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People use smartphones while driving despite ban

## **Finnish service reduces driver distraction by up to 60%**

**Using smartphones while driving causes many hazardous situations, but over 80 percent of drivers still use their smartphones behind the wheel. Globally the risks posed on road safety by the use of phones is a well researched topic. It has been observed that visual distraction (the driver's eyes are away from the road) plays a part in as much as 93 percent of rear-end collisions. In Finland a solution has been developed for this growing problem: a simple service that, according to a recent study, reduces distraction by up to 60 percent.**

Carrio is an infotainment solution used in the Android operating system, and you can import your own favorite content into it, making it easy to use on a simple screen. For example, the service reads your emails and WhatsApp messages out loud with the right language while you are driving. The aim with Carrio has been to optimize usage while driving with e.g. voice control.

A study conducted in the University of Jyväskylä compared the use of Carrio with the use of the phone's existing Android applications during driving. In driving simulator conditions, test subjects were given tasks, such as reading emails, finding songs, and switching between different applications.

– We measured visual distraction, or how much the driver's gaze wanders away from the road. The results were clear: Carrio reduced distraction 57% on average. You could thus conclude that these tasks would be safer to do with Carrio than on a smartphone, reports **Tuomo Kujala**, Research Fellow at the University of Jyväskylä.

### **Keeping one's eyes on the road reduces accident risk**

The study clearly shows that good user interface planning and content optimization for the user's needs can significantly affect driver distraction. The essential part is maximizing the time drivers keep their eyes on the road while driving.

– It is unlikely we can stop the use of smartphones by bans, so we are better off developing solutions that help increase safe usage, says **Timo Salminen**, CEO of Ficonic Solutions.

Salminen sees Carrio also as a possible additional service for e.g. insurance companies, phone companies, car dealerships, and car rental services.

– If people already started using Carrio when purchasing insurance or a car, it could significantly reduce accidents as the use of "regular" smartphone applications decreases. But this does not have to mean you can no longer enjoy yourself behind the wheel. With Carrio, you can more safely make use of the "empty time" spent behind the wheel, says Salminen.

24 people of ages between 20 and 79 took part in the experiment. The majority of subjects felt that tasks completed with Carrio were less of a strain than the use of the smartphone's own applications. The difference was especially apparent with tasks related to email and finding music.

– Carrio caused significantly less strain with these types of tasks. The email task done through Carrio was also experienced to be burdensome when the person had to listen to a long message and pick out the answer to a question they were asked. However, the burden was considered to be significantly less compared to reading an email on the smartphone, and their eyes stayed on the road considerably more.

Ficonic Solutions and its Carrio are TU Automotive Awards 2017 finalists in 'Newcomer of the Year' category.

Read more: <http://www.tu-auto.com/detroit/awards-finalists.php>

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