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A KIND OF HUSH

## Researchers leave vroom for electric cars' sound debate

Most appropriate noise alerts for hybrid vehicles being considered

**Coventry, England (Reuters)** Should an electric car go vroom vroom like its internal combustion ancestors, make a noise like a space ship in Star Wars or emit the tranquil sounds of birdsong?

Researchers in England considering noises to alert pedestrians and cyclists to the presence of oncoming electric cars say legislation to force silent electric vehicles (EVs) to make a warning noise is inevitable.

"It's definitely coming," Warwick University Professor Paul Jennings told Reuters. "It's being prompted by the fact that there are now real statistics."

Figures compiled by the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show pedestrians and cyclists are twice as likely to be hit

by a hybrid electric vehicle running silently at low speed than by a car with a normal engine. The research team at Warwick University's Manufacturing Group (WMG) who have spent years helping the car industry make vehicles quieter now find their work in reverse gear.

"We want... to investigate sounds that are going to be safe, have minimal effect on the environment and are going to give some creativity to the manufacturers," Jennings said.

The team has adapted an electric delivery truck on campus to make different noises on different days. They then canvass opinion from students.

