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EU Research Project bids to Ease Traffic Congestion

A major new EU research project into the future of motoring aims to examine how technology can help vehicles and roads to 'talk' to one another, paving the way for improved traffic flow.



A new four-technology research project - CVIS (Co-operative Vehicle-Infrastructure Systems) covers the design, development and testing of technologies to allow vehicles to communicate with each other and with the nearby roadside infrastructure over a wireless network.

In the future trucks, buses and cars could receive road sign information, weather alerts, warnings of approaching emergency vehicles or notification of accidents direct into the vehicle, with the aid of emerging technologies.

Another potential benefit of the technology would be to improve the movement of freight goods, so that when a truck carrying heavy goods is on the road, it could be possible to determine a prescheduled time to load or unload so that it causes the minimum amount of disruption to other traffic on the road.

Emergency vehicles could also benefit from a more integrated road communications system, where the traffic patterns could be analysed to determine the fastest route to the scene of an accident. Traffic managers could also begin using alerts to warn other drivers on the same route that an accident has happened.

The thinking behind the project is that cars or trucks on the road have many sources of information such as roadside signs, parking areas, traffic sensors or toll points that drivers can use to determine the route they take or the speed at which they travel. Equally, information about the vehicle could also be relayed to the road infrastructure for more efficient traffic planning.

Up until now, however, much of that information has been available in piecemeal form - there hasn't been a way to aggregate it and present it to drivers - or to take truck, bus and car information and relay it to traffic systems.

And at the kernel of the project is a Dublin-based company; Mapflow, a software house that specialises in geographic information systems (GIS) and location-based systems. The company has won a key role in the consortium working on the project, which will cost €41m with the EU contributing just over half of the total funding.

The wider aim of CVIS is to begin what it says will be "a revolution in mobility for travellers and goods", increasing road safety and efficiency and reducing the environmental impact of road transport in the process.

The project consortium is led by ERTICO, a public-private partnership that represents car

manufacturers and other stakeholders in intelligent transport systems. The entire project team comprises 61 different companies, including car and truck makers, technology suppliers, mobile networks and local authorities in several countries.

Mapflow is a partner of Navteq, which is leading one of the work streams in the project consortium. The Dublin firm's role will be to develop technologies that use positioning and mapping components to provide spatial data for next-generation traffic management and information systems.

by TNN Staff Writer
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