

What your mechanic is really doing

May 12 2002

If you have ever wondered what happens to your car when you take it to a garage, then a text message might just be able to help.

In-car tracking systems are usually intended to keep tabs on stolen cars, but the technology can have additional benefits, as one Manchester man recently found out.

The man, known only as Mr G, purchased a global positioning satellite system called TrakM8 from Dorset firm Interactive Projects.

TrakM8 can be set to send an SMS text message to a mobile phone for a variety of purposes such as if the driver has broken down or is in other difficulties.

It also has a feature that alerts the driver via SMS when the car is going above the speed limit.

Caught

out

This feature proved revealing when Mr G took his car in for a routine service.

When the car should have been in the garage, he received a series of SMS messages telling him that his BMW was actually speeding through the streets of Manchester.

"Someone was obviously driving it with some welly and I wasn't too happy as it was a new car," said Mr G.

"I called the garage with some pretty angry messages and the service manager couldn't believe it and nearly died of embarrassment," he explained.

"The really funny thing was that he had fitted the system two days earlier,"

Satisfying moment

This added benefit of the TrakM8 system could prove useful for people keen to keep an eye on their mechanic's use of their car, said Karen Knapton of trakm8 Limited.

"We would have loved to see the service manager's face when he was shown the action replay of the abused car," she said.

"It must have been one of those satisfying moments.

"We all know this kind of thing happens but it's great to be able to prove it," she said.

