

## "The e-Cars Are Coming!"

Detroit carmakers are about to give me my e-wheels.

In their ongoing quest to lure me into a showroom, they've unveiled a car that puts the full power of the Internet onto a dashboard screen. So that way, I won't need to go even 15 minutes without access to every other human being on the planet.

As I barrel down the interstate at 65 miles per hours, I can keep up with e-mail and even buy my Labrador Retriever a big rawhide chew toy on line.

Carmakers assure me this is something that I, as a consumer, have demanded. I cannot remember specifically when I asked them for this, but I'll take their word for it, because lately, I have been very busy.

It wasn't long ago they gave us navigational technology that uses an orbiting Global Positioning Satellite, or GPS, to tell us within a matter of feet, precisely where we are. So it's no longer enough just to be lost. Now we are able to see just how lost we are.

The on board screen displays a map and a little moving dot that is supposed to be us. We continue to drive while looking down at the screen, and by moving the dot with our steering wheel, we try to get it to our destination. GPS was, incidentally, dreamed up by the same people who gave us Pac Man.

Fortunately if you carelessly drive off the road while using GPS, it will be easy to tell the rescuers exactly which ravine you are in. Personally, I am looking forward to the time I can use GPS to help me find my keys.

Safety experts call a dashboard computer screen lunacy. Car phones increase the chance of an accident by 4. Think about being behind someone trying to unload a nose diving stock, or a highway full of drivers jabbering in some chat room.

"Safety," Detroit answers, "no problem," because the system will be voice activated, "And just think, on long trips you'll have someone to talk to."  
And besides, they ask, why do you think you have airbags?

Technology is great. Without my laptop for instance, this commentary wouldn't be done until next week.

However, a computer screen is wholly inappropriate in an automobile. Given a choice of dashboard amenities, I would personally prefer a fireplace, or even a waffle maker.

But the truth is, my biggest fear of an Internet ready car is that some hacker could break into my GPS.... and make me drive somewhere I really don't want to go.

