

Beaut of a back-seat driver

Vincent Blake

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GEORGE GERMANOS got a speeding fine in the post.

It confused him, as he had set the cruise control. He checked the route and found there was a change in speed zones he had not noticed.

But the damage had been done.

He told friends and family about it and found it was an issue with them too.

The systems architect decided to do something about it.

Germanos set out to see if there was a database for speed zones he could use to create a GPS-based system.

He asked the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority, and it said it didn't have such a thing.

He tried NRMA, the state's road service organisation.

It didn't have one either.

After-market and in-car GPS navigation systems could be programmed to set speed limits for various classes of road, but there was too much inconsistency in the posting of speed limits for that to be effective.

Germanos saw a problem and he could fix. He quit his job and started working on what would become known as Speed Alert.

Creating the database was a lot of work, involving driving all the roads in the Sydney metropolitan area and logging the position of each speed change with a GPS unit.

His team included school zones and programmed the software to work out what the time was, as they are only in force at particular times.

Sydney drivers can get the software now for \$119 and Melbourne drivers will have it by December. Various packages, including Bluetooth GPS receivers, PDAs with GPS and smartphones will be available.

www.speedalert.com.au

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