

In-car Social Networking



Social Networking Basics

Social networking is one of the biggest trends in the world of technology today, and definitely the most important one. Social networks occupy a major role in internet communications and are encroaching on the mobile industry, attempting to enter such tendentious and conservative spaces as trade, transportation, and many other such traditionally “offline” fields. Its various targets shall soon include the automobile industry.

Luxoft’s approach to In - Car Social Networking

Luxoft’s approach to social networking is focused on combining two factors: car-particular ergonomics and the unique communication context.

Regular fixtures of social networking, such as web-based interfaces, text messages, and image submissions will have to be reworked. In their place, “one-button” user interfaces, voice dialogs, and direct integration with such vehicle equipment as acoustic systems and cameras will have to perform the same tasks.

The introduction of social networks to cars will begin by integrating regular web-based solutions, including Facebook, Twitter, and others. It must however employ a user interface specially designed for vehicles and a terrain infrastructure working in cooperation with the head unit to provide a suitable context for user interaction.

All the in-car social networking features can be grouped into the following categories:

- Voice comments on events, including a hierarchical presentation of the comments left by other users
 - Text and voice-based forums / micro-blogs
 - Text and voice-based event commenting
- Direct messaging to registered users
 - Messages to known users (text, voice, photo, or video chat)
 - Messages to anonymous users (e.g. registered by license plate or other label)

Technologically, Luxoft’s automotive social networking system is based on three major components:

- **Land agent:** A proxy server which provides integration with regular social networking solutions and makes car users a part of the global social world. The land agent is basically a specialized internet proxy with an OTA-qualified protocol, allowing it to work with head units and HTTP/HTTPS to get information from the web servers of social networking sites.
- **Embedded agent:** The embedded agent, complete with its own user interface, enables an application in the head unit which supports data exchange with the land agent. A portable solution is employed in the head unit, running under Java VM and applicable for any kind of QNX, Linux, Win Auto and Android-based head units, supporting Java. It can be also customized for even deeper integration with the system of each specific customer.
- **Ergonomic User Interface:** The driver must have readily available shortcuts to perform operations rapidly. For example, uploading images from disk files to a web album is a lengthy process, so the driver must be able immediately to snap and share the camera view through a one button click. The user interface is Luxoft’s greatest contribution and makes the entire system both practical and applicable for real life situations.
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- Contributing to discussion groups
 - Participation in a group based on common interests
 - Participation in a group based on the local neighborhood
- Broadcasting messages to subscribers