End of the Road for Red Lights? Ford Trials Tech to Help Drivers ‘Ride the Green Wave’

- Hitting a series of red lights on a miserable commute could become a thing of the past with the help of technology that is now being trialled with Ford cars
- Drivers choose recommended speed to maximise chance of meeting green lights based on timing info from roadside units. UK daily drivers spend two days per year waiting at red lights
- Ford cars also trial tech that warns when cars unseen up ahead brake hard to show benefits of connected cars for UK’s largest self-driving and connected car trial

Imagine if you could take the kids to school, commute to work or drive across town to do some shopping without ever hitting a single red traffic light.

Technology is currently being trialled with Ford cars to make “riding the green wave” a day-to-day reality. Green Light Optimal Speed Advisory uses information on traffic light timings from a roadside unit to display to the driver the best speed to travel to get a green light.

Ford is trialling the technology as it helps to demonstrate the benefits of connected cars for UK Autodrive – the nation’s largest self-driving and connected car trial. The 16-member, partly publicly funded £20 million project is developing and trialling vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure technologies that could make driving less stressful and time-consuming, and improve fuel efficiency.

“There’s not much worse after a long day than to hit one red light after another on the drive home, and be forced to stop and start again at every junction,” said Christian Ress, supervisor, Driver Assist Technologies, Ford Research and Advanced Engineering. “Enabling drivers to ‘ride the green wave’ also means a smoother, continuous journey that helps to improve the flow of traffic and provide significant reductions in carbon dioxide emissions and fuel consumption.”

Daily drivers in the UK alone spend two days each year waiting at red lights, and similar technologies already enable cyclists in Copenhagen and Amsterdam to avoid red lights. * If drivers find hitting a red light unavoidable the system displays how long until the light turns green.

The Mondeo Hybrid cars provided by Ford are also trialling Emergency Electronic Brake Lights, which warn when a vehicle up ahead suddenly brakes hard – even if the incident occurs out-of-sight – up to a distance of 500 metres.

Technologies that will be trialled next year also warn drivers when another vehicle is blocking the junction ahead; when an ambulance, police car or fire truck is approaching; and prioritises vehicles arriving at intersections without traffic signs or traffic lights.

Trials are taking place on both public roads and closed circuits in Milton Keynes and Coventry during the next two years.

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