

More Electronic Toys Throwing OEMs for a Loop

by Gerald Scott
News Dept.

An unrelenting wave of technology developments in the consumer electronics industry is having a corresponding impact on autos.

That is to say, the Millennial Generation, age 30 and under, are bringing more and more electronic toys into the vehicle cockpit and now OEMs are scrambling to safely accommodate the devices, which include not just cell phones but tablet computers, portable GPS units and more.

It's almost forgotten now that just two months ago, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) called for a comprehensive national ban on any cell phone or communications device in the car – all because of how unsafe manipulating the devices can be while actually driving.

But the larger, national social trend is that consumers are bringing – and using – even more devices into the auto cockpit and the OEMs are challenged to safely accommodate this rush to communicate while driving.

Meanwhile, state and federal laws are attempting to curb the use of devices in cars, but it seems like it's a modest stop sign blowing in the wind, fighting a losing battle to slow down a digital hurricane.

"It's a dilemma that's not going to be solved easily – there's no question that all of these electronic devices coming into cars are a distraction, and yet, many people will not give this up no matter what the law says," observed John

McElroy, host of the Autoline Detroit TV program and a veteran car industry expert.

"Especially when you think about phones, there are so many people who work in their cars, especially salespeople these days – no way that they're going to give that up."

The problem is that, statistics show, people using one hand on the wheel and one hand to talk or text on their cell phone are more dangerous than a driver with two hands on the wheel.

NHTSA says that there are still 10 million car accidents on U.S. roads each year and 1.6 million of those are rear-end collisions, an increase over earlier years and likely caused by driver distraction.

Detroit and all global automakers are challenged to develop and deploy factory-

installed, enabling technology that accommodates in-car communications while keeping the driver and passengers relatively safe as they do.

"How do you handle this? Certainly having hands-free phones with a Bluetooth connection is a big step in the right direction," continues McElroy.

"But even so, the data shows that alone – just having a hands-free phone – is not safe enough.

"So now it's incumbent on the automakers to figure out how do they make talking on a phone as safe as talking to somebody on the front seat next to you?"

"They're grappling with that, nobody has an easy answer.

"All the car companies in the world are working on this, all the insurance companies



As consumers bring an increasing number of portable communications devices into the cockpit, such as the Apple iPad pictured here, the automakers are challenged to design their factory interior systems to accommodate the growing variety.

are looking at this, all the consumer safety groups in the world are looking at this, all the safety agencies of governments are looking at this.

"Undoubtedly some sort of answer will arise, but we're at the point right now where nobody's got the silver bullet, nobody's solved this issue."

Jeep Reaches 2M on 'Face'

AUBURN HILLS – The Jeep brand is celebrating a major milestone as its Facebook page has reached over 2 million fans.

The brand is the first domestic automotive brand to hit the 2 million mark on Facebook, outpacing the next closest domestic brand by approximately 700,000 fans.

"On behalf of the entire Jeep brand team, I would like to extend a personal thank you to our consumers – and literally millions of fans – for their continued loyalty and support," said Mike Manley, President and CEO – Jeep Brand, Chrysler Group LLC.

"We are proud of our 70-year history and all that the Jeep brand has accomplished along the way."

All of the automakers are seeking to leverage social media to their sales advantage.

About GM Cars in the Movies, And What About the Oscar?

DETROIT – Lights, camera, start your engines!

For one night each year, Hollywood gathers to honor the best in the movie industry. Yet, an often unsung star in these films seldom receives the credit it deserves – the automobile.

Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac have produced some of the toughest, fastest, most stylish and most cutting-edge American-made vehicles to have appeared in countless films. From classics like American Graffiti (1973) and Rain Man (1988) to modern action movies like the Trans-

formers franchise (2007, 2009, and 2011) and The Matrix Reloaded (2003), General Motors vehicles have been scene stealers in some of Hollywood's biggest blockbusters.

"The high-profile association with a blockbuster and classic movies gives Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac wonderful exposure to those not familiar with the brand," said Steve Tihanyi, general director Branded Entertainment & Marketing Alliances.

"We are always looking for unique ways to humanize and

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The iconic movie car from "Ghostbusters" (The Ambulance, known as ECTO-1, which was on its license plate), was a 1959 Cadillac "Miller Meteor" model. The name originates from the company that custom-outfitted these Cadillacs for medical service and other applications.

GM Cancer Dinner Open to the Public

by Gerald Scott
News Dept.

For the first time, the annual Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute dinner will be held at the GM Tech Center in Warren.

The event, scheduled for April 28, will be held at the Vehicle Engineering Center (VEC) on the Tech Center campus.

Notably, GM Senior Vice President of Global Product Development, Mary Barra, and her husband Tony, president of Filament Consulting, will chair the Institute's 30th annual fund-raising dinner.

A 33-year veteran of GM, Barra is responsible for leading the design, engineering and quality of new vehicles for GM around the globe.

"We're very happy to have the support of Mary and Tony Barra as chairs of this year's dinner to support cancer research," said Gerold Bepler, president and CEO, Karmanos Cancer Institute.

"We're incredibly grateful for the unprecedented commitment from GM and the GM Foundation. Thanks to all of our supporters, we are developing the next standard of cancer care that will be used around the world."

The Barras follow GM Chairman and CEO Dan Akeron and his wife, Karin, who chaired the event together in 2011 when it was held at the GM Heritage Center in Sterling Heights. More than \$868,000 was raised for cancer research at the 2011 function.

Meanwhile, health and human services is one of four key areas of community support given by the GM Foundation. The philanthropic entity announced earlier this year that it is donating \$400,000 to the Barbara Ann Karmanos Institute, bringing to nearly \$6 million the Foundation's support over the last 15 years.

"The GM Foundation grant will help Karmanos continue

the important fight against cancer," said Foundation President Vivian Pickard. "We are fortunate to have this leading organization serving our Michigan communities and we are committed to making this year's annual dinner a success."

General Motors Co. is the host sponsor of this year's dinner while the presenting sponsor will be local software firm Compuware Corp. Executive Sponsors are Johnson Controls and Lil and Alex Erdeljan.

This year's Annual Dinner will continue to benefit the critical work of Karmanos researchers and physicians who are creating the next standard of cancer care that will be used around the world.

The event will include a cocktail reception, an elegant seated dinner, brief program, entertainment, an exciting raffle and is open to the public.

Benefactor tickets are \$750 and Patron tickets are \$525.



General Motors Senior VP of Global Product Development Mary Barra and her husband Tony will together chair the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute's 30th annual dinner on April 28. The dinner will be held at the Vehicle Engineering Center (VEC) at the GM Tech Center in Warren.

Contact Lisa Koltunchik at Karmanos for tickets or more details at (313) 576-8106.

Said GM's Mary Barra,

"Tony and I are honored to be able to build upon the success of last year's event by chairing the 2012 Annual Din-

ner. The opportunity to serve an organization that is dedicated to eradicating cancer is a special privilege for us."

Snyder Tours Detroit Arsenal in Warren

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder stopped by to visit the headquarters of the U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command at the Detroit Arsenal on Feb. 17.

"Michigan is leading the nation in terms of talent," Snyder said, "(So) it's no surprise that

the Army's TACOM LCMC has Michigan's best logisticians, engineers and project managers taking care of our soldiers."

Snyder received a command briefing hosted by TACOM LCMC Deputy to the Commander Mike Viggato and other TACOM senior lead-

ers. He also toured the TARDEC engineering labs at the Warren Army base. TARDEC is the Army's Tank-Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center.

"We were very happy to have Gov. Snyder visit TACOM today so that he could see close

hand the positive impact that we have not only on the state of Michigan, but on our support to our soldiers in the field around the world," TACOM's Viggato said.

"Protecting our sons, daughters, sisters and brothers is our first priority."

Chrysler Brand, Anderson Cooper Show Donate Minivan to Area Family in Need

by Gerald Scott
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Who says it doesn't "pay" to watch TV these days?

This notion was certainly true for the Ewing family of Canton recently. Katarra Ewing, the mother of the family, was watching the "Anderson" TV talk show program a few months ago – the show starring journalist Anderson Cooper in New York.

She applied for a vehicle through the "Anderson, I Need Your Help for the Holidays!" segment and because the Ewing family was transportation challenged, they

were eventually chosen to receive a free 2012 Chrysler Town & Country minivan.

The Ewings had struggled through a series of hoopy cars, unemployment and the like, so back in December they made a business case for help from the TV show.

Here in late February, that help arrived in the form of that new minivan, courtesy of Chrysler brand together with the "Anderson" daytime show. The Ewings received the keys to the vehicle and the minivan itself last week at the Milosch Palace Chrysler Dodge Jeep dealership in Lake Orion.

"Sunroof, navigation, power everything, should make the daily commutes a lot easier," said Bruce Velisek, Chrysler brand head of Large Car and MPV Marketing. "So we're excited for the opportunity to work with you guys and present you with a 2012 Town & Country."

Replied Katarra, "It's beautiful, it's beautiful – it only has seven miles on it, too."

No price was put on the vehicle, but Chrysler's public web site shows 2012 Chrysler Town & Country minivans' MSRP starts at \$29,900, before all of the options such as uConnect and video screens.



Chrysler executive Bruce Velisek, left, hands the keys to this 2012 Chrysler Town & Country minivan to the Ewing family of Canton as part of a promotion together with the "Anderson" Cooper TV show.