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FEATURE: 12 Volt - Connectivity in the Car

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Bluetooth, Phones, Voice & Music

Bluetooth integration is becoming more of a fixture with OEMs looking to capitalize on a growing demand for more connectivity. The Ford SYNC system, which we discussed in greater detail in a previous column, [Safe & Secure Driving](#), will likely pave the way for built-in Bluetooth, and other forms of connectivity, to be the norm moving forward. In fact, Ford recently announced plans to install WiFi access points throughout its assembly line, to wirelessly sync software to the new line of MyFord Touch-equipped vehicles, bringing the idea of connectivity to the back-end process as well. Using MyFord Touch, drivers can control the vehicle in much the same way they control their portable gadgets via things like touch-screens and dashboard controls. The first plant to implement the system will actually be in Canada, in Oakville, ON just outside of downtown Toronto, and the first vehicles to incorporate MyFord Touch will be the 2011 Edge and Lincoln MKX.

Staub's Trotter suggests that all the recent legislations mandating hands-free calling has created opportunities that can drive additional demand for more connectivity with the car radio; not just with the iPod or other music players, but also with smartphones and a plethora of partner apps related to music.

"We can see greater demand for BlackBerry and Android devices on the music side coming soon," predicts Grant Daoust, Vice President of Trends Electronics International. "Future interfaces in people's cars will have very high-quality Bluetooth, along with streaming."

Daoust adds that the next step will be voice commands, including interactive messaging that can read e-mails and text messages aloud. The technology is already available in devices like the iLane, BlueAnt's T1 headset, BlueTrek's Crescendo headset, Got2b Wireless car kits, and Motorola's H17txt. And other popular applications, like Vlingo, are already offering similar functionality.

Got2b is an interesting technology that includes both a portable visor or dash-mounted unit and an installed option. Using the system, drivers can make and receive voice calls hands-free, but can also hear e-mails read aloud to them, and compose them by voice, which is then converted to text with an audio file attached. There's even the ability to compose everything from text messages to Facebook and Twitter updates, calendar appointments, and other items. It recognizes both English and French linguistics. "The punctuation is even recognized," declares Dennis Bazin, Vice President of Sales & Marketing at Progressive Sales Canada Electronics Inc., the Canadian distributor of the product. "It's like someone is there interpreting the e-mail for you. It's very smart. It can even distinguish grammatically between words like "their" and "they're" depending on the sentence you're composing." Four models are available: the GTS501 that is tailored toward the rectangular OEM cut-out of a typical Toyota vehicle; the G2-100, which replaces a cigarette lighter adapter but the function button can be recessed into any 1" hole; the G2-2200 universal surface mount; and The Voice portable unit. Installation for the installed models will vary in price depending on the integrator and/or the make of vehicle.

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