

Car security systems: nighttime nuisance or necessity?

By Suzanne Robinson
Emerald Contributor

It's 3 a.m. You're peeling your eyes open from a sleepy stupor, cursing the police for using their sirens at this hour. But this startling sound is not the police. It's another aggravating car alarm.

Sound familiar? Maybe, maybe not.

Only a few students, when questioned, seemed genuinely irked by car alarms. Junior Melissa Armstrong said she

Resounding car alarms have captured the attention of the Eugene Police Department as well.

"People usually call in about alarms only after the alarm has been sounding for 30 to 40 minutes," said Beverly Collins, EPD community service specialist in crime prevention. "They call because they're irritated by the noise."

This poses a problem for the police, Collins said. After responding to these complaints, police are often left not only

since I got my car, and I've never had anything stolen. My neighbor had his stereo system stolen three days after it was installed. He has an alarm now. It's annoying sometimes, but I think it protects my car."

Safety is what motivates people to invest in a car alarm,

said David Bowden, part-time sales representative at an auto supply store.

Alarm prices range from about \$33 for a basic alarm system to \$155 for an alarm with a siren, pager and glass detector. Motion detectors and impact detectors may also be pur-

chased separately. Bowden said he doesn't know of any features designed to prevent false alarms.

"It's basically the alarms with shock sensors that cause the problems," Bowden said. "If the sensors are set on high, the alarm is easily activated."

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doesn't find accidentally activated alarms to be much of a nuisance.

"I have a friend who had one," Armstrong said. "It often went off in the middle of the night. People left nasty notes on his car." But because personal belongings are stolen so often on campus, she said, she believes that the alarms are worth the complaints.

Jean Takaesu, junior, said she also thinks alarms prevent crime.

"Any noise attracts attention. I pay attention when I hear an alarm go off," she said.

without possible suspects, but also without the car owners themselves. Collins recommended that alarm owners let their neighbors know what to do if the alarm activates.

Although car alarms are considered fashionable by some, others consider them a necessity.

"It's partly trend and partly protection," said student Ali Jandro. "If you have a \$2,000 sound system in your car, it's worth the \$100 investment in an alarm."

Sophomore Sean Martindell agreed: "I've had my alarm



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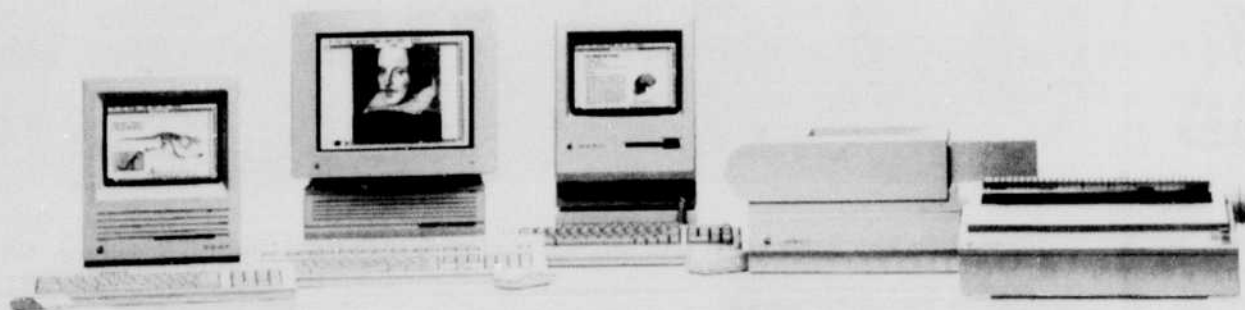
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