Daimler to test using cars to scan for parking spaces

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German carmaker Daimler to pilot a project to allow networked cars to share information about available parking spots to save drivers time

German carmaker Daimler said on Friday it would pilot a project to allow sensor-studded, networked cars to share information about available parking spots to save drivers time.

"The daily hunt for a parking space often takes up as much time again as

the actual journey," the Mercedes-Benz maker said in a statement, causing "stress and annoyance".

Daimler will work with Bosch—the world's largest auto-parts maker—on the scheme dubbed "community-based parking" in its home city of Stuttgart, capital of southwestern Baden-Wuerttemberg state.

During the project, set to begin "imminently", participating cars will use built-in ultrasound sensors to scan the roadside while travelling at speeds of up to 55 kilometres per hour (34 miles/hour).

Information about free parking spaces will then be sent via a "secure connection" to Bosch's cloud computing service to be processed.

One technical challenge will be identifying which gaps in the roadside are genuine parking spaces and which are exits from parking garages.

But with enough cars travelling down the same street, spaces that are repeatedly registered as empty can be identified as likely exits, Daimler explained.

The first iteration of the technology will simply provide drivers information about the probability of finding a parking space on a particular street.

With a larger base of users in the future, it will be possible to display available parking spaces in real time on a dashboard map or in the carmaker's smartphone app, Daimler said.

Connected cars and their associated services are becoming one of the biggest areas of research and development for manufacturers and component suppliers, fitting into the wider "Internet of Things".