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Teenagers used to worry about their little brother or sister snitching on them. Now, big brother is watching.

New monitoring devices are hitting the market that let parents keep close tabs on how their kids are behaving hehind the wheel.

They can tell whether teenagers are driving recklessly. whether they're wearing seat belts and whether they are just going to the library as they promised.



Courtesy of Smart Driver

Elizabeth Zook checks the connection on a SmartDriver unit installed in a car, A red light glows on the unit when a driving violation occurs. To get a report, the unit must be plugged into a PC.

Based on technology long used by trucking companies to track driver behavior, the gadgets - typically installed under the dashboard - can track acceleration, braking and distance traveled.

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Devices record traffic violations. Parents are key customers.

MICHELLE HIGGINS The Wall Street Journal



Courtesy of Smart Driver

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hitting the market that let parents keep close tabs on how their kids are behaving behind the wheel. They can tell whether teenagers

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driver behavior, the gadgets -

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dashboard - can track acceleration, braking and distance traveled.

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Some of the new devices are interactive, capable of notifying parents if their child speeds or drives beyond a predefined boundary, such as a boyfriend's house or Nogales.

Depending on the product, the alerts come via e-mail, phone or by logging onto a Web site.

Alltrack USA, an online retailer that offers Real-Time Tracking, sells a \$40 add-on that lets parents immediately tell their kid to knock it off.

From their computer, parents can flash a light on the dashboard or blow the car's horn at the driver. It allows parents to prevent a car from being restarted once it's parked somewhere.

In about a month, Road Safety International Inc., maker of the RS-1000 Teen Driving System, plans to

add an optional GPS receiver that will push the total cost of the product to about \$480 from about

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Today's Events

Check out what's going on in and around Tucson, with the Citizen's new events calendar. Gadgets such as these range in price from \$140 for a basic system without instant tracking to more than \$400 plus monthly fees for options that use global-positioning satellite technology.

Now, Road Safety's device records the car's speed and other data that parents can only retrieve later.

\$280 now.

As with nannycams and other observational equipment, the teen trackers raise tough issues for parents.

On the one hand, car crashes are the top cause of death among teens. On the other, many parents want to treat a

young adult as worthy of trust.

When Jeff Auerbach put a tracking device in the car used by his 16-year-old son Andrew, the two went shopping for it together.

"What I didn't want it to be was sort of a 'gotcha' spy program," says Auerbach, a patent lawyer in Rockville, Md.

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His hope was that since Andrew knew someone could be checking up on him, he'd be inclined to drive safely all the

Andrew says he was a little

"It's not the greatest feeling"

But he says it provided a helpful excuse once when a friend urged him to see how fast his

"It was very, very easy to just say, 'No, it's got a tracker system.' "

Similar technology is being used by car-alarm makers to help

time

upset at first.

car would go.

activated.

watching, he says.

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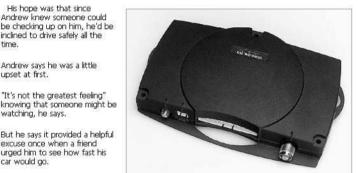
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in Atlanta.

CSI Wireless Inc., based in Alberta, Calgary, makes the hardware and provides the software to Directed Electronics, a vehicle-security and remote-start company based in Vista, Calif., for its five GPS tracking products. Each of those products is sold under four brands: Viper, Clifford, Python and Automate.Inger Falco of Northport, N.Y., found that a basic model solved her son's problems.

reminder the driver is being monitored,

After he got into crashes, she says, she put a SmartDriver recording device in his car. "Of course, he said that's very sneaky of you," she recalls. "But he got over it very quickly. It was either have this in your car, or don't drive.



Courtesy of CSI Wireless Directed Electronics uses the Asset-Link system from CSI Wireless in its

prevent theft and recover stolen vehicles. Directed Electronics Inc.'s Viper GPS Tracking System, a device designed to add tracking capabilities to the company's car alarms and with teen-tracking capabilities, can alert the car's owner if the alarm is

GPS tracking products. Satloc, a CSI subsidiary in Scottsdale, developed

a big chunk of the technology used in the system.

Insurance companies are starting to get interested in technology like this.

Progressive Insurance, based in Mayfield Village, Ohio, is running a 5,000-car pilot program in Minnesota

using a device that records speed and other data.

Participants, in return for letting the insurer track their driving patterns, can qualify for insurance discounts of up to 25 percent.

The most basic devices - the ones without GPS or e-mail capabilities - plug into the computer that most cars these days have.

It records a couple days' worth of data, such as when your teen or anyone else started the car, how far it went and at what speeds.



Dozens of products are available Consumers who buy Real-Time Tracking from Alltrack USA can buy a peripheral device that flashes a dashboard light or beep a car's horn as a

Since some of the more powerful devices use cellular phone networks to transmit

the car.

with an array of brand names, but many of the devices are

data, they may require monthly fees of up to nearly \$70.

To see the data, a user must

unplug the device from the car and hook it to a PC,

More powerful versions, which either offer instant e-mail or realtime access via a Web page, never have to be removed from

Indeed, many are manufactured

by a handful of companies, including AirIQ Inc., Advanced Tracking Technologies and Discrete Wireless

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