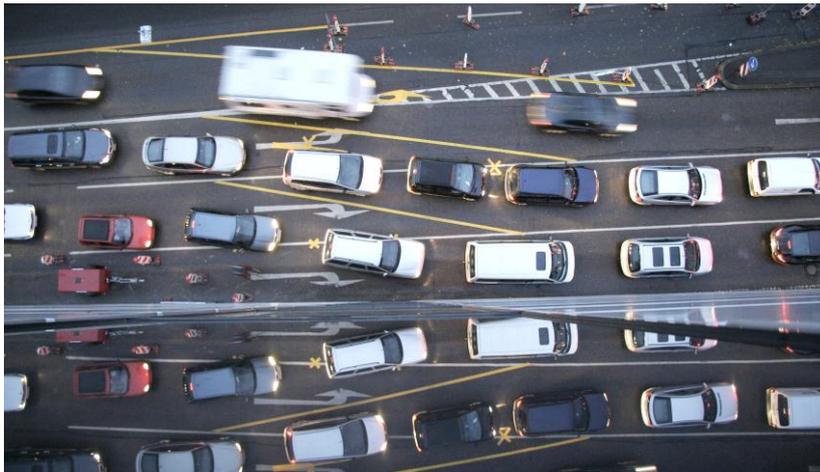


Many Transport Means Lead to the Destination

KIT Study Confirms Slow Change of Everyday Mobility in Germany – Less Young Car Drivers – More Users Change among Transport Means as Needed



Mobility still is determined by car traffic. But the number of persons using alternatives, such as the bus, train, and bicycle, is increasing. (Photo: photocase.de)

Going for a quick shopping with the car? Or using the tram without having to look for a parking space in the city? A nice ride with the bicycle? Every means of transportation has its advantages and drawbacks in everyday life. To analyze the behavior of traffic participants in detail, KIT researchers annually ask about 1500 persons from all over Germany for the distances they covered. This German Mobility Panel is carried out on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Transport. With the help of these surveys, scientists analyze major trends that will then be considered in the plans made by the state, municipalities, and industry.

“Our long-term study shows that the generation below the age of 30 today uses the car less often than in the past,” says Dr.-Ing. Martin Kagerbauer from the Institute of Transport Studies of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). “Persons aged older than 60 continue to use their car extensively even at calmer, older age.” In cities with a good public transport system, young people use a mix of bicycle, bus, train, and car to cover their needs for transportation.” This generation appears to pass the examination for a driver’s license and to



*KIT Mobility Systems Center:
Solutions for tomorrow's mobility*

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buy a car later than in the past,” says Kagerbauer. “However, we did not ask them for their reasons being of ideological or economic nature.”

The changes of society due to the internet and increased life expectancy are also reflected by the data of the transport researchers. The distance covered by every citizen per day is stagnating. “This may be due to more consumption being covered online and to the fraction of retirees increasing in an aging society, as a result of which commuter traffic decreases,” explains Kagerbauer.

Based on the data of the German Mobility Panel and other surveys, politics can estimate how the transport system has to be designed to meet the needs of the people today and tomorrow. After all, transport infrastructure costs a lot of money and it always has to be decided which investments are reasonable and which not. Industry also responds to trends in mobility by new customized products. “Car sharing and bicycles or electric bikes for rent are offers addressing the flexible, urban inhabitant, who often needs little motorization to cover the distances required,” explains Kagerbauer.

“Mobility as an integrated system is enormously complex,” emphasizes Kagerbauer. “This is why we need long-term studies to reliably identify trends.” Since 1994, KIT scientists have been evaluating the 1500 questionnaires which are completed annually under the German Mobility Panel on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Transport. For a duration of one week in autumn every year, the interviewees document the paths covered by them by car, bicycle, bus, train, or by foot. In addition to the questionnaire, the interviewees also document the refueling of their cars in spring. This allows for a detailed analysis of their driving behavior. As the participants in the survey provide information for up to three years in succession, the data allow reliable statements to be made about trends and tendencies.

More information on the Mobility Panel: www.mobilitaetspanel.de

The Mobility Systems Center pools KIT activities relating to vehicle technology. Presently, 40 institutes with about 800 employees are working on methodological and technical fundamentals for tomorrow’s vehicles. It is their objective to develop energy-efficient, low-emission, and safe vehicles and mobility concepts. The researchers also consider the complex interactions of vehicle, driver, traffic, and society.

Under the heading of “Future Mobility”, KIT will present its scientific activities on its new “Campus East – Mobility and Innovation” during an Open Day on July 02. More information can be found at: www.pkm.kit.edu/3072.php

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation according to the legislation of the state of Baden-Württemberg. It fulfills the mission of a university and the mission of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. KIT focuses on a knowledge triangle that links the tasks of research, teaching, and innovation.

This press release is available on the internet at www.kit.edu.