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Introducing the drunk-busting steering wheel

By [Lester Haines](#)

Published Tuesday 31st May 2005 11:47 GMT

A US inventor reckons he has improved on the good old "breath alcohol ignition interlock" with a skin sensor which will immobilise your car if you're seven sheets to the wind.

Existing systems rely on the half-cut driver breathing into a device which then refuses to fire up the car. Dennis Bellehumeur's cunning plan is to use sensors either in gloves or on the steering wheel which perform the same function.

The 54-year-old Florida real estate agent spent 12 years developing his device after his teenage son pranged the family motor while pissed, suffering minor brain damage in the process. He told Yahoo! News: "Thank God no one was killed. It was a real wake-up call. I wanted to do something. I hope one day I'll get a call from some guy saying 'I was drunk and could've killed someone, but because of you, I couldn't start my car'."

Bellehumeur has just received his patent for the drunk-buster and hopes to complete testing this year. However, there is a major impediment to its widespread adoption: the cost. At \$600 a pop, the automotive industry may not be too keen. Furthermore, James Frank, a research psychologist for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, added: "Neither will the driving public [accept it] because the majority of them don't drink and drive. We're not there yet."

The agency says that drink driving killed an estimated 16,654 people last year in the US, representing almost 40 per cent of all traffic deaths. ®

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