



“WALKING, ITS NOT ROCKET SCIENCE”

In 1920 just 40 years after Edison invented the incandescent bulb, a Frenchman patented an in road lighted crosswalk.

So in 2006, Christchurch is trialling it's first in road pedestrian warning system some 86 years later. So why do we not see these systems on every crosswalk.

Of course in 1920 the benefits of the electric light bulb were still marvelled around the developing world. Bulbs of the day were fragile enough as encased in glass and placed metres above the road, safe as to say placing them in the roadway at the mercy of the traffic was not considered a practical concept.

However it would not take much thought from drivers among you to be clear on the benefits of flashing lights across the road to influence your approach to such obstacles.

Nobody wants to kill or injure a pedestrian it is as much a life changing experience for the victim as it is for the driver.

An aging population and increasing pressures on urban streets makes split second decisions the difference between life and death.

Technology now is on our side, and increasingly money is being shifted from reducing the consequences of an accident to preventing it all together, moving away from the ambulance at the end of the cliff approach if you will.

For most safety measures to come into effect such as road side barriers, airbags etc, you have to have an accident in the first place.

Unfortunately the homosapien, pedestrian as yet does not come with such safety devices. Genetic engineering may afford some features in the future but for now our best form of defence is prevention.

Recently installed as a trail in Hereford St by Harding Traffic is one of the worlds leading in road lighting technologies. This technology utilises inductive transfer or IPT to power LED road studs. This technology addresses the issues first identified in 1920. With no physical wire connection and an installation technique which allows the marker to float above the road surface, the problems of the old incandescent bulb are behind us.

Hereford St represents the 288th installation for this New Zealand invented and manufactured technology, Smartstud™. Now installed over 300km of road with over 20,000 light heads, and installed in 19 countries around the globe. 187 of these installations are lighted crosswalks, which over 90% of these are in the US market. Our company is installing on average 12 lighted crosswalks a month across the United States.

A recognition of the on-cost benefits is important if we are to see more. Now some 50 studies on the benefits of in road lighting have been published across the US alone.

But of course the frustration might be for you that despite the obvious benefits and the many studies now published from Academic institutions around the world, New Zealand is only now trialling the concept. Are we different to the rest of the world?

If I asked drivers who drive in the rain at night about how difficult it is to see Pedestrian crossing. The reply received is always the same, in every town, city and country in the world.

Lets hope that Christchurch will lead the country in allocating more funds toward such projects. Christchurch is the first council to recognise the benefits of lighting uncontrolled crosswalks and the first in New Zealand to install such a system.

As an aside, the Lyttleton Tunnel also graces one of the worlds first in tunnel systems, this from a company, Harding Traffic that now leads the world in tunnel lighting systems with some 75 tunnels installed across Europe in the last 2 years.

After all "ITS NOT ROCKET SCIENCE"