

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Electric vehicles used in air pollution project

Electric vehicles fitted with specially developed air quality sensors are being used in a project to measure air pollution. The University of Leicester is working with Bluesky, an aerial mapping company, to develop a mobile mapping system that can measure pollution at street level in the city. Scientists will be going out in the electric vehicles to assess the real extent of air pollution on the streets of Leicester, using information gathered by the sensors to investigate alternative travel solutions. The data will then be spatially referenced to enable its use in Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

The initiative is part of

a programme which is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to team university research departments with small businesses in the East Midlands Region.

Dr Roland Leigh of the university's Department of Physics and Astronomy said: "Electric vehicles are part of the solution to urban air quality issues. It therefore makes perfect sense to use them to collect data that will be used to monitor levels and aid research into other ways of managing this growing threat."

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ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Charging infrastructure and vehicle price more important than vehicle range

A recent study carried out at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee has concluded that lower vehicle prices and improved charging infrastructure are more important in helping the electric vehicle sector to grow than increased vehicle range.

Researcher Zhenhong Lin identified optimum vehicle ranges based on the driving patterns of 36,664 American drivers, finding that for most consumers cars offering a range of 100 miles or less are satisfactory – provided that charging infrastructure continues to grow.

The study suggests that the industry should change its

approach from concentrating on higher-capacity batteries to rolling out more charging points, as until manufacturing costs drop to less than \$100 per kWh of electricity, lower range vehicles make more economic sense.

The study, *Optimizing and Diversifying Electric Vehicle Driving Range for U.S. Drivers*, is published in the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS) journal *Transportation Science*.

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LowCVP's Andy Eastlake Electric is only one of the options

Writing this as the latest electric vehicle registration figures are published by the SMMT I am sure we are all very encouraged at the growth in the plug-in market, but we should not lose sight of the fact that these still only represent 0.33% of the burgeoning new car market in 2014. With this in mind it is even more important for us to embrace every opportunity and technology that gives us an edge in reducing the carbon impact of our transport. These opportunities come at us from every angle of vehicle type, use, design and fuel and at times can be overwhelming.

A recent example of the plethora of approaches came through the judging for our LowCVP Low Carbon Champions Awards, to be presented at the networking LCV2014 dinner in September. The standard and range of entries was higher and larger than ever before.

They covered innovative biofuel production processes, heavy duty vehicles and operators, cars, vans, research publications, campaigns and travel schemes using 'L' category vehicles in shared rural operations. The innovation throughout, exemplified the creativity of British engineers and the appetite from the UK market for new low carbon solutions.

In this environment it is even more critical for our hugely important fleet market to have ambitious desires for the next generation of vehicles and really encourage these technology prototypes out of the lab and onto the road. The mainstream vehicle manufacturers are delivering a wider range of products and of course they represent the obvious and easy choice, but mainstream products are just that and are built for a global market.

For a truly bespoke approach, our UK SMEs (small and medium enterprises) in the automotive sector are second to none and UK fleets can give these companies the opportunity to succeed and themselves the competitive edge. So be adventurous when you search out the latest innovation and best advice because as Virgil said, "fortune sides with him who dares."

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