PUTTING THE BRAKES ON TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS IN CHINA

China’s Jiangsu province tries out various strategies to raise public awareness and curb traffic offences.

When it comes to public awareness and behavior change campaigns, it’s always interesting to see how organizations effect change. Last year, we covered a Russian nonprofit which uses hologram projections of disabled drivers to ward off those tempted to take disabled parking spaces. Road deaths in China have long been a cause for concern with the WHO estimating that 250,000 people were killed on China’s roads, amongst them over 10,000 children. This figure is disputed by Chinese authorities, who put the figure around 60,000, but it is clearly a serious problem. The latest rising death toll comes from non-motorized vehicles, in particular e-bikes. Some estimates put the number of e-bikes in use in China at over 200 million. The speed at which these vehicles travel, coupled with the fact that no driving test is required to ride one, is problematic. Indeed, an officer with the Traffic Police Headquarters of the Jiangsu Provincial Public Security Department said that non-motorized vehicles running red lights caused 47 deaths in the first half of this year.

In response to this alarming figure, Chinese traffic police have been trialling two interesting strategies to improve road safety, focussing in on non-motorized vehicles. The more traditional of the strategies was an online radio broadcast earlier on this month which detailed the various aspects of their law enforcement process. 210,000 people tuned in for the one hour broadcast.

The second, earlier this year, was a novel approach that – to some extent – gamified traffic regulation. Officials handed out 15,000, ‘50 percent discount coupons’ to people breaking traffic rules incurring a fine. The coupons had the highway code printed on the reverse. Rule-breakers were asked ‘on the spot’ questions about the highway code which, if answered correctly, resulted in the...
fine being lifted altogether. 'Contestants' were even allowed to phone a friend. Not quite a "get out jail free card" but a good incentive for learning the highway code.

How else can gamification be used to focus public attention on important government safety messages?

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Website: http://english.cri.cn/12394/2016/07/08/4161s933483.htm