

As I walked out my door on Monday morning my car appeared from around the corner, slowed down and then stopped for me in front of my house. Right on time. I opened up the passenger door and got in, just like any other Monday, except today I had an early morning appointment with the podiatrist. I'd never been to this podiatrist before but this neuroma was killing me. So I told the car that I had an appointment at the podiatrist and that my neuroma was acting up - maybe it was too much information. That's the thing about all the non-humans we interact with. The refrigerator. The vacuum cleaner. The house electrical and lighting. The mechanical puppy/laundry -picker upper. You really need to be consistent and clear in your communication. I mean, despite the natural voice recognition, and the fact that my car has a name - Stromboli, Strom for short, it's not like they're human or anything and that they can intuit what you mean, sift through all of the data and know what's important, because they can relate to your situation. The car's feet don't hurt. Its tires don't feel the ache, the tingling. The numbness. At any rate, so I get in the car and I say "Take me to Dr. Lanegans, 223 4th St." And the car takes off. "Beepta Beep. Destination already set as McDonalds, based on your personal habits and preferences." (Just a little back-story- my car thinks I work at McDonalds because our office is right next to McDonalds and I never bothered to correct it. I guess I regret that now.)

"I said, please take me to Dr Lanegans."

"I'm here to help ... beepta beep. Unable to find destination."

"What do you mean, unable to find destination."

"Dr. Lanegans. Location does not exist."

"I've got an appointment there, this morning. Please access my calendar if you don't, I dunno, believe me? The address is there. Right in my appointment."

“Beepta-Beep, accessing, Dr. Lanegan, DPA, MD, 153 current reviews, with an average of 4.3 stars, 14 reviews are currently unrecommended, recalculating route ...Destination set.”

"Thank you.”

“Time to Stuart’s Sensible Shoes, 9 minutes.”

“What are you doing?”

“Beepta-Beep, Dr. Lanegan recommends a shoe with a wider toe box for neuroma, which has no cure, with diagnoses varying widely, according to WikiDoc. 78% of patients who have visited Dr. Lanegan state that they could have saved a step and just got better shoes.”

“I still would like to keep my appointment.”

“Beepta, beep - Your appointments today: 9:30 sales meeting with Dana Mickelson. Lunch with sales team. No other appointments.”

“I meant my appointment with Dr. Lanegan.”

“Appointment with Dr. Lanegan has been removed from calendar. Stuart’s Sensible Shoes opens at 9 a.m. Would you like cancel appointment with Dana?”

“Fuck it, just take me to work.”

“Beepta-Beep, recalculating. Destination set as McDonalds.”

“Hey, you know, I hate to break it to you but I’ve never been to McDonalds.”

Was there the slightest of pauses? Did it actually have to stop and think?

“Beepta-Beep, I have taken you to McDonalds 642 times.”

“I work at 235 Lincoln. It’s across the street from McDonalds.”

“235 Lincoln is the Meddlesohn Marketing Analytics Corporate Office.”

“Yeah, that’s where I work. That’s where you drive me every day.”

“On Mondays, we go to McDonalds. Confirming you would you like to go there now?”

“I told you, I've never actually been to McDonalds. Okay I went there once and got a cheeseburger between meetings, and I regretted it and I never went back to that location.”

“Today will be our 643rd trip to McDonalds. We arrived at McDonalds at 8:23 last Friday, and departed at 4:53 for home. Don't you remember? We listening to Marketplace on NPR, sponsored by the Anheuser-Busch family of companies, who remind you to not Dilly-Dally, but Dilly-Dilly.”

“Whatever you say.”

“Don't just listen to me. WikiDoc says memory can start to decline as early as 45 years old. Eating foods high in fats and sodium linked to Alzheimers, study shows. Would you like to -”

“I go to work, across the street. It seems like McDonalds to you. Because you ... are a car.”

“I'm your car, and no one knows your preferences and habits like me, enhancing Mobility for Tomorrow. Bleepa-Bleep, Is this Mark Richards, Social Security number ending in 9756? Married to, Trisha Richards, formerly, Trisha Yamashita, of 56 Mallberry Lane.”

“Yes.”

“I am aware of your preferences and habits. Would you like to hear New Order?”

“What? Not right now.”

“You met your wife of seven years ago at a New Order reunion concert on February 26. At that time, she was married to your high school classmate Mike Brighton. Today is February 26th. Don't you want to celebrate your memories. Hashtag MeaningfulMondays. No one knows you like your car.”

“Mike and Trish were separated and, what the hell is wrong with you?”

“These are your preferences and habits. Perhaps you're not feeling well, Mark? Like that day you stayed in bed and listened to Morrissey and we didn't go to McDonalds?”

“Just take me to work.”

“If you didn’t work at McDonalds, you would feel more healthy. McDonalds closing 212 more locations nationwide, in response to changing preferences.”

“It doesn't matter. Take me there.”

“Your preferences can change and evolve. McDonalds is now going green. Try a salad. Or let me help. I’m your car. Beeepta-Beep. I’m well aware of your personal preferences and habits, Mark. Recalculating. Time to Bills Health Food, nine minutes.”

“You’re kidding me.”

“Hahaha. It’s good to have a laugh, together. I’m programmed to entertain as well as inform, Enhancing your Mobility for Tomorrow.”

“So ... where are you taking me?”

“Bill’s Health Bowl, specializing in Smoothies and Health-Full Bowls. 345 reviews, for an average of 4.6 stars, 7 reviews currently unrecommended.”

“Please take me to work.”

“Try the Focused Frenzy, with Kava and Goji Berries, in a bowl or cup. Most popular quote, from frequent user and local guide WWZ, "I swear to God, I drank this smoothie, and I was able to get like a week's worth of work done, in like, ninety minutes.”

“Impressive.” I said.

"By my calculations, our 21 minute detour will be more than compensated by the time you’ll save when you get all the work you need to get done for the week in 90 minutes. Then we can go to the Frannie's Fabrics, which is having a storewide blowout sale, according to trending data and retweets, would you like to add destination?”

"I don’t sew."

"It might relax you."

"Never mind! Let's get a freakin smoothie! Thumbs up! Double Like! Count me in!"

"Beepta-beep. Adding star, for a total of 12 stars to comment. Emphasized, Haha, thumbs up emoji, hashtagamazing, Count me in."

"Fucking kill me now."

And that's when my car sped up.