

## Traffic jams are just a math problem, says Israeli AI firm

The ITC says traffic jams like this one in Los Angeles are a global scourge, leaving the average driver stuck in traffic three days a year.

Israel's traffic congestion ranks among the worst among developed economies, but an algorithm can help, says one of the country's IT companies dedicated to the automotive and mobility sector.

ITC, or Intelligent Traffic Control, was one of the AI players at Tel Aviv's recent EcoMotion showcase, where high-tech and AI companies hope to make transportation more efficient and cleaner.

Its AI software collects real-time data from road cameras and then sends instructions to manipulate traffic lights based on vehicle flows.

"ITC managed to prove mathematically that many traffic jams can be prevented, if you intervene early enough," said its co-founder and chief technology officer, Dvir Kenig, citing a 30 percent drop in traffic at the two junctions using its system.

The company says congestion is a global scourge, estimating that the average driver spends three days a year stuck in traffic, which also creates greenhouse gas emissions.

The problem is acute in Israel, where, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "transport infrastructure lags far behind" most member countries and "road congestion is among the worst in the OECD." "



Dvir Kenig, CEO and co-founder of the ITC company, Intelligent Traffic Control.

## **military innovations**

EcoMotion founder Meir Arnon told AFP that growing global interest in smart mobility has made Israel a player in the auto industry, even though it does not make any cars.

"Cars have changed," said the industrialist-turned-investor. "The cars were metal and the wheels and a radio. Today these things do not matter, they are all mass produced by the same companies for everyone.

"What sets automakers apart today is the driving experience... the ability of the vehicle to adapt to the driver," he said.

Systems developed by Israel's military and private defense industry, particularly surveillance, communication and sensor technology, have become critical to automakers, Arnon said.

With more than 600 startups in the field, "second only to Silicon Valley," Israel has become a "hub of mobility," Arnon said, noting that 35 global auto companies have operations in the country, including General Motors.



The EcoMotion Week trade show was held in May 2022 in the Israeli coastal city of Tel Aviv.

"The future of vehicles is outside of vehicles: in the cloud, in our phones, in cars to some extent, and all of these elements create an open platform," said Gil Golan, head of GM's local technical center.

"This open platform is a place for innovation and creativity, which the Israelis are good at."

### **engineers needed**

Also at EcoMotion was Rider Dome, whose cameras mounted on the front and rear of motorcycles use artificial intelligence to warn drivers of nearby dangers.

"A driving assistant that has become standard in almost every car doesn't exist in motorcycles," said CEO Yoav Elgrichi. "That's why we decided to found Rider Dome."



EcoMotion is a growing smart mobility community of more than 600 startups and 13,000 people.

But some observers warn that Israel's tech sector, including smart mobility, could lose steam.

The Israel Innovation Authority says the tech sector, which accounts for half of the country's exports and one in 10 jobs, is "maturing" and the number of startups is declining.



Yoav Elgrichi, CEO and co-founder of Rider Dome.

Israel needs more engineers, argues Lisya Bahar Manoah, a partner at Catalyst Investments, if it is to keep pace with the growing mobility sector that is expected to “double in size” globally in the coming years.

“The way we can overcome the problem is that, as in Europe, especially Germany and Austria, they are creating vocational schools,” he said.

“Israel needs to stop and think now of a way to create more engineers to support the start-up system. We need to adjust our education system accordingly.”

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