

- [Try Times Reader today](#)
- [Log In](#)
- [Register Now](#)
- [TimesPeople](#)

- [Home Page](#)
- [Today's Paper](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Most Popular](#)
- [Times Topics](#)

Search All NYTimes.com

The New York Times

Wednesday, November 24, 2010

[Automobiles](#)

- [World](#)
- [U.S.](#)
- [N.Y. / Region](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Arts](#)
- [Style](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Autos](#)

- [New Cars](#)
- [Used Cars](#)
- [Collectible Cars](#)
- [Sell Your Car](#)

- [All Classifieds](#)

**RETHINK
QUALITY**

**This food is stealing all
the buzz in NY...**
Aug 31st from QualityHunters



Jean Tang
Jean Tang
Co-author of *The Big
New York Sandwich Book*
[READ MORE ▶](#)



Wheels

The Nuts and Bolts of Whatever Moves You



January 19, 2010, 11:05 am

For Electric Bikes, Three Makes a Trend

By [DANIEL MCDERMON](#)

It's a cliché in certain corners of the news media that a reporter needs to note three examples to report a story about a trend. The rule of three is often cited more in derision than admiration, but it seems to hold a certain amount of water. (For example, [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). See how that works?)

So now it's official: electric bicycles are a trend. Or, to be more exact, articles about electric bicycles are. The Times and The Wall Street Journal have both featured articles on the subject this week. Brad Stone, writing in the Ping column for the Sunday Business section of The Times, noted that Sanyo, an electronics giant, is selling a [\\$2,300 bike with an electric motor](#), the Enloop, suggesting that more companies may follow suit. The Journal's Shai Oster, in a front-page article on Tuesday, cites [growing turmoil over electric bikes in China](#).

Mr. Stone focused on a shift in the United States toward the use of bicycles as daily transportation, which, when combined with technical developments in batteries with extended range, has prompted several manufacturers to offer electric bicycles for sale. The Journal's article focuses on the unforeseen consequences in China, where the increasing use of e-bikes has led to a perceived increase in accidents. Bikes with electric motors attached are often capable of speeds up to 20 miles an hour, faster than many traditional cyclists ride.

Meanwhile, one magazine is sponsoring a contest to find the [best home-built electric bike](#), while [The Irish Times](#) also covered the Chinese market angle, and numerous blogs picked up on [Sanyo's](#)

[presentation at the Consumer Electronics Show](#) in Las Vegas. The rule of three is, it seems, well met.

These articles come a couple of months after an item published in City Room by J. David Goodman, looking at the [unclear legal status](#) of e-bikes in New York. Before that, Wheels reported on a [short test ride](#) of one such bike, the Ultra Motors A2B Metro. So it seems that the media really have this particular trend covered. Which means just one thing: watch out for more.

- [E-mail This](#)
- [Print](#)
- Share

 Twitter

- Recommend

[Eneloop](#), [Sanyo](#)

- Previous Post [BMW 3 Series Latest to Get New Turbo Engine](#)**7 Readers' Comments**
- Next Post [Dealer Sues Woman to Cancel 'Good Deal'](#)

[Post a Comment »](#)

- [All Comments](#)
- [Highlights](#)
- [Readers' Recommendations](#)
- [Replies](#)

- Oldest
- [Newest](#)

[1.](#)
Don
Oregon

January 19th, 2010

6:26 pm

The plural of "anecdote" is not "data".

[Recommend](#) Recommended by 2 Readers

[Report as Inappropriate](#)

[2.](#)

SG

Eagle WI USA

January 19th, 2010

6:27 pm

I've spent time working in Shenzhen, south China's busy industrial city, and I can attest to the ubiquity of electric bicycles - in the last two years, they have nearly completely replaced the noisier motorcycles and mopeds. Even their postal service uses them. A charging infrastructure is apparently not needed for the lighter power requirements of these bicycles, they are just plugged into normal outlets.

The speed and silence of these bicycles requires some adapting to - as a pedestrian I have nearly been hit stepping off a curb on several occasions, and have really had to talk myself back into "second grade - look both ways" vigilance where my ears have been unable to assist. It's a real consideration, especially in China, where (to put it mildly) drivers have more expectations that others will get out of their way.

Other countries adopting these may want to consider adding a "putt-putt" sound to them over a given speed.

I'd still consider owning one to see how it fits my commuting needs. Local Chinese ones can be had for ~ \$300 USD equivalent but then you are on your own for exporting, charging (typically 220V) and maintenance. Price varies also by battery capacity.

[Recommend](#) Recommended by 1 Readers

[Report as Inappropriate](#)

[3.](#)

WhatThe...

SW, Va.

January 19th, 2010

6:49 pm

Not to date myself, but re: "The speed and silence of these bicycles requires some adapting to - as a pedestrian I have nearly been hit stepping off a curb on several occasions", they should revisit a 1950's fad of clipping a baseball or poker card to the wheel frame and let the wheel spokes make the card flapping/rattle sound. Or some other clever constant noise-making contraption whenever

the bike is in motion.

[Recommend](#) Recommended by 1 Readers

[Report as Inappropriate](#)

4.

Pedego Electric Bikes

Irvine, CA

January 19th, 2010

7:36 pm

Electric bikes are indeed becoming popular. With over 20 million ebikes sold in 2009 worldwide, it is obvious that they are not a new item. Unfortunately, there were only around 30,000 electric bikes sold in the US last year. Why? Mostly lack of consumer awareness that they even exist. Thanks for helping expose them!

As a manufacturer of electric bikes, I can tell you that the current buyers of them are the baby boomer crowd who remember how much fun it was riding a bike as a kid but now just do not want to fight the hills and headwinds. They are not buying them for transportation (like Asia or Europe), not buying them for fitness and not buying them to be eco friendly. They buy them because they are having fun! After riding them for a little while, do they go do errands to the store, etc. on them? Absolutely because it is more fun going to the store on a bike. Are they getting exercise? You bet since almost everyone still pedals while riding. Are they being eco friendly? A lot more than driving their cars to the bank, post office, etc.

Electric bikes will continue to become more popular in the US because 75 million baby boomers are going to lead the way having fun being a kid again. Best Buy sees this happening and they are rolling out electric bicycles in their stores nationwide. When gas hits \$5 per gallon (not if but when), watch out for the electric bike market!

[Recommend](#) Recommended by 4 Readers

[Report as Inappropriate](#)

5.

[Russ Finley](#)

Seattle

January 20th, 2010

5:06 pm

Funny how trends happen. The Eneloop has all the same features of the electric bikes sold in a shop close to where I live, but costs twice as much. Why has it garnered so much attention?

When you look at the pictures in the China articles you realize that most of them are of electric scooters or mopeds, not bicycles with electric motors attached to them. A loophole lets you call anything with two wheels, an electric motor and worthless pedals attached, an ebike.

And the death rates they cite are tiny when you realize that there are over a billion people in

China.

There are no international standards for electric bikes. You can build your own that will outperform the Sanyo version for half the price:

<http://biodiversivist.blogspot.com...>

[Recommend](#) Recommended by 0 Readers

[Report as Inappropriate](#)

6.

[NYCeWheels](#)

NYC

January 20th, 2010

10:39 pm

I think it helps to have big players like Sanyo in the mix to help us get the word out. Sanyo has an almost unlimited marketing budget which is needed to let the general public know about electric bikes. 99% of Americans do not even know those exist.

Yes the bike could be a bit cheaper but the extra margin pays for PR, marketing and consumer education. Struggling electric bike manufacturers are not able to do that and therefore usually fail.

[Recommend](#) Recommended by 0 Readers

[Report as Inappropriate](#)

7.

Alexa

DC

January 22nd, 2010

1:20 am

<http://trueslant.com...>

Another interesting article about e-bikes in China

[Recommend](#) Recommended by 0 Readers

[Report as Inappropriate](#)

Post a Comment [Suggest a Correction to This Blog Post »](#)

You are currently logged in as .

Display Name ([What's this](#))

Location (example: New York, NY)

Send me a link to my published comment at e10029@yahoo.com ([Change e-mail](#))

Characters Remaining: 5000

Comment (Required)

Submit

Comments are moderated and generally will be posted if they are on-topic and not abusive. For more information, please see our [Comments FAQ](#).

Search This Blog

- Previous Post [BMW 3 Series Latest to Get New Turbo Engine](#)
- Next Post [Dealer Sues Woman to Cancel 'Good Deal'](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [RSS](#)

Follow This Blog

[Slide Show: 2010 Los Angeles Auto Show](#)



Highlights from the media preview of the auto show in Los Angeles.

Recent Posts From Los Angeles

- [2010 Los Angeles Auto Show: The Bubbly Is Back](#)
- [Kia POP Concept: A Case Study in What-If](#)
- [Mazda Shinari Concept: Best in Flow](#)
- [2011 Saab 9-4X: The Cadillac of Saabs](#)
- [2011 Chrysler 200: A New and Improved Sebring](#)
- [Audi Hedges on New Models](#)
- [Lotus to Work on Next-Generation IndyCar for 2012](#)
- [2011 Nissan Quest: Now Made in Japan](#)
- [2011 Audi A7: Audi Joins the 4-Door Coupe Parade](#)
- [2011 Mitsubishi i-MiEV Is Coming to North America](#)
- [2010 Los Angeles Auto Show: a Dearth of Diesels](#)

- [2012 Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG: More Power, Less Guzzle](#)
- [Subaru Impreza Concept: A New Strategy](#)
- [2012 Fiat 500: The Italians Are Back](#)
- [2011 Coda EV: Easy on the Environment, If Not the Eyes](#)

[Advertise on NYTimes.com](#)

Recent Recalls

- [Nissan Recalls 501,000 Trucks in U.S. for Steering Problem](#)
- [Britax Child Safety Recalling 23,000 Car Seats](#)
- [Mercedes Recalls 85,000 Recent Cars for Steering Problem](#)

Recent Posts

November 23

[N.H.T.S.A. Opens Audit of Rental Car Repairs](#)

Federal safety regulators are investigating whether rental cars are being fixed promptly after they are recalled for safety problems.

November 23

[A Baby Incubator Made From Car Parts](#)

Design That Matters, a design consultant firm in Massachusetts, has developed a baby incubator made out of recycled car parts.

November 23

[Steven Rattner Dishes on the Chevrolet Volt](#)

In an interview, Steven L. Rattner, the car czar for the Obama administration, talks about his opinion of the high costs in developing the Chevrolet Volt, a topic he discusses in his recent book, "Overhaul."

November 23

[Saudi Prince Says He Owns 1% of G.M.](#)

General Motors management, prepare to hear often from one of your newest investors, Prince Walid bin Talal of Saudi Arabia.

November 22

[Spy Photo of 2012 VW Beetle, One of Oprah's Favorite Things](#)

A spy photo of the 2012 Volkswagen Beetle, which Oprah Winfrey gave away to each audience member on Tuesday.

Archive

Select Month 

Related Blog

Motorsports

[Formula One](#)



Brad Spurgeon, a longtime auto racing reporter based in Paris, discusses all things about Formula One: the competition, the gossip, the technology and the politics. Join him in the virtual paddock.

Tag List

- [GENERAL MOTORS](#) 271
- [G.M.](#) 219
- [AUTO SHOW](#) 181
- [FORD](#) 168
- [TOYOTA](#) 168
- [ELECTRIC CAR](#) 146
- [HYBRID](#) 145
- [FORMULA ONE](#) 134
- [CHRYSLER](#) 122
- [NASCAR](#) 114
- [DETROIT](#) 100
- [HONDA](#) 100
- [NEW YORK AUTO SHOW](#) 93
- [N.H.T.S.A.](#) 92
- [EV](#) 88

- [BMW](#) 87
- [VOLKSWAGEN](#) 81
- [CHEVROLET](#) 78
- [NISSAN](#) 78
- [VW](#) 70
- [FERRARI](#) 66
- [PORSCHE](#) 61
- [DETROIT AUTO SHOW](#) 54
- [MERCEDES-BENZ](#) 53
- [E.V.](#) 53
- [MOTORSPORTS](#) 53
- [RECALLS](#) 52
- [MOTORCYCLES](#) 51
- [AUDI](#) 50

- [LOS ANGELES AUTO SHOW](#) 46

[Follow The New York Times »](#)

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [RSS](#)

Wheels E-Mail



Sign up to receive a weekly dose of news, trends and all things automotive. [See Sample](#)

[Change E-mail Address](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)



[The new Harry Potter](#)

[ALSO IN MOVIES »](#)

- [Diane Keaton, hiding in plain sight](#)
- [The visual design of 'Megamind'](#)

nytimes.com

MOVIES

[Home](#)

- [World](#)
- [U.S.](#)
- [N.Y. / Region](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Arts](#)
- [Style](#)
- [Travel](#)

- [Jobs](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Autos](#)
- [Back to Top](#)

[Copyright 2010 The New York Times Company](#)

- [Privacy](#)
- [Terms of Service](#)
- [Search](#)
- [Corrections](#)
- [RSS](#)
- [First Look](#)
- [Help](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Work for Us](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Site Map](#)