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'eCall a future trend in infotainment sector'



BANGALORE, INDIA: The stupendous growth India has been witnessing in recent months has made Indian families, particularly the middle class, so 'greedy' that they now want to convert their car into a virtual home. They want all kinds of facilities, right from information to entertainment, in their vehicles, which gives car makers sleepless nights to design customizable infotainment systems to the insatiable customer.

For a company like TATA Elxsi, a leading player in infotainment products, it was not easy to design products that match with the tastes of the Indian consumer. Many a time it requires careful planning right from the initial stage of requirements capture, defining the features, specifications, executing the features and the final implementation, according to the company.

CIOL had an interaction with **Anil Sondur - VP, Industrial design and Transportation Electronics Business unit, TATA Elxsi**, who said the retrofitting products from foreign markets are not cost-effective from an Indian customer's perspective. **Excerpts:**

CIOL: What are the new trends in the in-vehicle infotainment (IVI) segment in India?

Sondur: Currently, the in-vehicle infotainment segment in India is nascent. But the industry is witnessing a large number of organized players entering the market and making lots of investments in technology, which will result in better user-friendly features for consumers.

Globally, wireless connectivity is huge focus area, along with the concept of connected cars, wherein cars will communicate with the outside world.

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However, the Indian scenario is poised to see an increased use of bluetooth connectivity and in-built navigation systems. Reliable voice-recognition systems recently launched in some car brands are a few examples for this.

CIOL: What are your key vehicle infotainment offerings? What is the USP of your products?

Sondur: At TATA Elxsi, we provide the entire range of application development as well as automation by bringing in the latest connectivity technologies from phone connectivity to connecting with the Internet. We have been designing and developing infotainment systems for major OEMs (original equipment manufacturers).

Tata Elxsi delivers support in the selection and sourcing of infotainment systems from various suppliers. Our work in in-vehicle infotainment also involves defining the processes for infotainment suppliers where we jointly work with them for the design and development of the Human Machine Interface.

CIOL: What are the challenges that you have faced in the implementation part?

Sondur: Generally in Infotainment projects, security is a major concern where infotainment features like bluetooth connectivity, Internet access, firmware upgrade over the air etc. are supported. IVI features have a

longer lifecycle as compared to the shorter lifecycle of consumer electronic products.

The changes that have to be incorporated at this stage becomes very difficult as, in some cases, the user compares the infotainment features with those of fast-changing smart phone. These changes will have to be made into the system and many a time it will require connection to the vehicle network, and it affects the security of other electronic control unit's(ECU) going inside the vehicle.

CIOL: What are the future trends in in-vehicular entertainment industry?

Sondur: The three main areas that can directly contribute to the growth of in-car infotainment's eco-system are safety, security and comfort with services such as remote diagnostics, vehicle relationship management and fleet management.

Rich graphic user-interface, 3D graphics, voice recognition capability, faster response time, minimum driver distraction and eCall (a service that is aimed at providing rapid assistance to drivers involved in an accident) are some of the trends that can drive the future.

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