

Stop with the signs or we're on a one-way street to hell



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While driving down any major road, motorists are frequently assaulted by the bright colours and catchy slogans of advertising. Often these signs are promoting a business, touting a political candidate, or informing motorists that an important garage sale is taking place on the next street. Then there are signs meant to educate and promote a message. For example, there's my all-time favorite: the one that reminds me to "Focus and Drive: Arrive Alive." Hey, maybe I could focus and drive if I wasn't so busy squinting my eyes from 10 km back to try and read a sign that has no bearing on the actual situation on the road. It's commonly impressed upon the public that drivers get into accidents because of distractions — talking on cell phones, eating, smoking, fiddling with the radio while driving and more. But you know what else is distracting? Unnecessary road signs.

In the summer there's always more signage along the road than usual. Everywhere I turn, there's an increase in construction zones, and of course with that comes an increase in billboards, television, and radio ads urging the public not to "R.I.P. through construction zones." I'm not the type of driver who "rips" anywhere, but it never takes too long for me to get enraged when I see those bright orange signs along the Yellowhead telling me to slow to 50 km/h because it's apparently a construction zone. It makes it a lot worse when I slow down to a crawl and the only construction to be found is a guy on the side of the road eating a Timbit, if anyone at all. At this point I'm forced to ask myself, "What defines a construction zone?" I ask you, is it abandoned machinery, tarps flapping the breeze? Please.

This raises the question: why are those signs still there? We've already established that the roads are littered with enough unnecessary advertising; there's no need to add to it because construction companies are too lazy to cover their signs at the end of the workday. Not only are they a distraction and an inconvenience, but they cause irritation and impatience. This isn't just a gripe; when drivers get irritated and impatient, they get reckless. When faced with the construction situation described above, there are two options. The first: continue going 50 for absolutely no reason and piss off your neighbouring motorists. The second: break the law. Which is the better option — possible road rage or disregarding signage that shouldn't be there in the first place? And which do you think a reckless driver is going to pick?

I know, I know, drivers are warned that speed fines double in construction zones, but in practice I don't know anyone who's ever actually received this elusive fine. And then there are the threats from the Edmonton Police Force that there was a "Big Ticket Event" going on a couple of months ago. I'm not a supporter of speeding, but it's my strong suspicion that there was no Big Ticket Event; rather, there was just a Normal Ticket Event and they were trying to slow people down with empty threats, and distract them in the meantime.

Don't get me wrong, I would gladly decrease my speed if I was actually driving through a construction zone. I realize that workers are killed in construction zones because cars go too fast. But maybe drivers wouldn't be tempted to speed if the construction companies were more diligent in covering up the signs when they aren't needed. So the message for construction companies: take down the pointless signs. Then there's no reason to run the gamut of red lights and signs, making for fewer distractions, fewer accidents, and lower speeds when there actually is a reason for drivers to slow down.



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Events Calendar	FOOD, PRIZES AND GIVE-A-WAYS		
August 31, September 1	10am - 4pm	Rutherford Library <i>West Atrium Entrance</i>	Block Party Join us for cool music & hot popcorn
September 2 - 4, 2009	9am - 3pm	Scott Library <i>2nd Floor, WC Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre</i>	Info Rx Get your dose of information and we'll provide the sugar to help the medicine go down
September 2 & 3, 2009	11am - 1pm	Coutts Library <i>1st Floor, Education South East Wing</i>	Pirates of the Curriculum & Open House Two days of drop-in orientations, activities and refreshments.
September 3, 2009	noon - 5pm	Cameron Library <i>1st Floor</i>	DocDay Documentaries and popcorn all day, featuring 4pm screening of <i>RIP! A Remix Manifesto</i>
September 3, 2009	12pm - 2pm	Bibliothèque Saint-Jean <i>Pavillion McMahon Campus Saint-Jean</i>	La Semaine de la rentrée Drop in and get to know your librarians and share our <i>bienvenue</i> cake
September 3, 2009	1pm - 4pm	Winspear Library <i>1st Floor, Business Building</i>	Meltdown 2009 Appropriate some frozen assests – stop by for free <i>Sno Cones</i>
September 8, 2009	1pm - 2pm	Weir Library <i>2nd Floor, Law Centre</i>	The CANDY Bar You've been called to the Candy Bar. Stop by for great Candy selections served by our friendly "bar-tenders"

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