

SPEED CAMERA TECHNOLOGY

Super-Gatsos

New speed camera takes multiple photos and video

BY ANDY DOWNES

A NEW monster Gatso speed camera is designed to spy on four lanes of traffic, video road users and take a snap of the driver's face. It's on its way to the UK's roads and could be with us in as little as a year.

The new four-camera system has an infrared lighting system, flashes, digital video, can store up to 60,000 pictures on the hard drive and even has a spiked collar to prevent vandals climbing up and smashing the camera.

Although the camera's design is currently forward facing, there will inevitably be plans for a rear-facing one to catch speeding motorcyclists as well should the system prove a success.

The Gatso Multi-Camera System (MCS) isn't used in the UK yet as it hasn't been type-approved but once this has been carried out and camera

partnerships want one it could be in place within the year.

The camera system is designed to replace single lens cameras that can only watch one lane of traffic at a time – the MCS keeps an eye on up to four and can take two pictures at the same time of vehicles in different lanes.

But none of the new technology is currently of any use against motorcycles as the £100,000 camera only works by taking images and speed-readings from the front so it can use the video and infrared cameras to get an image of the face of the driver as back-up evidence.

A spokesman for Serco, Gatsometer's UK distributor said: "It's not available in the UK at the moment but it may well be something we will bring in in the future. It's up to the local camera partnerships to decide if they want them. If they do it could be here within 12 to 18 months."



THIS new Gatso can take photos of two lanes at once and store 60,000 digital images

NEW RIDER

BY SIMON JOHNSTON



CORRECT observation is vital to anticipation on a motorcycle

Why everyone needs a CBT

NOW I've completed my CBT, I firmly agree with all those who feel it should be compulsory for all road users, not just motorcyclists.

There are so many things that everyone can learn from a CBT – for car drivers, cyclists and even pedestrians – that will help you use the roads safely.

This week I'll concentrate on what I now strongly believe is the cause of a large percentage of accidents on our roads – poor observation.

Correct observation is a habit that new car drivers slip out of a few months after passing their driving tests – I sure did and didn't sort it out until a serious close call, years later.

MCN reader Ben James summed it up well with his e-mail to me recently. He said: "When you have observation drummed into you so much during a CBT and theory test you realise how much you neglect it if you're a car driver! Every road user should see things from the two-wheeled point of view, maybe they'd be more aware then."

And he's right. Since taking my CBT I've seen so many more examples of car driving idiots not thinking outside their own 15ft x 6ft boundary.

Now that I'm thinking like a biker, I'm looking that little bit further ahead and always thinking 'Is that child on the opposite kerb going to cross in front of me?'; 'What is behind that parked car 100m ahead of me?'; 'Is there likely to be anything nasty round this blind bend?'

On a bike the answers to these questions can have you sliding down the road helmet first, but in a car they are often seen as just minor annoyances – maybe not even enough to set off your airbag.

The importance of correct observation and anticipation really can't be stressed enough; after all human beings are difficult creatures to predict at the best of times, but put them behind the wheel/handlebars of a 100bhp lump of metal and things get slightly more dangerous...

Ticket for doing 40mph in a 40mph zone!



TONY OAKES on the road where he was sent a speeding ticket for doing 40mph in a 40 zone

LONDON'S speed camera authority is threatening a rider with prosecution for doing 40mph in a 40mph zone.

A notice sent to MCN reader Tony Oakes threatens prosecution for: "An alleged offence of excess speed in a 40mph limit". The letter then adds: "The speed of the vehicle was 40mph."

Oakes, a 38-year-old despatch rider from Rainham, Essex, also received a notice for an alleged offence of doing 42mph on the other side of the same road –

Dagenham Road in East London – but this one said the speed limit was 30mph.

When Oakes wrote back pointing out the usual limit on the road was 40 and that there were no 30mph signs to indicate it had changed, a reply claimed: "Every road should be considered to be a 30mph limit unless shown otherwise."

Oakes added: "Signs on the opposite side of the road say the limit is 40mph. Why haven't they put up signs to show the limit has changed? They want to nick everybody."

Chrissy Dicks, from the Metropolitan Police, claimed: "The speed limit on this stretch of road was reduced from 40mph to 30mph in January 2006."

She continued: "It was not necessary for the local authority to put up new permanent speed limit signs as roads in built-up areas with street lighting are 30mph unless signs indicate otherwise."

Oakes has sent us a photograph of the road, which he says was taken last month, showing a 40mph speed limit sign still in place.

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