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Newway for parents to back-tweet drive

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NERVOUS parents can now keep a digital eye on their children's driving thanks to a new safety system about to go on sale. The technology is able to send parents a text message if it detects the car is driving erratically or too close to the car in front.

Accident avoidance technology that alerts drivers if they are too close to the car ahead or if they are drifting out of their lane has previously only been available on luxury cars.

But thanks to a new aftermarket system, even an old Kingswood or Datsun can pack the same state-of-the-art safety equipment found in a Volvo or BMW.

The Mobileye C2-270 system consists of a camera, computer processor and a warning light unit that sits on the dashboard. It works by taking six digital inputs from the car: speed, brakes, left and right indicators, windscreen wipers and high-and low-beam headlights.

The regional sales manager for Mobileye, Michael Hirsh, said those inputs could be found in any car, even older ones made before on-board computers.

The camera is able to scan the road ahead for other cars, cyclists, pedestrians and lane markings and alert the driver if it detects a problem. It processes not only the amount of vehicle and pedestrian traffic but its trajectory relative to the car.

Final pricing for the system has not been confirmed, but Mr Hirsh told the Herald it sells for between \$800 and \$1200 overseas, which includes installation. Volvo charges \$2075 for its lane departure warning system.

Mr Hirsch said Mobileye should be available in car parts shops within a few weeks for both private and fleet customers.

Deborah Jones, who is about to let her 17-year-old daughter Cate onto Sydney roads, says such a system has its appeal.

"It would be good to alert them if they're doing the wrong thing," Ms Jones said, while admitting hesitation about being too protective.



"My concern, though, is that they'd come to depend on it. So what happens when they drive a car that doesn't have it?"

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