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Abstract <p>This preliminary study describes the current road traffic information services, what is known about the effects and usefulness of information, and how these services should be developed. The data was collected from literature studies and personal interviews. The study resulted in a compact description of actors and actions in road traffic information, a theoretical framework to analyse information services, preliminary results of the effects, and suggestions for further research and development.</p> <p>The study has three parts. The first part studied information services from the driver behaviour perspective. The outline was based on analysis of driver information needs and new services at different decision levels. According to the analyses, development activities should concentrate on services supporting strategic level decision-making.</p> <p>The second part consists of the description of the actors in the area and the results of the actor interviews. The results show how the information activities contribute to the realisation of traffic policy goals.</p> <p>The third part studies the effects of information. Because the lack of empirical evidence, a theoretical estimation was made about the effects of efficient real-time weather and road surface condition and incident warnings on the costs caused by the problems. If 70% of the drivers would receive local information of the problem at the correct time using e.g. vehicle terminals the annual benefit of weather and road surface condition announcements was estimated to be 5.8 million Euros and the annual benefit of incident reporting 1.2 million Euros. The interview of four transport companies studied their operation and future service utilisation potential. The companies defined several benefits to improve traffic safety and promptness of delivery.</p> <p>The conclusions emphasise the significance of information services as part of other measures. The information services are being developed. Specific messages for the drivers, focused on a certain place and situation, support other activities. This type of information is assumed to attain substantial benefits. In the future, traffic mass communications may be a considerable device in road authority traffic control, supposing that e.g. control systems and services along with vehicle terminals are developed. Co-operation between the actors is becoming even more important. User needs, especially regarding traffic safety, have to be taken into account in the development of the services. The realisation of traffic policy objectives requires the organisation of real-time traffic information services.</p> <p>The study has been granted European Community financial aid in the field of Trans-European Networks - Transport.</p>			
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