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HOW THE IOT CAN REDUCE RISK IN THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SECTOR



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As featured in **IoT Tech** 



Autonomous and electric cars will be the focus of new legislation that aims to get people buying driverless cars by 2020.



Internet of Things (IoT) technologies are taking hold of industries far and wide. Permeating a host of different markets and finding new ways to automate, measure and improve processes. The days when people thought of (IoT) as science fiction, a futuristic world in which your fridge boils you an egg while your bed runs you a bath, are thankfully starting to pass. People and businesses are embracing the real impact of this revolutionary technology, and the commercial vehicle (CV) sector is just one of the sectors benefitting. Here are a few reasons why.

By Tristan Watkins
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1. REDUCING RISK ON THE ROAD

Imagine a fleet of interconnected self-driving vehicles that can sense, evaluate and act - automatically or at your command. With vehicles reliably able to drive themselves, we're talking about a potentially accident-free fleet. Not only would this mean safer roads, it would also drastically reduce the cost of risk associated with fleet management.

This isn't as far-fetched as you might think. The UK Government has pledged that autonomous and electric cars will be the focus of new legislation that aims to get people buying driverless cars by 2020. Testing of driverless cars is said to begin in the UK as early as next year.

2. KEEP YOUR FLEET MOVING

Driverless vehicles won't need to eat, sleep or take rest-breaks. Productivity gains can be further maximised with sensor technology that can monitor vehicle health, such as tyre wear and tear. On the road adjustments can also be made as real-time information on traffic congestion, safety alerts, and road and weather conditions is fed into the system and continuously updated. Navigating long-haul journeys will be made easy and risk-free, with destinations reached faster and safely.

3. TRACKING FUEL AND MILEAGE

An ongoing challenge for fleet managers is budget control. Poor vehicle maintenance, fuel consumption and driver behaviour can, and do, increase costs unnecessarily.

With the IoT, each vehicle will be fitted out with a fuel management dashboard that connects to the fleet network and gathers data while driving. Able to track issues such as excess speeding, idle time and maintenance needs, managers will have a bird's eye view on how well their fleet, as well as individual

vehicles, are operating. Any poor practices will be flagged and can then be addressed to help break bad driving habits, improve routine maintenance and maximise fuel efficiency.

The interoperability of IoT devices will also allow for smartphones or apps to be installed in vehicles to track mileage from journey start to finish. Fleet managers will have instant access to downloadable and transparent information ready for their files - and the HMRC.

4. MANAGING MAINTENANCE

The whole is only as good as the sum of its parts. Or more to the point, a fleet business runs only as well as its vehicles. Keeping the machines in top-notch running order is a manager's number one priority, and scheduling headache. An IoT-based fleet management system using mobile scanners, hidden sensors and RFID systems, can rank maintenance needs per vehicle, and according to what needs the most urgent attention. This way, vehicles in good working nick won't be taken off the road unnecessarily, breakdowns will be pre-empted and overall downtime minimised.

5. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the risk reduction benefits of the IoT for the CV sector are numerous, and hugely attractive from a cost and time saving perspective, there are some concerns around take-up. Successful interoperability of IoT devices is vital to enjoy all the advantages of working within an intelligent, integrated network. Additionally, the roll-out of driverless vehicles will result in industry job losses, a short-term challenge as these roles are reabsorbed elsewhere. With many CV fleets already getting on board, there is no doubt that the impact of the IoT in this sector outweighs the concerns, and is no longer the stuff of science fiction.



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