

## Buckle off for speed

What happens when Toyota engineers give their creative DNA *free rein*? On of the more or less useful things showed at the annual Idea Expo of the Toyota Engineering Society is a *wearable* car.

This vehicle can be *wrapped* around the *waist* when not in use. To turn it into a motor vehicle, the user removes the belt and reverses its curvature, linking the wheeled ends with a cable.

The result is a highly rigid electric scooter with a seat and footrests. Needless to say, this wearable car requires no parking space and can be stored in a bag or locker at one's destination.



Bild: Toyota

## A healthy nation?

While it may seem that cell phones, computers and other technology *gadgets*

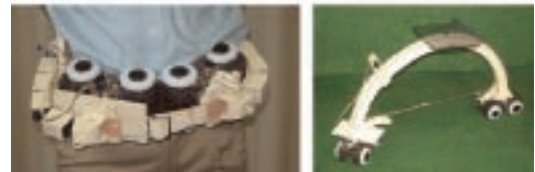
the *toothbrush* is the one invention they cannot live without. The 2003 Lemelson-MIT Invention Index, an annual survey of Americans' *perceptions* about inventing and innovating, found that technologically advanced items significantly *lag* in importance behind the toothbrush, which was developed in the 15th century.

lect the invention they could not live without from among five choices –toothbrush, automobile, personal computer, cell phone and microwave – more than a third of teens (34 percent) and almost half of adults (42 percent) cited the toothbrush. The automobile ranked a close second, getting votes from 31 percent of teens and 37 percent of adults.

When asked to se-



are Americans' most *coveted* items, teens and adults agree that



<i>account balance</i>	Kontostand
<i>boom gate</i>	Schranke
<i>buckle off, to</i>	abschnallen
<i>conduct, to</i>	durchführen
<i>covet, to</i>	begehren
<i>free rein</i>	freier Lauf
<i>fund</i>	Deckung, Geldmittel
<i>gadget</i>	Schnickschnack
<i>lag, to</i>	zurückbleiben, zögern
<i>parking slip</i>	Parkschein
<i>perception</i>	Wahrnehmung
<i>toothbrush</i>	Zahnbürste
<i>waist</i>	Taille
<i>wearable</i>	zu tragend, anziehend
<i>wrap, to</i>	wickeln

## Dial P for parking - no coins required

The Australian research institution CSIRO has developed a new way of paying for parking which has the potential to do away with parking meters, *boom gates* and lost *parking slips* for ever.

To provide the service, car parks don't need to have any physical infrastructure other than a big sign that tells people what number to call.

Customers register their mobile phone number and vehicle details online. They

can then prepay their parking fees by credit card and check their *account balance*,

parking history and change their vehicle details, anytime online. To pay for



Bild: CSIRO

parking, customers simply call the number displayed at the car park to start the virtual parking meter when they arrive, and call again to stop it when they leave.

SMS messages to the customer are used to confirm fee payments and to warn if an account has insufficient

*fun*s. Parking inspectors can view a list of vehicles authorised to park in the area using a WAP phone or handheld computer.

CSIRO and the Australian Capital Territory Department of Urban Services are currently *conducting* a trial system.