

Tekst 4

Why phones are replacing cars

And why this is a good thing

“PARKS beautifully”, boasts an advertising hoarding for the XDA II, above a glimpse of its sleek silver lines. “Responsive to every turn”, declares another poster. Yet these ads, seen recently in London, are not selling a car but an advanced kind of mobile phone. Maybe that should not be surprising. Using automotive imagery to sell a handset makes a lot of sense for, in many respects, mobile phones are replacing cars.

Phones are now the dominant technology with which young people, and urban youth in particular, 16. For what sort of phone you carry and how you customise it says a great deal about you, just as the choice of car did for a previous generation. In today's congested cities, you can no longer make a statement by pulling up outside a bar in a particular kind of car. 17, you make a statement by displaying your mobile phone, with its carefully chosen ringtone, screen logo and slip cover. Mobile phones, like cars, are fashion items: in both cases, people buy new ones far more often than is actually necessary. Both are social technologies that bring people together; for teenagers, both act as symbols of independence. And cars and phones alike promote freedom and mobility, with unexpected social consequences.

At first, the 18 of both cars and phones was defined by something that was no longer there. Cars were originally horseless carriages, and early models looked suitably carriage-like; only later did car manufacturers realise that cars could be almost any shape they wanted to make them. 19, mobile phones used to look much like the push-button type of fixed-line phones, only without the wire. But now they come in a bewildering range of strange shapes and sizes.

It is to be 20 that mobile phones are taking on many of the social functions of cars. While it is a laudable goal that everyone on earth should someday have a mobile phone, having cars all around produces mixed feelings. They are a horribly inefficient mode of transport – why move a ton of metal around in order to transport a few bags of groceries? – and they cause pollution, mainly in the form of nasty gases. A chirping handset is a much greener form of self-expression than an old banger. It may irritate but it is 21. In the hands of a drunk driver, a car becomes a deadly weapon. That is not true of a phone (though terrorists have been known to rig mobile phones to trigger bombs). Despite concern that radiation from phones and masts causes health problems, there is no clear evidence of harm, and similar worries about power lines and computer screens proved unfounded. Less pollution, less traffic, fewer alcohol-related deaths and injuries: the switch from cars to phones cannot happen soon enough.

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Kies bij iedere open plek in de tekst het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.

1p 16

- A communicate
- B define themselves
- C entertain themselves
- D grow up

1p 17

- A After all
- B Furthermore
- C Instead
- D Likewise

1p 18

- A design
- B necessity
- C quality
- D success
- E value

1p 19

- A Besides
- B By contrast
- C Similarly

1p 20

- A doubted
- B regretted
- C welcomed

1p 21

- A affordable
- B fashionable
- C popular
- D safe