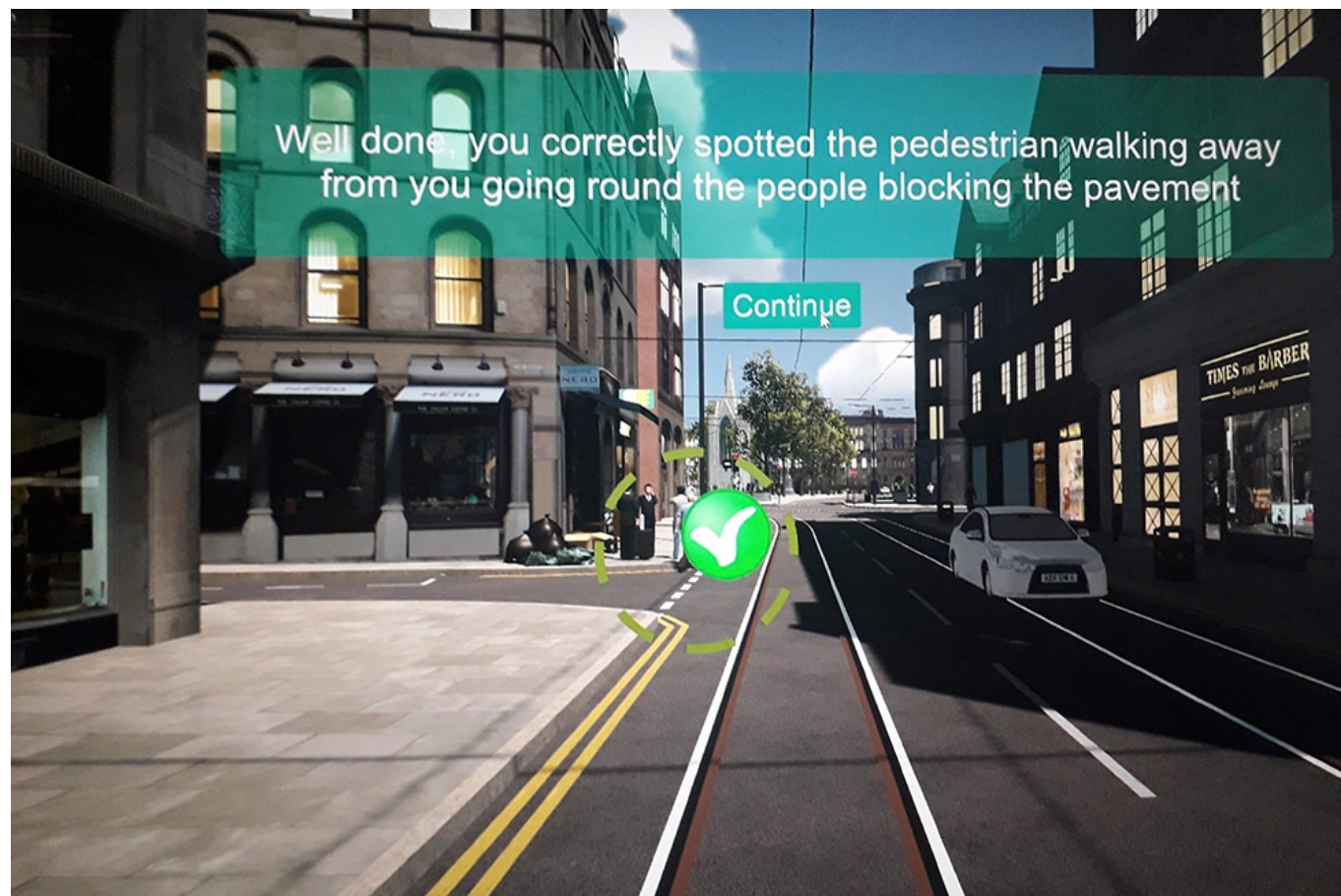# Sector set to benefit from AI research

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Light rail operators across the UK are being offered the chance to benefit from the latest artificial intelligence and virtual reality research funded by the Light Rail Safety and Standards Board (LRSSB).

Initial trials of a new 'hazard perception technology tool' have proved a huge success, and now the organisation responsible for further enhancing light rail safety is rolling out the software to the wider sector.

Similar to that used by the DVLA for driving licence testing, the software is specifically designed to meet the needs of the light rail operators. It can be run on a mid-range PC (either laptop or desktop) and is now available from the LRSSB at no cost to operators.

Carl Williams, the organisation's Chief Executive, explained: "The project and software continues to evolve, but it's now ready to be adopted across the sector, and we hope it will help set new standards in the training and recruitment of drivers."

The computer program is designed to immerse users in a digital virtual world where they can encounter a variety of both typical and unusual hazards in a recognisable working environment.

It's capable of recreating a wide range of scenarios that take into account road user behaviours and the activity of less aware pedestrians to familiarise the user with unusual situations that are too difficult or dangerous to reproduce in real life.

West Midlands Metro has already participated in trials of the technology, and Anthony Stanley, the tramway's Head of Quality, Health and Safety and the Environment, commented: "As well as providing a really useful tool for existing drivers to hone their hazard perception skills, this excellent software package is playing a significant role in our recruitment programme.

"When used in the early stage of the process, it can help us identify those with the most appropriate attitude towards risk and measure hazard perception abilities in an objective way."

The hazard perception tool was developed following workshops set up by the LRSSB and training simulation specialists Avansim and can benefit systems of all sizes, from the smallest heritage operations through to major city-based networks.

"The LRSSB has led on the project from the start, and now the whole light rail sector can benefit from this pioneering work," Mr Williams added.

For further details on how to obtain the hazard perception tool, please contact info@lrssb.co.uk.

Photo credit: LRSSB