

STRATEGY ANALYTICS INSIGHT

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Behavior Modification Comes to Fleet Telematics from the Cloud

Snapshot

Motor vehicle crashes resulted in over 33,000 fatalities and 2.22M injuries in the U.S. in 2009 and 38% of all crashes are related to driver distraction, a problem experienced around the world. This has led to laws restricting the use of mobile phones in vehicles. The latest ruling came last week from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration: a ban on texting for truckers that includes a \$2,750 fine for violations.

Unfortunately, laws and public service messages are not getting the job done, as any law enforcement officer or fleet operator can attest. What is required to achieve real behavior modification is a form of coercion that appeals to the basest human instincts: fear and greed.

And since enacting laws and talking about highway fatalities resulting from distracted driving have failed to have the desired impact, it is technology's turn to take on this challenge and ZoomSafer, alone among the dozen or so distracted driving mitigation solution providers, has emerged with a cloud-based solution – Fleetsafer Vision - that can be applied anywhere in the world without any added hardware. The implications are significant for the fleet industry, for insurance telematics and even for existing passenger vehicle telematics systems.

Analysis

The debate over conquering distracted driving gained furious intensity in 2010, with two Distracted Driving Summits in Washington, DC, and frequent anti-DD pronouncements from US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. Out of these gatherings came multiple official and grassroots initiatives targeting distracted driving generally and mobile phone use in vehicles specifically. The culmination of the campaign was the launch of at least two large studies to assess the impact of mobile phone use on driving behavior.

Distracted driving is a global problem and different regions have taken different approaches with varying results. In Germany, the rigid enforcement of laws forbidding the touching of a mobile phone in a car have been more or less successful in achieving that goal, while in China, drivers routinely flout the prohibition against talking on a handheld phone while driving.

While fleet vehicle drivers are subject to many of the same laws as drivers of large volume passenger vehicles, they are also subject to other personal and professional temptations to talk on the phone. But the owners of the fleets have their own interests at stake in attempting to modify driver behavior, including everything from safer and more efficient operation of their vehicles to the management of insurance-related costs.

Fleet drivers and fleet owners have one thing in common. They are both motivated by greed. Combining this motivation with clever management of available data, ZoomSafer has found the key to successfully integrate driver monitoring with behavior modification without any added hardware.

Breaking the hardware connection is the key to the ZoomSafer value proposition and the company has taken steps to protect its concept. Insurance companies and fleet operators at recent telematics events have talked about OBDII modules and smartphone GPS tracking with downloaded apps. But ZoomSafer's FleetSafer Vision depends entirely on processing data already available to fleet operators from their existing equipment – on-board trackers and company phones – and public information sources.

FleetSafer Vision works with any type of phone – not just smartphones – and requires no on-device software. As a cloud-based service, FleetSafer Vision integrates vehicular telematics data (trip information, location, speed, etc.) with mobile device usage data (phone calls, text messages, etc.) and other information (email logs, weather, traffic, etc.) so fleet operators can measure and remediate risky behavior and reinforce good behavior.

The company will be formally introducing FleetSafer Vision at the upcoming Consumer Electronics Show next week. The implications are staggering. Not every fleet operator is interested in tracking their drivers' phone use for texting,

personal calls or social networking activity, regardless of the law. But introduce insurance companies into the equation and greed takes over. All fleet operators are interested in reducing their costs and any tool that contributes to lower insurance rates – and maybe lower accident rates – is attractive.

Deploying mobile phone apps to a force of drivers with a wide range of devices, some of which may not even be able to handle an app, is a potential nightmare, as is deploying modules or any other hardware. ZoomSafer's FleetSafer Vision takes hardware and software completely out of the equation. All FleetSafer requires is data.

Using FleetSafer Vision, fleet operators and maybe their insurers can process vehicle and device data in the context of other public data such as weather, traffic or road conditions and use the resulting output as a basis for rewarding drivers who adhere to laws and company policies governing vehicle operation. For drivers who fail to follow guidelines, based on their observed behavior, remedial measure might include the installation of an app or wireless module capable of limiting the use of a company phone while driving.

Implications

FleetSafer Vision is one of what is likely to be a growing variety of telematics solutions based entirely on the mining of data thrown off by devices that are either already embedded in a vehicle or which have been carried in by the driver. While FleetSafer Vision is based on mobile phone use correlated to vehicle use information, location and context alone can be sufficient for delivering location and context relevant information in real time – such as advertising. But crunching the data offline can also produce service dividends for drivers for everything from usage-based insurance to social networking and navigation applications.

Contact Information

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