

Toyota aims to eliminate traffic mortalities with new Simulator

Last Monday, Toyota Motor Corp. unveiled a new technology which the automaker claims to be the world's true-to life driving simulator with its safety features aimed at not just reducing but eliminating traffic-related mortalities.

Toyota's demonstration was held at the Higashifuji Technical Center near Mt. Fuji in Tokyo. Toyota's new safety equipment showed the participants composed of journalists on how it detects unusual driving behaviors like drunkenness and drowsiness.

The warehouse-sized structure features a dome-shaped pod perched atop a turntable on a track that slides in all four directions at angles of up to 25 degrees to mimic the sensation of accelerating, braking and turning in different directions.

The new Toyota facility measures 4.5 meter long and 7.1 meter wide that can be installed in any vehicle model. The simulator is lined on the inside with a screen showing a moving, wrap-around view of the outside environment that gives the driver and his passengers the chimera of traveling.

Other leading automakers like Honda Motor Co. and Daimler Ag have also developed similar technology but it seems like Toyota has the edge. Toyota's product has the longest range of 35 meters from front to back and 20 meters from right to left says Toyota engineers.

"It still needs some fine tuning, but we aim to start putting it to use in earnest from next April," said Takashi Yonekawa, a senior staff engineer at the centre.

The project was completed in September and until the demonstration, Toyota never allowed reporters into the pod. The pod can also be seen via a glass pane in an adjacent room. Although the pod was not moving, the moving images which are a true-to life depiction of 64 km of road in a 6-square kilometer section of the surrounding area, it was almost real that the spectators felt nauseous.

On the same demonstration, Toyota also introduced another safety technology based on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). This equipment uses global positioning system receivers and sensors which give way to communication between cars and road infrastructure, pedestrians or other cars to reduce collisions.

Also, according to Toyota Managing Officer Takashi Shigematsu, their domestic rivals, Honda Motor Co. (also makes genuine [Acura body parts](#)) and Nissan Motor Co. are working on the same equipment. The three largest automakers are expecting to test their products next year.

Auto safety equipments are now the added spice to which automakers appeal to their consumers. Toyota Motor Corp. is taking it seriously and on the lead in the safety race. Last year, the biggest Japanese automaker equipped its Lexus LS460 with a pedestrian detection system.

About the Author

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