

Is your car assertive?



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Body

ARE you a chilled, average or assertive driver? And which one is your car? Elon Musk's Tesla electric car company has announced that it has restored the chill, average and assertive driving modes to its automated driver assist feature.

Which means what exactly?

That in some Tesla cars you may be able to choose full self-driving and set it at your preferred mode and the automated car will act accordingly.

So, for example, if you choose the "assertive" mode, rather than "chill" or "average" Tesla say it will mean that their cars will follow other cars more closely, change lanes more frequently and stay in the overtaking lane for longer. They may also perform "rolling stops".

What's a rolling stop when it's at home? Or on the road for that matter?

It's when a car doesn't come to a complete stop. This matters because in the United States it is illegal in some places.

Ah, these options are only available in America?

At the moment, yes, that is the case. Tesla's Y model electric sport utility vehicle (SUV) may be arriving in the UK in the near future, but these driving modes are only available in the US as part of a limited test.

When you say restored ...?

Is your car assertive?

You noticed that. Yes, these driving modes were first introduced last October as part of Tesla's full self-driving car software but were then withdrawn due to other bugs in the system such as intermittent safety warnings when there was no danger present.

Talking about safety warnings, do we really need an assertive automatic car?

Well, the first thing to say is that, despite the term "full self-driving" this is a driver assistance feature. Also, drivers have to pass a safety test to even access the software.

I'm not convinced that's enough.

You're not alone. When the options were first introduced last year the head of the National Transportation Safety Board in the US, Jennifer Homendy, argued that basic safety issues had still to be addressed.

Confidence can't have been helped when the company announced a recall of more than 475,000 cars in the US, including nearly 360,000 Model 3 vehicles due to potential rear-view camera issues towards the end of last year.

So, what you're telling me is that cars aren't going to start driving themselves in the near future?

You'll have to wait before you can read The Herald behind the wheel.

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