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German men told they can no longer stand and deliver

By **Kate Connolly**
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German men are being shamed into urinating while sitting down by a gadget which is saving millions of women from cleaning up in the bathroom after them.

The WC ghost, a £6 voice-alarm, reprimands men for standing at the lavatory pan. It is triggered when the seat is lifted. The battery-operated devices are attached to the seats and deliver stern warnings to those who attempt to stand and urinate (known as "Stehpinkeln").

"Hey, stand-peeing is not allowed here and will be punished with fines, so if you don't want any trouble, you'd best sit down," one of the devices orders in a voice impersonating the German leader, Chancellor Gerhard Schroder. Another has a voice similar to that of his predecessor, Helmut Kohl.

advertisement

The manufacturers of the WC ghost, Patentwert, say they are ready to direct their gadgets at the British market.

Their prototype English-speaking WC ghost says in an American drawl: "Don't you go wetting this floor cowboy, you never know who's behind you. So sit down, get your water pistol in the bowl where it belongs. Ha, ha, ha."

They also plan to copy the voices of Tony Blair and the Queen.

So far 1.8 million WC ghosts have been sold in German supermarkets.

But Klaus Schwerma, author of Standing Urinators: The Last Bastion of Masculinity?

doubts whether it will ever be possible to convert all men.

"Many insist on standing, even though it leads to much marital strife," he said.

In German, the phrase for someone who sits and urinates, a "Sitzpinkler", is equivalent to "wimp".

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