

Could EU-funded study herald the dawn of a new transport era?

European Commission

The creation and implementation of a universally understood communications language that permits infrastructure and vehicles to cooperate and share information would benefit the transport sector and people immensely. Not only would traffic congestion and pollution ease, but people would also enjoy improved traffic safety, shorter travel periods and even fewer visits to their car mechanics. The CVIS project partners say these changes would help ease driver frustration and erase road rage, a phenomenon that has grown significantly in the last couple of decades.

According to CVIS, a future of cooperative drivers using cooperative vehicle infrastructure systems will lead to a better future and intelligent transport systems (ITS), which bring information and communication technologies to the transport sector, are pivotal to achieving this objective.

'On every continent, part of the spectrum has been reserved for cooperative systems, 5.9 GHz (gigahertz) in the US and Europe, and 5.8 GHz in Japan, so this subset of ITS is certainly coming,' explained CVIS coordinator Paul Kompfner, Sector Head, Cooperative Mobility at ERTICO-ITS Europe, the network of ITS and Services stakeholders in Europe. 'Right now, I'd say Europe has something of a lead in technology development and validation across a wide range of test sites.'

The CVIS consortium, which is made up of 62 research institutes and companies from 15 European countries, also developed an open, innovative ITS platform that can function on many levels including portable devices to roadside systems. Ultimately, the partners worked on developing a number of core technologies so as to produce an integrated, open-source 'internet of cars'.

A complete communications infrastructure was developed that is capable of running from hardware, through protocols, standards, middleware, application programming interfaces (APIs) and cross-platform integration. The project partners also created a platform that can use existing communication infrastructures like satellite communication, infra-red and WiFi (Wireless Fidelity).

According to the partners, they secured a scalable, open (and partially open-source) software chain to a scalable hardware chain. The software chain can manage various elements of the CVIS framework including vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communications, floating vehicle data collection, traffic management, etc. This chain can also establish a series of APIs.

Since its launch in 2008, CVIS has tested the combined technologies in various trials

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in seven countries. The project partners say the 'internet of cars' will have a huge impact on road use, effectively becoming the model of how other ITS will be developed in the years to come.

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