

BMW installs new technology

The days of being able to lie to an unwanted telephone caller: "Sorry, I can't talk, I'm in the car" are about to end.



Communications GM Guy Kilfoil says the new ConnectedDrive BMWs will improve productivity of business people. Image: Twitter

German car manufacturer BMW has upped the stakes in the world of in-car connectivity with its latest ConnectedDrive technology, which allows cars to link up with the driver's office, download traffic information, read e-mails, report accidents and even arrange a car service.

The technology will arrive in SA in July. BMWs built from that month onwards will carry implanted SIM cards that will allow owners to register online for the various services. Some will be available immediately and others phased in by 2015.

BMW SA Communications General Manager Guy Kilfoil says the enhanced connectivity will appeal to business people who consider the hours spent in traffic each week as wasted time, and would rather use it usefully.

They will have direct access to high-resolution Internet, an online calendar, unlimited data transfer and e-mails that are read out loud.

But the ConnectedDrive options go far beyond working convenience. For example, if the car is involved in an accident, it automatically contacts emergency services, passing on location and severity of damage. There is also an emergency button the driver can use to pass on occupants' medical condition.

Anticipatory vehicle service

Another feature is the "anticipatory" vehicle service, which will constantly monitor a car's service data, from fluid levels to brake pads. If a service is needed, the car's data is transferred directly to BMW and the driver is asked to make an appointment.

The SIM cards cannot be fitted to BMWs built before next month. However, BMW hopes to extend its service portfolio to 25 countries by the end of 2014 and to have about 5m cars linked to the service by 2017. The company claims to be "the first manufacturer to commit itself firmly to the goal of blanket connectivity".

Other options available in SA will include:

- Real-time traffic information;
- Weather forecasts;
- Access to Facebook, Twitter and other social media;
- smartphone facility that indicates the car's location up to 1,5km away, for example if you can't remember where you parked it;
- Personal concierge allowing drivers to obtain advice from "real, live" people on restaurants and other destinations.



All new BMWs will be fitted with a SIM card and provide a full range of communications technology to owners. Image: [AutoWeek](#)