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Automotive IQ sat down with Massimo Cavazzini, Product Innovation Manager – Infotainment, EMEA Product Planning at FIAT Group, to discuss the current and future possibilities for integrating the car into our increasingly digital lifestyles.

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Could you please describe your role at Fiat?

Massimo Cavazzini: Yes, I'm in the EMEA Product Planning Infotainment, responsible for the connected vehicle platform for services and applications. In a nutshell, the team is bringing the connected car alive in Europe for the Fiat Chrysler Group.

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I know you're doing a presentation today on integrating the car into people's digital personas/ digital lifestyles. What is currently possible?

M.C.: In 2008, we launched our first application called *eco:Drive*. It helps the customers track their driving behavior based on real data coming from the in-vehicle network and giving feedback for improving driving style, to save money and fuel. This is the first step of a digital road map we have because our vision is not only to bring internet into the car with the classic services that we all know - music, social news - but also to bring the car into the internet, i.e. take out all the relevant data from the car and put them in the cloud giving relevant, convenient services both to the customers and also to the internal business units like after sales or Research & Development to improve our products.

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This also potentially helps racing teams, after-market development or factory parts development and so on?

M.C.: Telemetry is a big area and in the coming years we will probably see more and more coming in. Of course, once you have the data on the cloud you can imagine using that data as much as you can, not only to give the customer some convenient applications but also to give insurance companies data about driving style, to give after-market companies insights to develop new products, R&D department to improve the performance or, if there is an issue, to track and issue a recall as soon as possible.

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Exactly, it probably helps you guys to get the right information about which parts are not performing up to spec, I would imagine?

M.C.: Yes. I think that the potential is really huge; probably the industry still does not really understand the value: we all recognize the potential of the data but we are currently exploring the opportunities, so something more is coming.

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Do you see, for example, the European market being very different in this way to other markets?

M.C.: In the end, I think there is a time shift between other markets and the European market. The US is advanced, for sure, because some competitors started 10 to 15 years ago and the willingness to pay is higher, while the European market arrived a little bit later and we still need to create a real market. In terms of customer needs, it's basically the same with some minor differences: eco-driving has been more in Europe and Asia than the US, satellite radio is U.S. –centric and traffic is more for cities. Safety and security will be the same worldwide depending also on legislation.

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Could you discuss the eco:Drive in a little bit more detail?

M.C.: Yes, the eco-drive is quite easy. Basically, what we do is record telemetry data from the car, then the customer can upload data to the server using the mobile phone or a USB stick, and in the future when the car will have an embedded modem directly to the server. Once data are in the cloud, you can analyze them either from your computer or from your mobile app in simple and intuitive way: the service gives you a real analysis of the data with personalized tips. Usually eco driving means getting generic advices such as “accelerate less to improve your driving,” eco:Drive it's telling you exactly which journey you accelerated too much, which were the wrong gears and how you need to improve. So, it's a real personal assistant. Launching the brand new 500L with the Uconnect system, we introduced the eco:Drive Live feature so you also get in-vehicle real-time feedback while driving, there's not only a post-journey analysis but also an online live analysis.

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Would there be some potential to actually measure yourself against other Fiat drivers or something like that?

M.C.: Yes. At the Frankfurt Motor Show, we presented the eco:Drive Social project we are going to launch soon. Based on social dynamics and gamification, we're going to let drivers compete against each other and, of course, the opportunities in this area are huge because we are going to launch some races not only one person against another, but also country against country or Fiat Cinquecento owners against Fiat Punto owners,.

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That sounds like a really good hook to get people interested. Thank you very much for your time, I appreciate this. I hope you enjoy the conference as well.