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Letters

Speeders take heed

Is automated collection of tolls ("Paying as you go," SN: 1/25/92, p.63) the ultimate form of highway revenue collection? Informal discussions I have had with toll highway users have led to a rather Orwellian application of the same technology: automatic collection of fines for speeding.

The same data-collection devices used for toll collection need simply apply a time "stamp" to the driver's highway ingress and egress records, as well as rest area stops. The central data processor can then very simply calculate an average speed for the driver on the highway. Average speeds in excess of 10 mph over the posted speeds would have fines added to their toll bills.

Rest stops and signs along the way could be equipped with displays to warn individual speeders to slow down or a fine will be assessed. This saves the highway patrol tre-

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Cover: New research indicates that when a person's attention gets sidetracked in relatively common ways — such as stopping to consider the meaning of someone else's behavior or mentally rehearsing one's own behavior for an upcoming meeting — impressions of others can go seriously awry. (Illustration: Randy Fletcher)

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mendous personnel and equipment expenses and is "detector resistant," making radar and laser detectors obsolete. Perhaps drivers who regulate their speed properly could have their tolls reduced or eliminated.

How many lives would such a system save?

*Richard W. Vesel
Painesville, Ohio*

Data make the difference

Ivars Peterson errs in his otherwise excellent report when he suggests that the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is unaware of other experiments in electronic communication such as SOLSTICE: AN ELECTRONIC JOURNAL OF GEOGRAPHY AND MATHEMATICS ("Math for all seasons," SN: 1/25/92, p.61). There are at least six others that offer peer-reviewed content. But of the titles in scientific areas, none, including SOLSTICE, fits a rigorous definition of scholarly scientific journal: None contains figures or tables, and therefore they cannot claim to disseminate scien-

tific results in electronic form.

THE ONLINE JOURNAL OF CURRENT CLINICAL TRIALS is indeed the first project that fits all criteria for a scientific scholarly journal: peer-reviewed papers complete with figures and tables that are widely and publicly available, which will be archived by the publisher, which are indexed in a major bibliographic data base (BIOSIS) and which cannot be published elsewhere after they have been published in electronic form.

*Richard S. Nicholson
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CORRECTION

"Closing in on the Killer" (SN: 1/25/92, p.56) referred to Mammalia as an order, when in fact it represents a class.

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