

Driving with technology



Mobile communications and GPS systems used as sat-navs are becoming very common in cars. Whether you are connecting your Bluetooth to blast tunes or looking for the nearest Waitrose, these have become a fundamental part of the daily drive for many of us.

This advice on using technology to complement your driving is from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards Richard Gladman.

- Whilst a sat-nav aids in getting you from A to B try to not become reliant on it. It is important to pay attention to road signs and the road ahead, in case there's a diversion sign that the device may not have picked up
- Get to know your sat-nav before you set off and always programme it when stationary. Many people trust their sat-navs not to get them lost but you also need to know about roadworks, diversions and places to stop. Keep an old fashioned map to ensure that you limit the chances of going completely off track
- Create your playlist before you start your journey. Taking your eyes off the wheel to look or adjust your music can often prove to be hazardous. It only takes a few seconds distraction to cause an accident. Remember to also keep your music down in some circumstances; your hearing can keep you safe, so be prepared to turn the music off
- Don't make or take calls when driving and never text or engage with social media on your smartphone. Through extensive research it has been shown that making calls, even hands-free, affects concentration and slows reactions when driving
- Some vehicles have the ability to create a Wi-Fi zone allowing internet access. This should be used as a luxury for passengers whilst ensuring they do not distract you as the driver. For instance a computer screen reflecting in the dark is a dangerous distraction

Richard said: "The latest driver assistance systems can be the perfect back-up to cover our occasional human failings but are no substitutes for concentration. The driver must always remain connected to what is going on around them. Multi-tasking is a myth and all too often that glance away can become a complete switch-off to an emerging risk. No text, tweet, check in or status update is worth crashing for."