



Kant or Won't?

Dear Reader,

Running the risk of alienating myself, I would like to wade into the debate regarding speed limits. The dilemma of the argument for a speed limit of 130 km/h is similar to a smoking ban: One cannot in good conscience be against it, because the upper 50 % of the speed range up to 250 km/h damages the environment more from an energy consumption viewpoint and if things go wrong, there tends to be a higher health risk for oneself and others than in the lower 50 %. To be in favor of a limit and assuming this position is morally far easier to represent. And a small, additional, economic argument: The forest of traffic signs would be reduced, and you wouldn't have to try and remember which speed limit is currently in force: Driving at 130 in a 100 km/h zone results in fewer problems than driving at 250 km/h.

Since I have the suspicion anyway that we will soon be cruising along the highway at a speed of 130 due to the lack of measurable opposing arguments, we can be proactive and take the initiative: If we follow this scenario through, certain topics within the scope of automotive development can be taken on board that support the roll-out of speed limits. For example, ever since I read the fascinating "In the Spotlight" article about PHEVs by Gernot Goppelt in the 7-8/2021 issue of ATZelectronics, I have discovered a new topic for myself: geofencing. This contributes usefully to the switching of hybrid vehicles to electric mode when they enter a low-emission zone. A meaningful option to increase the share of electrically driven vehicle cycles. If we consider the impact of this technology further, it could also be used to automatically limit a vehicle's speed to a certain value. Reflecting upon this devoid of any emotion, then advantages do emerge: Generally valid maximum speeds supported by geofencing would facilitate

vehicle automation in the medium and long term, since sensors, software and computers can be less powerful than they need to be at higher speeds; as a side-effect, noise and environmental pollution, together with stress levels, are reduced. In addition, a complete system, either in the form of a license or included as standard that enables automated driving up to a speed of 130 using a validated sensor configuration with computer and AI architecture, could be a business model, if one were to sell high-end mobility instead of not necessarily high-end vehicles.

A technically asserted speed limit may be a thorn in the side of ambitious drivers, but, at the end of the day, it only aligns a personal preference with the legal situation on public roads. Whoever doesn't like it can say so. However, when all is said and done, the Kantian approach applies that an individual's freedom ends where the freedom of another, and hence that of the general public, begins.

Enjoy reading this edition.

Robert Unseld
Responsible Editor



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