

Web-page for careful driving and marketing of private vehicles.

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Abstract

Safe traffic is depending of: **Careful drivers - in safe cars - on safe roads**. To get safe traffic, all three items have to be present. It does not give safe traffic if the car and road are safe, and the drivers are speeding and having fun and excitement on the roads.

The main thinking behind the web-site has not been to describe how to drive careful and build safe cars and roads, but rather the opposite. The web-site exposes when the Minister opens an unsafe new main road or when BMW and others promote unsafe driving in their marketing of new cars.

The www.safetraffic.info is arranged with the following main pages: Careful driver, Safe vehicles, Safe roads, Media, Safe traffic and Diagrams.

Careful driving is a requirement in §3 in the Norwegian traffic law. This is depending of continues attention by the driver. If the driver sends SMS, use the mobile telephone or operate the road office by a PC screen beside the steering wheel, the driving is not careful. In Norway the individual driving license is issued for life. The authorities do not want to be responsible for the update of the drivers driving competence or attitudes.

For the young coming drivers, the start by rally car play on the play station, is not the best background for a careful driving on the real roads. The fun connected to car speed is exposed to young children in many ways, one is by a T-shirt telling: "Going down the fast lane" and showing a car at high speed.

Some years ago the advertisements for new cars from makers as BMW, Volvo, Mercedes and Audi quite often had a clear promotion towards unsafe driving. This were exposed on this web page and the companies were noticed. In most cases the advertisement has not been show after such a notice. Further the promotion message in the next advertisements have been less aggressive towards unsafe driving or with a complete different angle.

Most media are interested in cars and driving. The Norwegian state owned TV channel (NRK) has for years shown a program named "Autofil". This program clearly promotes fun and speed on the roads. The same is done by a number of auto journalists in journals, internet papers and newspapers.

Under the heading of Safe Traffic, the following areas are presented: Who is responsible for safe traffic on the roads?, Road Traffic Authority, Costs connected to accidents and injuries, Ethics and traffic safety and an introduction of an "Oscar" price for safe traffic.

If the priority in reality were set for a safe traffic, and all actors having influence, worked positively together, the number of killed and injured on the roads could be greatly reduced. This would include the removal of the freedom to fun, speed and excitement on all public roads by giving freedom from injuries and death priority. The key item is to get careful drivers, taking care to reduce and possibly avoid the risks for accidents as required in the traffic law.

1. Introduction

The start of this project was a simple observation on the roads. All vehicles from some car manufactures did always pass me on the road. This resulted in the formulation of the following question: Does the vehicles always passing me have higher injury rate? To answer this question, I bought the total data set of all car injuries in Norway during 3 years. This data set consisted of 60,000 lines, each line giving data for one injured person in the traffic. The data included information about the car model being involved as well as a number of other relevant information.

The highest injury frequencies were found related to cars from companies like BMW, Volvo and Mercedes. These cars are not regarded as the most unsafe cars on the roads.

The next step was to analyse the marketing of the vehicles, primarily by advertisements and what the car journalists are writing in the papers. The result from this analysis was that the aggressive marketing of fun, speed and excitement with the car on the roads corresponded with highest injuries connected to the same models of cars. As long as the roads are the same for all cars, the conclusion behind the differences had to be found primarily behind the steering wheel. The key item was the driving attitudes exercised by the drivers. The main safety items to reduce injuries and death are careful driving combined with the removal of auto joy and excess speed on the roads.

This understanding resulted in the development of a promotion program to promote careful driving. The potential gain from such a program, run by the authorities, was regarded to be considerable. The Norwegian ministry of transport was approached with the program and they refused to go this route. The reason may have been that the politicians are afraid for actively removing the freedom to fun, speed and excitement on the roads.

What could a dedicated individual do in this situation? The answer was to develop a web-page: www.safetraffic.info and www.sikkertrafikk.no, one in English and one in Norwegian.

2. Safetraffic.info

The key message is that safe traffic is depending of: **Careful drivers - in safe cars - on safe roads**. To get safe traffic, all three items have to be present. It does not give safe traffic if the car and road are safe, and the drivers are speeding and having fun and excitement on the roads. (Løken, 2007)

The main thinking behind the web-site has not been to describe how to drive careful and build safe cars and roads, but rather the opposite. The web-site exposes when the Minister opens an unsafe new main road or when BMW and others promote unsafe driving in their marketing of new cars.

The www.safetraffic.info is arranged with the following main pages:

- Careful driver
- Safe vehicles
- Safe roads
- Media
- Safe traffic
- Diagrams
- Contact

A short description of the main points shall be given for each page.

3. Careful drivers

Careful driving is a requirement in §3 in the Norwegian traffic law. The level of care is specified in the way that there shall be no risk for harming anybody as a result of the driving.



Careful driving is depending of continues attention by the driver. If the driver sends SMS or use the mobile telephone, the driving may not be careful. The introduction of a road office by a PC screen beside the steering wheel is under sales with positive promotion by car journalists. The message is: "When you arrive to the meeting, you are prepared."

For the young coming drivers, the start by rally car play on the play station, is not the best background for a careful driving on the real roads. The fun connected to car speed is exposed to young children in many ways. An eight year old boy had a T-shirt with a car at high speed: "Going down the fast lane". He was proud of the T-shirt telling about his fast car he wanted when he got his driving license.



In Norway the individual driving license is issued for life. Expire date is when the holder is 100 years old. The authorities do not want to be responsible for the update of the drivers driving competence or attitudes.

4. Safe vehicles

The new vehicles are developed to protect the persons inside the car in the case of an accident. Further the drive and brake systems are improved. This could reduce the number of injuries if the driving had been at the same risk level. If the driver at the other side feels safer and increase the risk level by excess speed and exciting driving, the total safety may in stead be reduced.



Volvo: Amusement park



Audi:



BMW: Bull riding

Some years ago, the advertisements for new cars from makers as BMW, Volvo, Mercedes and Audi quite often had a clear promotion towards unsafe driving. The three advertisements pictured, clearly illustrate this. Volvo tells: "Welcome to the amusement park". The Audi advertisement with the 90 km/hour speed limit in front of a roundabout, does not need any text. The bull riding BMW driver tells: "Suddenly every thing else becomes boring".

The web-page exposure of this activity to promote unsafe driving has not passed unnoticed by the car selling companies in Norway. In most cases the responsible for the advertisement has been informed by E-mail when his advertisement has been shown on the web-page. In most cases the advertisement has not been show after such a notice. Further the promotion message in the next advertisement has been less aggressive towards unsafe driving or with a complete different angle. One example which illustrates this is the Audi advertisement telling about how they polish their cars as shown on this page.



Audi: Polishing (Advertisement in 2007)

5. Safe roads

The safest roads are those with two or more lanes in each direction combined with a solid mid barrier. These roads are for the high capacities and can not be used at lower capacity roads. One new alternative for middle capacity roads are the 1 + 2 lane concept with a solid mid barrier. When the Minister of transport in 2006 opened a new segment of the main road (E18) in Norway without middle barriers, this was exposed on this web-page with the following heading: "The minister opens a new unsafe main road."

6. Media

Most media are interested in cars and driving. The Norwegian state owned TV channel (NRK) has for years shown a program named "Autofil". This program clearly promotes fun, speed and excitements on the roads.

When an auto journalist in 2007 had tested a Mercedes SL, the heading was: "Canon bullet from Mercedes." The journalist described the fantastic acceleration from the over 500 Hp motor.



A newspaper promotes the Subaru car. Rally driver Solberg is driving Subaru.



The "Autofil" team from NRK promoting fun and unsafe driving on the roads.

7. Safe traffic

Under this heading different areas are presented:

- Who is responsible for safe traffic on the roads?
- Road Traffic Authority
- Costs connected to accidents and injuries.
- Ethics and traffic safety.
- Introduction of an "Oscar" price for safe traffic.

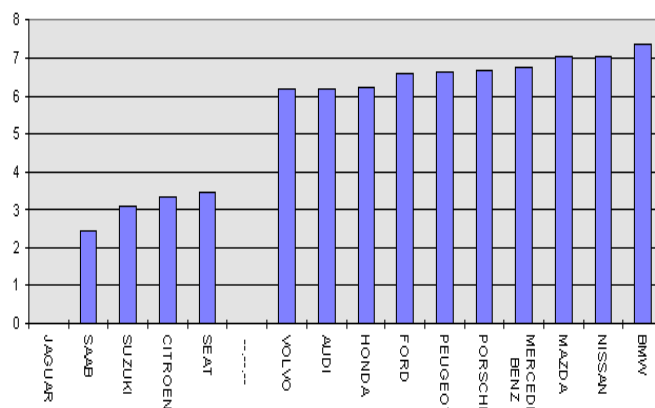
The main responsible person is the car driver. This does not mean that he/she is the only person responsible for a safe traffic. In reality there are a number of different institutions having influence on safe traffic and therefore are carrying parts of the total responsibility. The number is so large that the question is, if the responsibility in reality is pulverized. If this is the case, the Minister of transport and the Parliament are responsible. As done in other parts of the society, a road safety authority may be established to have road traffic safety as their own responsibility. (Løken, 2002) This authority could set up requirements, reducing the possibility for unsafe driving.

The total costs connected to road accidents on Norwegian roads may amount to 20 to 30 billion NOK per year. (4 to 6 billion USD) for a population of 4.7 million. If the Road Traffic Authority was placed under the Health department, costs connected to added safety on the roads could be balanced by reduced hospital costs treating the car injuries.

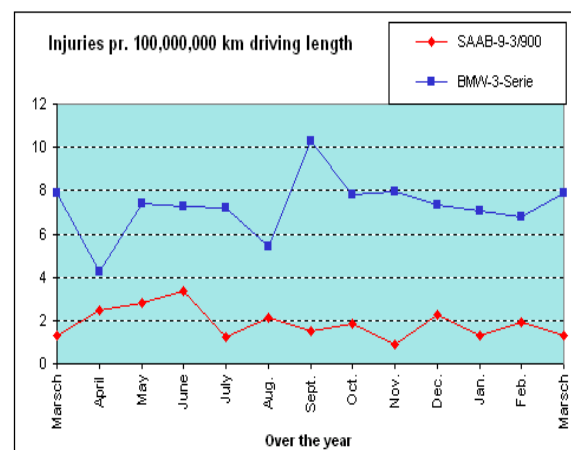
In other parts of the society as the health sector, a set of ethical roles has been thoroughly discussed and introduced. Such an ethical norm (Løken, 2005) for the road traffic is non-existent. There are easy to find activities connected to road traffic which clearly are far from ethical.

8. Diagrams

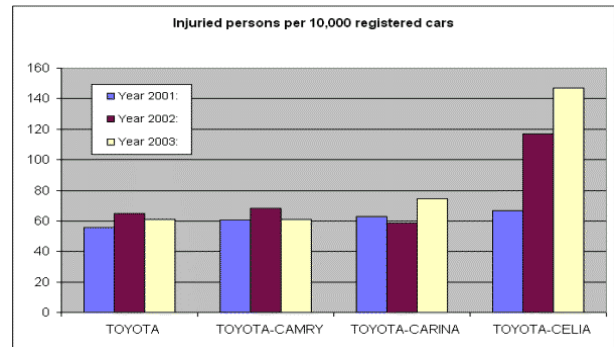
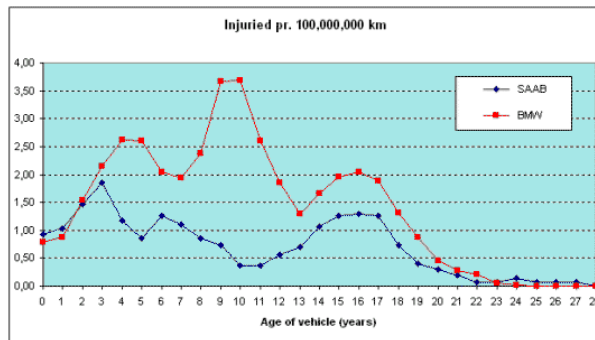
Some diagrams are included in the web-page. These are covering all registered injuries on Norwegian roads during 3 years (Løken, 2005).



Injuries per 100,000,000 km.



Injuries over the year for BMW and Saab.



Injuries as function of the age of the vehicle.

Toyota Celia is one of these small, low cars.

A special presentation program has been developed opening for showing any combination of two of the 150 different models. The injury data may be shown as a function of driver age, time of the day, male/female driver, in addition to the few examples shown above.

9. Concluding remarks

How could this type of activity be funded? The car industry wants to sell their cars and has not shown any positive interest in this work. The insurance companies might be interested. In practice no support has been obtained. The Department of transport is run out of political priorities and the parties do not want to argue for careful driving. This could give the voters a feel that their freedom to fun and excitement on the road should be removed and that could reduce the number of voters to the party in charge.

Left for funding is charity funds or idealistic individuals which realize the potentials for a considerable reduction in the number of killed and injured on the roads.

If the priority in reality were set for a safe traffic, and all actors having influence, worked positively together, the number of killed and injured on the roads could be greatly reduced. This would include the removal of the freedom to fun, speed and excitement on all public roads by giving freedom from injuries and death the main priority. (Løken, 2007)

References

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