

Out of the Box: Downloads

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It's not Driving, But an Incredible Simulation

Forget stodgy instructors and ridiculous-sounding road rules—today's driver's ed class is a whole new animal, notes the Big Blue Dot trendletter. Many of today's teens don't take the course, as it's been shifted right out of school schedules, which perhaps has something to do with the fact that teen drivers have the highest percentage of accidents.

Enter Drivers Ed Direct (www.driverseddirect.com), a California-based company that uses modern technology to make learning the rules of the road cool and contemporary. Drivers Ed Direct conducts all its courses online, using animated, interactive lessons that allow time-strapped teens to complete their ed hours around their schedules.

Parents are sent progress reports throughout the course.

When it's time for the "on-the-road" portion of instruction, each and every car is a hybrid. And to ensure that teens aren't mangled by motorist multi-tasking, a class on the use of driving in the era of PDAs and other personal technology is on the curriculum. Each student-driver's car is equipped with an iPod, cell phone and GPS unit so that kids learn NOT to become distracted drivers, but instead pull over when they need to use these gadgets.

Old-school drivers can only hope that teens will be required to stream scratchy gore classics such as Signal 30 or Last Prom to scare them to safety. After all, those titles are now available thanks to technological advances and can be downloaded via www.archive.org.