

The Open Source Car - Unconventional Wisdom and Sustainability

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Created 05/06/2006 - 3:01pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Monday 5th of June 2006 03:01:55 PM Filed under [Misc](#) [1]

Most people believe that the future will be powered by hydrogen, but that affordable fuel-cell vehicles are decades away. Hugo Spowers's engineering degree and MBA were sufficient to convince him that the barriers were neither technical nor financial but human. He formed a consortium with BOC, Morgan Cars, QinetiQ and Cranfield and Oxford universities, with funding from the DTI, to design a fuel-cell car with a difference. Spowers' company is called OSCar and the project is called LIFECar - Lightweight Fuel Efficient Car.

Last week, he and I began a discussion by considering transport on land, air and sea. Aviation is the most problematic: carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides are more damaging at altitude, the fuel is tax-free and consumption is very high. Yet road transport still accounts for 25 per cent of our fossil fuel use.

Where do we start?

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