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## **AWARD MAY BE A BIG BRAKE FOR CLEVER EDWARD**

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He may be too young to drive, but that has not stopped Edward Wilson winning a top prize for a road-safety invention.

The 16-year-old's innovative brake light system shows how quickly a car is slowing.

And it won Edward, who studies at New College Nottingham's High Pavement site, a prize at the 2007 Young Engineer for Britain awards.

He scooped the Design and Innovation Trophy in the 12 to 16 age group - and £800 in prize money.

He said: "I was sitting there when they announced the award I had won, and my dad had to nudge me to go up on the stage and get it. I was shocked."

The teenager, a former pupil of the National School, Hucknall, also won an award for his work from the Nottingham Society of Engineers in April.

Edward came up with his idea as a research project for his design and technology GCSE.

While researching he found that in 2004 there were 69,183 rear-end accidents in the UK, an increase on the previous two years.

He said: "I do a lot of driving with my dad on the motorway and I began to notice traffic jams seeming to build up for no reason.

"When I also looked into that I found it was caused by someone at the front reducing their speed and other drivers not noticing and having to slow quickly. The knock-on effect is a jam.

"That all indicated a need for a solution to improve the information available to drivers about the rate of deceleration of the vehicle in front."

Edward's device, called SlowSafe, aims to both cut accidents and reduce jams.

SlowSafe warns a driver the car ahead of them is slowing without the person in the car in front even having to put their foot on the brake.

The system automatically measures the rate of deceleration in the car and sends electronic signals to the rear lights - the faster the vehicle is slowing the stronger the lights will shine.

"I didn't want to overcomplicate driving and the information given to drivers so I needed to use systems that already existed and signals that drivers recognise and accept," said Edward.

The invention has patent-pending status and the name SlowSafe is due to be an official trademark.

The teenager now plans to spend the next few months giving presentations to car manufacturers and trying to persuade them to use SlowSafe.

Mother Serena Wilson, 45, explained that her son's achievement was all the more impressive because he also had to deal with dyslexia.

"I'm so proud of him. He even wrote his own computer programme and no one taught him how to do that - he learnt himself," she said.

"At times his dyslexia made things hard for him but he persevered. It's a huge achievement."

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