Ford and Intel want to make cars that respond to your face and gestures

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Where do anthropology students go when they leave college? Apparently, instead of travelling the Andaman Islands investigating the social impact of cousin marriage like they're supposed to, they've been earning big bucks working for Ford and Intel on something called "Project Mobii." The name stands for Mobile Interior Imaging, and we're told that it involves a collaboration between "ethnographers, anthropologists and engineers" who are looking for ways to deliver a "more personalized and seamless interaction between driver and vehicle."

In practice, that could mean connected cameras that allow a car-owner to check up on their vehicle remotely, just to make sure it isn't being ransacked or joyridden. Alternatively, gestures might be able to activate the sunroof, or facial recognition software could be used to identify the proper owner, while also allowing various permissions and settings to be programmed for other family members. (A bit like an in-car Xbox Kinect, perhaps, albeit with even fewer

games.) Alas, Ford and Intel have made it clear that Mobii is all just research and exploration for now, with nothing concrete to show for it. But hey, that's anthropology for ya.

[Image credit: Tabercil]

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