



## Back-seat driver a robot who doesn't miss a thing

By Bob Jennings

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The back-seat driver is set to go electronic and will check to see whether you've noticed the speed-limit sign, check if you're slowing down and let you know if you appear to have missed it.

The Australian-designed system is the subject of a serious paper being presented to an international conference on intelligent robotic systems in Sendai, Japan this week.

The latest big brother aid for motorists combines two technologies developed by the Australian National University's systems engineering department and at its start-up company, Seeing Machines.

The system uses a set of three cameras that pick out road signs, while a pair of cameras monitor where the driver is looking.

When the system has matched the image at the roadside with signs stored in its memory, it checks whether the driver looked in the direction of the sign. If the sign indicates a speed restriction, the system checks to see whether the car is travelling within the limit.

"We don't want to make the system too intrusive and warn drivers of things which they have already seen," said Lars Petersson, the leader of the ANU smart car project, part of the National Information and Communications Technology Australia program. "This would be very annoying and drivers would be tempted to turn it off."

The system was being developed to recognise objects such as pedestrians and to warn drivers if they appear not to have noticed a hazard, and also to monitor whether the car was keeping within its lane, he said.

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