



# **Pimp My Ride: America's Traffic Problem Solved**

by Chad Lowry

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The other day my dog and I were discussing the relative merits of socialized medicine based on a regressive tax system. Ha, ha! Just kidding. I could never keep up with my dog on that kind of stuff. He's way advanced like that. But why can't he figure out how to get his ball out from under the kitchen table? And who keeps kicking me in the butt when I go under there to get it?

Anyway, while he was babbling on about the danger and unfairness of punishing the middle and lower classes, I was thinking about crackers. That's a funny word, "crackers." Also, why isn't all traffic controlled by tractor beams?

This would be a huge improvement over the way things now work. Cars would be the same as today, only they wouldn't have anything under the hood except a computer. And a refrigerated compartment big enough to hold a deli tray and a pony keg.

Think about it: no more polluting engines, no more high gas prices, no more international fighting over oil, no more accidents, no more rubbernecking and gawking at accidents. Sure, the Middle East turns back into nothing but a desert, but they'll come up with something. How about exporting some sand to Oklahoma? I hear Tulsa needs a beach. Or how about opening a casino? It worked for Vegas.

Here's how the new technology would work: Let's say you need to pick up some roses for your girlfriend after she caught you with that hooker at the YMCA. On second thought, better make it some jewelry. (Note to self: Open a store selling nothing but presents that say "I'm sorry." Call it Apologifts.) You get into the vehicle, tell the computer the address you want to go to, the computer ridicules you for not covering your tracks better, then wirelessly communicates your destination to the network of tractor beam machines, and off you go.

Haven't you ever sat in traffic and wondered why all the cars in a lane don't start moving at the same time when a traffic light turns from red to green? Drives me nuts. That, and the price of really good cheese. But because they will be able to move all of the cars at the same velocity at the same time, tractor beams will solve this problem.

Here are some other benefits to this brave new world:

1) No more getting lost. Of course, you won't be able to take the scenic route either, since the computer will always take the quickest and most efficient path. But you can look at trees any time, right? Unless you live somewhere where there are no trees, and you never

need to ride by somewhere that has trees, in which case you're screwed.

2) Over the hills and through the woods (maybe) to grandmother's house you go, while keeping your dirty dishes from sliding all over the place. (You're bringing them over to grandma's so she can wash them. Grandmas love that kind of stuff.)

3) You can watch porn without worrying about distracting other drivers, not that it stops you now anyway.

4) If a wild monkey gets loose in the backseat, you're not nearly in as much danger of crashing. But watch out for that loaded diaper he's whipping around his head!!

You're probably wondering whether the technology for this is even possible. I'm thinking yes. After all, cars today already have maps and driving directions on them, so we know an onboard computer can figure out where to go and how to get there. And we've all seen tractor beams in movies, so why not just use them everywhere? The big three automakers are probably the tallest hurdle to making this happen, but I'm confident America's labor force can make these vehicles as cheaply and poorly as they do an automobile.

We'll probably need a whole new lingo for this paradigm shift, too. Cars could be known as laze-o-rides, and the tractor beam network can be called the "Pulltronic Movement System." The PMS devices will either hover in the air or be strung from wires; I'll work out the details later, depending on how bloated I'm feeling after lunch. And the person who used to maneuver the vehicle by driving it can be called The Shemp. Or, if it makes them feel better, Commander.

Personally, since anyone could "drive" a laze-o-ride, I'd rather see kids running around yelling: "I call Shemp! I call being The Shemp!!"

Of course, this change won't be easy for most current drivers. They're still going to want to feel as if they are in charge of the vehicle. A fake steering wheel can be provided for the control freaks. It won't do anything to change the direction of the laze-o-ride, but it might make a spaz feel better. I want a bus steering wheel in mine. Those things are huge, and I can't wait to crank it hand-over-hand, rocking my torso forward and back while rounding a corner and announcing, "Next stop, Bridgetown Mall!"

Another change we could make to help distract the attention of the person in the old driver's seat is to load up the dashboard with all

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kinds of extra buttons, switches and levers. The gizmos won't actually do anything except light up and make different noises, but I suppose one of them could operate the whipped cream dispenser. The control panels could also have various themes, like Star Wars, Knight Rider, or Peanuts. Wouldn't it be great to take a running start, jump in through the laze-o-ride's open window, hit a big red button on the dashboard and hear David Hasselhoff scream, "KITT, get me outta here!"

"Hey," you're probably thinking to yourself, "that's great and all, but who's gonna pay for the research and whatnot to make this happen?" Why, the government is, you crazy goose. My dog has a few ideas on how to get it done.