In 2002 there were 29 million kilometres of road in the world. If the network of roads were evenly spread out in a grid system, the furthest you could ever be from a road (whilst being on land) would be 4.5 kilometres.

Cities are mazes of roads, often congested with traffic. In cities most people live, work and sleep within a few metres of a road. In contrast, in some remote places people live so far from roads that they have never seen a car.

Regionally the highest number of roads per square kilometre are found in Japan and the lowest in the Middle East, where most of the world’s petroleum is extracted and where some of the oldest cities are sited.

Territory size shows the proportion of all the roads in the world that are located there.

“Road transport is ... the dominant form of transport in SubSaharan Africa ... It carries 80 to 90 per cent of ... passenger and freight transport and provides the only form of access to most rural communities.” Ian Heggie, 1994