



Safe & Sound of Texas White Paper

Technology Can "Drive" Complacency

By David Bianco

I admit it. I am a fan of automobiles. I am also a fan of technology. As those worlds have begun to morph together, my interest level has surged.

Ironically, given the possible outcomes due to technology, you might say these worlds are "colliding" (pun intended).

There is no doubt that the interior cabin of our vehicles are becoming more comfortable and "geeky" with every new model year. "Infotainment" is now a [dictionary word](#) and has renamed an entire new wave of [aftermarket of products](#).

So, what's the big deal? Many guys like cars and technology. While that is true, my 8-5 job introduces a bit of a witches brew to this vehicular electronic utopia: in 2012, I became the Safety Manager at a large manufacturing company.

All of a sudden I am focused on hazards, loss prevention, caring about a much larger group of people than just my direct family. From day 1, I knew instinctively that Safety is about prevention and people - making sure workers go home just as they arrived (albeit a bit more tired).

So a funny thing happened on the way to the showroom; in 2015, I had to buy a vehicle for myself. After much research, it came to narrowing the list of models and options. And while I found that I definitely wanted a great sound system, a backup camera and all the regular bells and whistles, the whole "Technology Package" option list gave me pause.

Did I want to be trained to **not** look at blind spots? Did I want to diminish my mental presence and expect my car to keep me on the straight and narrow? What if I got used to that in my vehicle and then drove another? While the price tag was scary enough, the thought of becoming complacent while driving a 4,000 piece of metal at 70MPH was even scarier. So my geeky hat and my safety hat got into a rather contentious battle.

About that same time our organization was investigating Behavioral Based Safety systems to implement. One of those in the running was [SafeStart by Electrolab Limited in Canada](#). I found they provided a very unique approach to developing safety minded employees - by challenging us to become independently aware of our personal responsibility towards being safe - at work, at home and on the road.

Learning that our unintended errors (Eyes not on Task, Mind not on Task, Line-of-Fire, Balance / Traction / Grip) were driven by 4 primary states (Rushing, Frustration, Fatigue



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and Complacency) made an enormous amount of sense. I realized my gut feeling about some of this automotive technology was driven by a fear that it would increase my Complacency.

I've been driving for since 1973, so I didn't need anything else to increase my complacency. I mean when it came to driving, I had become complacent about my complacency! But if it wasn't for SafeStart, I would be "fat, dumb and happy" thinking that I hadn't a care in the world. I would be thinking that the new, cool Technology Package in my vehicle would be my best friend.

So I decided that while I still had a decent amount of my faculties in place, I would rely on them and continue to train them to be my blind spot detectors. The Technology Package isn't in my car.

Just to clarify about using a back-up camera, I have always struggled with knowing where the back of my car was when backing up. So a backup camera is simply another set of eyes that I need but I still have to decide when to stop.

God knows the day may come, in the not too distant future that I will either need these vehicular aides so that others are comfortable riding with me or I won't be able to find a new car without them installed.

Until such time, I will continue to drive using the skills I learned at 16 and honed all these years to keep me safe on the road.

I have installed one piece of optional equipment in my vehicle. I keep my SafeStart card in the mirror slot of my visor (see photo). It is always flipped down so I always start my car with the 4 States, 4 Errors and 4 Critical Error Reduction Techniques in my view and mind. Oh, and put your cell phone out of reach to reduce temptation and use hands-free Bluetooth (if you must).

When Safety is a Value and not simply a goal, or something you do at work, it can begin in affect your thoughts and decisions in a totally new way. You will see it as a personal responsibility and a way to improve your life in many ways. And that means every day and all day. Safety isn't like work clothes, you don't discard it at the end of your shift.

Whether you are deciding on car technology or self-triggering on your state of frustration before you yell at someone, these principles can bring you to a new and better place for yourself and those around you!



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2020 Update

All of what I had written in 2015 is still true. The technology has grown: screens are larger, autonomous driving systems are improving, "360°" cameras and more, better speech recognition, integration to native smartphone platforms like Apple iOS and Google Android are more mainstream.

Unfortunately, driving environments and hazards on the streets have not changed.

And as drivers employ more of these tools, these same drivers, thinking they are safer due to the tools they possess are becoming a bigger hazard *to the other guy*.

So the human fundamentals have not changed. Technology can drive complacency.

P.S. One piece of technology is strongly urge you do install is a [webcam](#). These are instrumental in case of an unfortunate accident to prove what really happened. I just upgraded to a unit that films forward and backward (a real asset for Uber/Lyft drivers).