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Press Information

Volvo Group invests in technology that increases drivers' attention on the road

Studies show that lack of attention is the single largest cause of traffic accidents. As part of the Volvo Group's comprehensive safety efforts, Volvo Technology Transfer is now investing in Seeing Machines, which is a technology developed by an Australian company that detects and warns vehicle drivers in the event of tiredness.

Experiences from the Volvo Group's accident investigations and general traffic safety research show that accidents are a combination of the human factor, vehicle problems and/or the traffic environment, in which the human factor accounts for 90% of accidents. This was confirmed by new research conducted at the Virginia Tech Transport Institute that demonstrates even more distinctly that inattentiveness, due to tiredness or distraction, is the single largest and most significant cause of accidents.

Seeing Machines is a company that arose from the research results from a number of research projects at the Australian National University (ANU) between 1997 and 2000. The company specializes in computerized technology that is able to track and follow head and eye movements and facial expressions. The technology is applicable for products within areas including vehicle safety, medical diagnosing, simulation, marketing and games.

Within the vehicle safety area, Seeing Machines' offers include a small camera that automatically detects signs of driver tiredness and distraction. A specific calculation program processes the information from images and measures the position of the head and rotation, eye movements and eyelid behavior. The degree of tiredness in the driver is measured by registering how the eyes open and close and should the driver close his/her eyes, this is registered directly. Distraction and work load is measured using head and eye movements.

"We hope that this technology will reduce the number of accidents on our roads and become an important feature in safety efforts at vehicle manufacturers," says Stig Fagerståhl at Volvo Technology Transfer and responsible for investing in Seeing Machines.

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Volvo Technology Transfer AB is part of the Volvo Group and focuses on developing and supporting new businesses that are relevant to the Volvo Group. Part of the work is to invest in companies and projects that are technologically and commercially attractive.

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