

iBeetle: Everything you never wanted in an infotainment system

Kasey Panetta, Associate Editor



We've talked A LOT about safety and innovation when it comes to infotainment systems in cars. We've focused on [more regulation](#) [1], [less regulation](#) [2], and [how to do this safely](#), [3]. The discussion revolves around how to do this safely, efficiently, and effectively.

The [iBeetle](#) iPhone display



a fully integrated one is "docked," a

- [Apple CarPlay](#) is for listening to your current models

"Expert" is an

extension of the on-board instruments: a g-meter, oil and coolant temperature gauges, a chronometer, and a compass. Again, the gauges are available onboard and I have no real use for a chronometer or g-meter. I wouldn't say no to the compass, but that could easily be incorporated into the car.

- "Trainer" compares driving times, distances and fuel economies and can be used with social media to figure out the fastest route. This is the one feature I would actually like to have. I drive on roads with really inconsistent traffic patterns, so I wouldn't mind a heads up about taking a different route.
- "Reader" will read your Facebook or social media messages aloud. I refuse to acknowledge this as a legitimate feature. I already have Siri to read texts to me when I'm driving, and I don't think I've even used that once.
- "Postcard" allows you to send your current location to your friends. This isn't a terrible feature, particularly for kids who are driving or if you're meeting someone and want them to know you're going to be a few minutes late.

iBeetle: Everything you never wanted in an infotainment system

Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

- “Photo” allows you to take photos inside the car. There is absolutely no reason that this should exist.
- “Milestones” is a feature that only works when the phone is “undocked” and it rewards you for hitting certain milestones within the application. I don't really understand this feature, but VW is saying it's a way to guide people through the other apps.



If there are two things that everyone—probably our ECN readers most of all—knows about me it's that I love Apple and I love German cars and even I can't get behind this.

I think Apple should design automotive interfaces because I like to use Apple products. Just look at what they came up with for iPods: simple, efficient, clean, and easy to use. Meanwhile, most car interfaces are awful. In my Bug, it took a tech savvy person 30 minutes to give up on figuring out how to use the Bluetooth option for play music from a phone. Car designers are great at cars, but they haven't mastered viable interfaces yet. The exceptions are in higher end cars like BMW, Mercedes, etc, but the average car hasn't been perfected.

VW is going to roll this out in early 2014 (for the iPhone 5), but there is no mention of pricing yet. It seems risky to fully integrate one particular product into a car because it could change (think of all the connectors) and most people might not have the exact phone they need. Frankly, I don't plan on having the iPhone 5 two years from now, let alone for the duration of my car ownership. Hopefully they'll come up with a way to swap out different connectors from the car or this has a serious built-in obsolescence problem.

Do you have a great idea for automobile infotainment systems? Tell us what you think, [here](#) [5].

Source URL (retrieved on 12/19/2013 - 12:59pm):

<http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2013/04/ibeetle-everything-you-never-wanted-infotainment-system>

Links:

[1] <http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2013/04/why-government-should-ban-cellphones-while-driving>

[2] <http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2013/04/nanny-state-should-loosen-its-grip-cell-phones>

[3] <http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2013/02/why-your-car-better-driver-you>

[4] https://www.volkswagen-media-services.com/medias_publish/ms/content/en/pre_ssemitteilungen/2013/04/20/world_premiere__the.standard.gid-oeffentlichkeit.html

[5] <http://www.ecnmag.com/An%2520engineer%27s%2520wishlist%2520for%2520car%2520infotainment%2520systems>