

The end of traffic jams? Dutch test new system

November 6 2013



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Researchers in the Netherlands will next year test a GPS navigation system aimed at preventing the international curse of motorway traffic jams by telling drivers which lane to move to.

Tests will be carried out as early as April on a 75-kilometre (around 50

mile) stretch of motorway passing through the Netherlands, from Germany to Belgium, which is popular with freight lorries.

"Traffic jams can be caused by a line of trucks," Paul van Koningsbruggen from Dutch IT firm Technolution told AFP.

"It's a [chain reaction](#): when a car drives up behind a truck, it brakes, then the car behind brakes, this time a bit more, and so on, until a car some distance away has to almost come to a standstill, and that's when you get a traffic jam," he said.

By letting [drivers](#) know in time that they should change lanes and drive at a certain speed, researchers hope they can prevent traffic jams forming.

Dutch GPS navigation equipment specialist TomTom and Delft University are also involved in the research.

"The idea is that around 1,000 drivers take part in the tests," said TomTom's Peter Krootjes.

"We don't yet know when it will be a marketable product, that depends on how successful the tests are," said Krootjes.

Volunteers taking part in the project will download an app to their smartphones, while some volunteers' cars will be equipped with additional sensors and cameras to get more data.

The system will however only work if at least 30-40 percent of drivers on a certain stretch of motorway are using it.

"If only one driver changes lane or speed, that's not going to prevent a traffic jam forming," Van Koningsbruggen said.

"It seems ambitious to say the system will mean the end of traffic jams," said Krootjes.

"What's for sure is that a driver who is well informed about [road traffic](#) will get home much more quickly, but this will also diminish the number of [traffic jams](#) for everybody," he said.

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Citation: The end of traffic jams? Dutch test new system (2013, November 6) retrieved 5 February 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-11-traffic-dutch.html>

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