Interviewer So had you heard about intelligent speed assistance before you sort of started getting these surveys and things from us?

M4 I've heard about it. Yes. I'm guessing it's a bit.... it's a bit like autopilot on a plane really, sort of thing where it sort of takes over and allows a bit more autonomous driving sort of thing. And I've seen that Google do a car and.... various other people have invested in it. But yeah...

Interviewer yeah....so the idea is that there's a camera on the car that picks up road signs, and it also uses GPS to detect, detect where you know where your car is and what the speed limit is. And then the idea is that if you went over the speed limit, it would gently cut the fuel to slow the car back to under the speed limit. And it would also have an override feature. So if you press the accelerator down hard, it will override the system and you can go faster. So that's the general sort of idea about how it would work. What are your impressions of that....

M4 I think from a... from a safety point of view, it's quite a good thing, really. I mean, it's very easy to drive over the speed limit, especially in built up areas, because 30 miles an hour doesn't seem that... or 20 miles an hour, doesn't seem that fast. So you just... there's a tendency to go a bit quicker and think you're not going as fast as you are. So in that respect, I think it's a... it's a... it's a very good thing. I think it'll obviously erm.... lower insurance premiums for people. If you have it enabled, a bit like the black box that people now have on their... a lot of learner drivers have...or new passers have on their car. And it's good that you can override it as well, which if you.... if you needed to erm.... break the law...for whatever reason but..... er yes so.... I think it's a.... it's not a bad system as long as it works as it should.

Interviewer So something that you would wonder about then is is that it would work well. Can you just tell me about a little bit more about what your concerns would be there?

M4 Well, if you enter, for example, a.... an area and it has variable speeds, for example, on the motorway where you're driving along and now you have all the variable speeds, would it.... would it actually pick that up and..... or would it just assume, I'm on a motorway, it's 70 miles an hour... Because erm.... that would be one thing and erm....certainly in terms of erm.... safety, would you become too depend on it... to... and then if there's...if it develops a malfunction, you suddenly find yourself in trouble due to a faulty car system.

Interviewer So it's putting that sort of trust in the technology..... if anything went wrong with it?

M4 Yes.

Interviewer Do you see it as a sort of a safety thing or do you see it as more of a thing of avoiding going over the speed limit and maybe getting caught out? How do you feel about that?

M4 I think it's a bit of both to be honest... I think in terms of safety, I would say that generally the speed limits that they.... pretty much try and keep people safe. So, you know, when you have 20 miles an hour or, you know, or lower around where there's schools.... and certainly in built up areas, I think from..... that's a very good er.... safety point of view. And then obviously, in turns, from a legal point of view, it does also.... especially if you're someone who likes to speed a lot, it would...it would help you er.... prevent you breaking the law and then effectively it could..... for some...certainly some companies, if you reach a certain amount of points on your licence, you would lose your job. So therefore it would make sure that you stayed safe.

Interviewer So do you think there's particular types of journeys or driving where you would find this kind of system more useful and maybe less useful in other ones?

M4 Yeah, I think if you were driving, for example, to erm.... just your normal commute to the office, for example, and you're going through various speed limits, that would be quite handy because.... especially if, you know, you wouldn't necessarily need to concentrate so much on the.... on the speed side of things. I think if you're.... if you're on a...a motorway and it's the middle of the night and it's completely clear, and there's no reason why you can't drive a little bit quicker than 70 miles an hour, then that's where it might be a bit of a hindrance erm.... especially if you're rushing to get home. So....yeah, I think it.... I think it serves a....it's a useful tool to have.... used in the right places... and the right occasions...

Interviewer but there's also.... it sounds like there's also a bit of a judgment of the road. So there might be a judgment sometimes that, you might want to go a little bit faster and then...it wouldn't be....

M4 Yes....and also, I suppose the inverse is that... is that if it's a winter's morning and it's been icy, even though the road might be 30 miles an hour, it's not suitable for driving at 30 miles, but it's not going to restrict.....or if it's heavy rainfall and you can't see, you've got not very good visibility and you're on the motorway, it still will allow you to drive at 70 miles an hour because it's not necessarily going to pick up that... your visibility is poor and therefore you should be driving slower.

Interviewer So there's still that driver judgement and.... I think you were saying that it would free up a bit of your attention if you were in a sort of more built up area, you wouldn't have to be looking out for....

M4 Yeah, you wouldn't be looking at the speedo, for example. You would just be able to concentrate on.... more on what the hazards are around you. You know, things like, you know, are there, you know, pedestrians that are likely to run out or.... you know, other various things but....

Interviewer yeah, and there'd be other.... there's other considerations to your speed like you were saying with the weather....

M4 Yes. Yeah.

Interviewer So if there could also be a system with it that could sort of maybe detect the weather a bit and then put some restrictions on around that, do you think that would be useful....

M4 Yeah, I think definitely. I think if it could pick up that, you know, that it was... it was heavy rain or whatever, that, that... there was, you know, impacting your visibility then... that would be er..... quite... quite a good thing to pick up, I think, yeah, definitely erm..... because like I say, I think that is possibly one of the things that people don't actually take into consideration when they're driving. I used to do a.... before Covid I used to do a...with my previous company I used to do quite a lot of driving.... for er.... to various places, and you would be on the motorway and it might be very.... particularly if it was raining quite heavy and you would see people just absolutely hammering up in the outside lane and you'd just be thinking, how can you actually see.... this is beyond.... But...... so yeah.... So in that respect, I think it would make things a lot.... people a lot safer.

Interviewer Yeah. So as you're saying, there's more to the speed limit than....

M4 ....more to speed than just the speed limit yeah.....yeah, it's taking... taking into consideration your surroundings erm.... and weather conditions and er.... road surface, I guess as well, which might be something, you know, especially with all the potholes about the place but.... But yes....so....

Interviewer So the system is generally that you can turn it on and off quite easily, so you could select it for particular journeys or you could have it on all the time or you could turn it off permanently. If you had this system in your car what do you think you would do with it?

M4 I'd probably have it switched on, if I'm honest, I would probably use it. I might turn it off occasionally, but I think it would be on more than off because I just think it's a.... it's a good thing to have. I mean erm.... and also erm.... in terms of... from a.... from an economical point of view, if you drive, the difference between driving at 65 miles an hour and 70 in terms of fuel consumption is quite.... it's quite significant erm.... or can be quite significant erm..... So, yeah, I think it's something I would definitely use. I think it's.... it's a useful tool to have so....

Interviewer Quite a few people have been mentioning the fuel efficiency. I think it's quite high up in people's minds at the moment.

M4 It is at the moment, yes. Yes, definitely, I mean, yeah... like I say, I'm quite fortunate at the moment, I'm based at home now, so it's er.... since pre-Covid so it's quite nice, but I used to have a commute.... I live in (city name) and work in (city name) and I used to have a commute from (city name) to (city name) every day and back so..... and before that it was literally....(city name to various other town names)...wherever, basically... so yeah, so......

Interviewer So it's another potential benefit of the system would be to improve fuel efficiency.

M4 Yes, definitely.

Interviewer So the the override system, when the system slowed you down, you would be able to press harder and go above it. How do you feel about that system? Do you have any reservations about it or do you think it sounds useful?

M4 I think it sounds useful. I mean, because obviously, like I say, if you did need to speed, if the road was clear and you did need to speed up, then that gives you that option so it doesn't..... it doesn't remove..... you being in control of the vehicle.... it just aids you when you want it and you can override it and take complete control... when you.... when you want to, I mean it's erm...., yeah, I don't think it's it's a yeah, I think it's a... it's a good option to be able to override it, especially if you, you know, need to, but erm.....

Interviewer Do you think that's something that the system needs to have....

M4 Erm....that's quite debatable, really, because there's part of me that thinks, no, it shouldn't, because then it just means that everybody drives sensible..... they drive to the speed limit erm.... and therefore that would hopefully help reduce er.... traffic accidents and... and... you know, everything else. But then there's another part of me that thinks.... if you had to get home in a hurry, for example, if you know.... one of your children were ill or something like that and you needed to get home really quickly and.... it was clear and the road conditions allowed it... you might want to drive a lot faster than the speed limit, and therefore it would stop you doing that. So.... yeah, so.....

Interviewer so it's a slightly sort of tricky thing.... whether you, you, you have that override....

M4 Yeah. And I suppose it depends, if you think about.... if this is just for just for our cars, then that's not such a problem...but if you've got emergency vehicles, then it probably wouldn't be such a good fix for them. So erm....so yeah.... I think, yeah, I think the override is possibly something that's required so.....

Interviewer So you're thinking you would override it if you were in a rush or if the road situation looked like it was fine to override... Are there any other situations where you think that might come into play of being able to speed out of....

M4 No, I think only if... only if the.... only if it was safe to do so, to be honest... I know I probably sound like I'm a bit boring, but.... I just think it's.... it's one of those things it's about.... it's always about.... you know, you might run into someone by speeding and you might be fine, but they might not be. And then how would you actually live with your conscience if you've caused an accident and.... well, yeah, I think, yeah, I think if it's clear and it's...or.... and you're in a rush, then.... you could override it. But you know, but for most of the time, I would say for 95 percent of the time or 97 percent of the time you wouldn't need to override it unless you're just.... for purely selfish reasons to just whizz off but yeah.... so.

Interviewer And if you were going to buy another car erm.... Would you be looking for these kinds of systems to be in cars like speed limiting systems? Would it be something that would make you more likely to buy a car or less likely or no difference?

M4 I...hmmm..... I think it would possibly be no different..... actually, I think it might make a difference because I think it might make things a bit safer. So yeah, I think I would probably look at it and go, well actually, that's not a bad system to have installed. I mean erm.... yeah, I think it's.... I think it's a good thing so yeah, I think I would be more inclined... if you offered me two identical cars and one had the speed-... one had it enabled and one didn't.... then... obviously dep-... on the price point, if it wasn't too much of an increase in price, then yeah, I'd definitely be thinking it would be something I would look at. I certainly think for... for companies, from a business point of view, that might be something that they might be interested in because.... certainly in terms of fleet driving, it would.... it would possibly lower the....possibly lower your insurance premiums as well. So, you know.....

Interviewer Yeah. Yeah. So it wouldn't necessarily have been something you would have been going looking for. But if you heard about it, you would be interested.

M4 Yeah, I'd be interested yes.

Interviewer Would you pay extra for it, because sometimes they're standard and sometimes they're add-ons so....

M4 Yes. Yeah, I wouldn't pay too much extra for it but if it were standard, they would be superb. And you know, I think.... if it was a little bit more then I might be tempted but erm....yeah...

Interviewer And if you were buying a car and it had this system in, is there anything that you would want to know from the dealers around how the system worked or how could they tell you in a effective way about what the system was and how it worked?

M4 Er.....Possibly go for a quick er..... if a test drive was possible, they could... they could take you out for a test drive and then show you how you enable it erm..... Talk you through it, let you have a chance to to take it and try it out and see if you like it and you get on with it and erm.... show you how you stop it, how you..... enable it, how you can.... you know, is it going to be something that you can just do off the steering wheel, is it something you need to do via the computer screeny bit erm......because that's the other thing when you're moving along.... when you, you know, just a.... just ease of use, I guess..... how easy is it to use and could they explain exactly how it works, what it does...erm... yeah...

Interviewer Yeah, so a demonstration is quite a good way of....

M4 Yes, definitely...definitely

Interviewer How do you find, finding out about these things from manuals and things. Do you do you find that OK? Or do you prefer a demonstration?

M4 I prefer to talk to people. I have a real er..... Yeah, I'm one of those, if I'm learning something, I'd rather be hands on, someone..... talking to someone and going through it, and I will take that information easier than if someone gave..... just gave me a book and went...there you go....So.... I think as well with a book, the onus is on you and it's easy to go well, I'll read that in 10 minutes and the ten minutes never comes.

Interviewer So looking at the system in cars, there's some options for making it easier and harder to turn off and things. So first of all, what do you feel about having the speed sytem in cars and not being able to turn the system off at all?

M4 I think you would just get used to it ....if you could not turn it off, if that was the way the car worked and you knew when you bought it, that was the way the car worked.... I guess you would just get.... you would then make a choice as to whether you're going to buy something that basically controlled the way you drive.... or not. I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing not being able to turn it off either... because.....short of the occasion, the odd occasion where you might need to speed then...then... it just means you can't....you just have to..... it's a bit like.... when I go on holiday.... I sit on an aircraft and I don't think, come on, hurry up... or when I sit on a train, I never think, Oh, god I need to... whereas in the car you sit and you think, Oh God, I need to go, I need to go, I need to go. That's completely gone... and I guess it might put you in more of that mindset than.... in more of the mindset around erm.... you know, you can't ....you can't just go, go, go anymore. ....you could only go as fast as you're allowed to go so....

Interviewer Yeah, so in some ways, it would calm people down a little bit more...

M4 yes....yeah, it takes that control away from you I guess.... that... that stops you thinking I can just, you know, go a bit quicker, go a bit quicker.... you know...

Interviewer And do you think that would put some people off particular cars if they had this system in and there was no way that they could turn it off?

M4 Yeah, I don't think my dad would like it (laughs)....

Interviewer Is that because he likes the freedom to speed or just the complicated technology?

M4 Er..... he would probably feel he isn't in control. He likes manual drive cars because he likes to be able to change the gear. He likes to be able to control his speed. He does... he's not necessarily a speeder, but it just... for him, that would just be a completely.... driving is a skill .... and you've deskilled it rather than er.... enabling you to... drive safely.

Interviewer Do you think that's an older generation thing or.....

M4 Yeah...... definitely. I think... I think... I think it is.... it's a bit like when.... seatbelt laws first came in when I was a child.... people like myself wouldn't even.... you go in a car and your automatic thing is to put a seatbelt on. But then when you look at the older generation who never had to wear them.... it took them years to catch up with this.....I actually need to put a seatbelt on. So, yeah, I think ....I think that's the.... I think it's possibly a generational thing that they feel that driving is a skill,... they don't need this to help them because they... you know, they can drive fine without it so....

Interviewer But how how do you feel about it? Do you feel like these things do add to your driving or....

M4 I think.... I think they're a good thing. I think they.... if they make the roads safer, they are definitely a good thing. I think there's a lot more cars on the road for us than there were, which is something that I think the older generation forget... that when I was a child, you normally had one car, one house. Now we've.... you've got two, three, four car households, depending obviously on the age of the children but... and there just seems to be a lot more cars on the road. And..... it's just.... it would just make everything a bit safer for everyone, I think.

Interviewer Yeah. So you think it would it wouldn't be a bad thing for it to be impossible to turn off.

M4 Yep.

Interviewer I think you've mentioned before about it being more difficult to override the system. And I think you said that that you felt reasonably positive about it being harder to override.....

M4 Yeah, I think... I think if..... I'm sort of thinking that if you have a system in place that makes you go, and the maximum you can drive in... in a built up area is 30 miles an hour.... and that's as fast as you can go.... that is not a bad thing because it prevents...... anybody zipping along at a ridiculously stupid speed erm...., and it makes everything safer for everybody else, the.... only place where.... the only roads I sort of think where I... where I would be a bit more dubious about it is a motorway, but then...having said that, if you go on the motorway at rush hour, it would probably not be such a bad thing because, you know, because... because the amount of people that .....literally hammer along at ridiculous, frightening speeds so..... you know, so yeah... I don't think it's such a bad thing. I think it's one of those things and if if it came in... and it was, this is how cars will work.... you either..... you know, adopt and adapt to it.... or you buy an old car or you stop driving... that's your choices effectively. It's one of those things, really erm..... and I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing.

Interviewer Yeah. So if it was harder to turn off or even... it would be better. There's also sort of the option of if people were overriding it, that it would give you a warning. How do you feel about those sorts of things, your car giving you warnings, it could be a visual warning or an auditory warning...

M4 I think that's a good thing. I think if you.... if you are.... if you mistakenly override it by putting your foot on the accelerator and it tells you, you're like... Oh, crikey, yes, sorry, I've knocked that off.... I need to, especially if it turns it off completely. You can then think, Oh, I actually need to put it back on sort of thing and make sure I'm driving safely erm.... So, yeah, I don't think it's.... I don't think making it..... I think giving... giving you a warning that you've deactivated the system is a good.... is a good thing, you know...and especially if you're constantly driving above the speed limit and it's constantly telling you, actually, you're driving at 80 in a 70 mile...you've got no excuse then.... if you get caught speeding because you've been told x amount of times by your vehicle, that you're doing it so.....you know...

Interviewer Do you have anything in your car that warns you when you go over the speed limit? Do you have like a visual thing on your display or anything like that?

M4 Not as far as I'm aware, no....

Interviewer So do you think that it's a good idea to start rolling out these systems in all new cars.... should it be a compulsory thing for erm....drivers to have in their car do you think?

M4 Yeah, I think it's a good thing. I really do think it would be a good thing. I think the only exemptions should be emergency vehicles, but everybody else there is..... I don't see any reason why.... anybody needs to... to not.... have this sort of system. I can't think of a reason anyway as to why.... you would have a valid reason to need to speed.... unless you are an emergency vehicle and then yes you do have a need.... but...yeah...

Interviewer and do you think everybody else would agree with that or do you think there'd be groups of...

M4 No (laughs).....definitely not...... definitely not. No, you see.... there are a fair few er.... people who like to drive rather... rather quickly..... from different factions of society. Some of the.... younger lads, when they are out to impress their mates by.... driving their Corsa as quick as they can. And then you've got the erm..... yeah, you've got.... It's only.... mainly... mainly men, funnily enough, that I think fall into the category of... you know, I've got to get there....now...I need to get there 10 seconds quicker and I think.... in my experience, the further towards London you go, the more that becomes.... prevalent....it...or... you know, because when you're driving towards London, it's.... another.... world. I mean... my wife, used to say to me when I used to drive down to London, I'd come back to (place name) and she'd be like, Oh my God, you've been driving in London again.... because I literally get on the road and vroom go. And she's like, Oh my God, just stop. Just calm down. It's.... the whole mentality is go, go, go. So I think.... certainly from my point of view, I think things like that, might.... would definitely be beneficial.

Interviewer Yeah. Well, that's what you were saying earlier about sort of calming people down a bit wasn't it.

M4 Yeah.

Interviewer So how do you think you would encourage people who....those sorts of people who might not be so positive about the system....how do you think you could encourage them to use something like this?

M4 I think you show them the advantages of it, so for example, I don't think people realise the.... devastation that road accidents can.... produce. I don't think people realise the life changing erm...effects of road accidents. I don't think people realise the consequences of driving quickly and the damage you can do to other people. They don't see a car as a... as anything other than a car. They don't realise it's actually.... can be a lethal weapon. So erm....and I think it's possibly more about education. And I think if you er.....you would probably need to start educating schoolchildren because I remember when I was in school, we used to have the....the people coming in and showing you about the dangers of doing the railway crossing sort of thing. Maybe a similar sort of thing, but for cars instead of... you know, this is the... if you drive at 20 miles an hour, this is the damage you do....if you drive at 30 it's this and if you drive at 40 it's this...that's why you should drive slower... and like, you know... maybe that's... that's what's needed to educate. I think it takes ..... it takes a mental shift, I mean.... when I was growing up er....smoking was considered the norm, you know, a lot of people smoked and now hardly anybody smokes because.... through the generations we've discovered it's bad for us, we know it's not good for us.... and therefore... our mindset as a society have changed.... and I think maybe that... that's what it needs.... it needs society to change its mindset that.... yeah, it's great watching an F1 car, but you're not Lewis Hamilton when you jump in.... your road car.... because that's not...what you're doing so....

Interviewer So it sounds like it's that kind of speed awareness thing in general related to this system. So you agree with it being compulsory being put into cars, how would you set it up in terms of how easy it is to turn on or off?

M4 I.... I would probably, if it was possible, make it a system you couldn't turn off and then it would literally just makes people drive safer. I mean, at the moment, as I say, you've got a lot of the people who have newly passed their tests, who have the black boxes in their car that monitors their speed.... monitors how they drive. It's one of those, but it's a permanent fixture, and.... I think people would just get used to it, and it would just be, well, I can't do that anymore, you know,

Interviewer so it's almost like not having that override and not being able to turn it off is what you need to have for people to accept that this is the way it's....

M4 yeah, the way it's going to be, yeah...

Interviewer And apart from the speed awareness, are there any other incentives or any other advantages that you could encourage people to.... to use the system, do you think?

M4 Er.....I suppose if... if you lowered their insurance premiums and there was a financial saving there, they'd be more inclined for that. If you could show them that they were going to use less fuel, they would be a.... definitely at the moment a big incentive in that erm....and generally...as I said, the safety element and trying to get people to understand that, you know, yeah, you might think you are Lewis Hamilton but you're not and you are likely to.... injure people so.... I think that's that's possibly like you say just education and.... yeah....

Interviewer And who do you think that education should come from? Is that a societal thing or is there anything that manufacturers or dealerships or people like that could do around that do you think?

M4 I think it's probably more of a society thing, more of a.... rather than a manufacturer thing, because it needs to be a consistent message rather than a....for any... otherwise, you'd get.... you would get into top trumps with manufacturers of how my system's better than their system and it's better than their system.... which.... they probably...you'd get it anyway. But.... but yeah... I just think if if it was more of a societal thing and more society driven, more.... educational for people then it would.... it would work a lot better....

Interviewer And what do you think is the best way of getting that information out to people.....

M4 So at the moment, I think er.... in terms of media, you.... I would be looking more around either.... online.... sort of an onliney type campaign or even... you know, the old traditional television adverts because people still watch TV. It's just might be that you need to go for a different....format in erm..... But yeah, I think that's that's possibly more of it and... the only other thing you could do is possibly go to community events and do something there.... and see if people engage.....

Interviewer So that's... that's all of my questions. Do you have anything else you'd thought of or....

M4 No, no, no. That's been fantastic. Thank you very much.