

Black box - Airplane Tech for Your Auto

A company in Prussia, PA, has finally keyed on a long-overdue idea. Why not use the very same systems technology for cars that is used for airplanes. The infamous "black box" recorders that are found in most of the world's airplanes to record both cockpit conversations and onboard equipment logistics have proved invaluable in after-crash investigations. The very same technology could also be used in automobiles, recording the seconds that led to an accident.

So reasons Prima Facie, the company that developed The RoadRecorder, a "black box" recorder already being used by some transit companies, armored car companies and police departments. According to its inventor, Shawn Marcell, the company's long range plan is to develop and market a Road- Recorder "inexpensive enough to lure the interest of automobile owners and their insurers." According to Marcell, Prima Facie might have its first consumer prototype available as early as next year at a price "less than \$1,000."

Marcell notes that, "by providing video of a crash and data on factors such as speed, turn-signal use and braking," disputes between victims could become a thing of the past. [RFN]

COMMENT: While recognizing that such technology could prove very beneficial for all parties involved, we can't help but also notice the myriad new technology that is finding its way into our automobiles. For instance, this story reminds us of a report that appeared in the Sept. 1996 edition of Hot Rod magazine entitled, "No Hot Rodding Allowed."

New auto industry regulations have further strapped auto builders and their mechanics with near "big brother" styled technology that requires an automobile inform a satellite not only when the car needs maintenance, but also if you install a different size set of tires to your auto.

In our next report, we'll shed more light on the so-called OBD-III regulations coming to an automobile, truck or van near you! Inventions like the RoadRecorder could easily be modified to include such Big Brother invasions! [RFN]

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