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Examen : Diplôme d'Expert Automobile	Durée : 2h00
Epreuve : Langue vivante étrangère : ANGLAIS	Coef : 1

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Is your car spying on you ?

By David Coursey

Most people know that most cars couldn't run without computers. However, most people don't know that one of those computers records what your car does in the seconds just before an accident. Even fewer know that this information could find its way to your insurance company or even into court.

Originally intended to monitor air-bag deployments in real-world situations, General Motors introduced this technology in 1990. Ford followed in 1998. The automakers kept the existence of these crash data recorders (CDRs) secret until 1999, when a GM executive revealed their existence (perhaps unintentionally) in a speech.

The data these devices record varies with the make, model, and year of a particular vehicle. One recent GM model, for example, keeps track of vehicle speed, engine speed, brake status, throttle position, state of driver's seat belt, and time from vehicle impact to air-bag deployment. Other metrics of a more technical or administrative nature, like how many times the engine has been started, are recorded as well.

The recording is triggered by the same mechanism that decides to deploy your air bags, based on things like sudden changes in acceleration or hard braking.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that 40 million crash data recorders have been installed in vehicles sold in the U.S., representing about 20 percent of vehicles on the road today. The agency has asked all automakers both to use CRD technology in their vehicles and to make the data readable by outsiders.

What about you and me driving down a familiar street when a car pulls out in front of us, causing a collision ? Does the insurance company really need to know we were driving 5 mph over the posted speed limit ? After all, doesn't everyone speed just a little, at least sometimes ?

Opponents, of course, wonder why the information is being gathered at all and whether vehicle owners should be able to have the CDR devices disabled or removed if they so choose.

However, the raw information the devices can provide safety engineers has already proven itself in making cars safer. Knowing that the information exists – and may be used against you in a court of law – could convince us all to drive more safely as well.

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TRAVAIL A EFFECTUER

I) COMPREHENSION (10 points)

Faire un compte-rendu en français de l'article « Is your car spying on you ? »

II) EXPRESSION (10 points)

Traiter le sujet suivant en anglais (120 mots environ)

Do you think all vehicles should be equipped with this « black box » technology ?
In your opinion, who should have access to the information ? Justify your answer.