

Forging ahead with intelligent mobility

By  Lauren Hartzenberg

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The digital revolution is upon us and it has left no industry untouched. Doing a fine job at keeping up with the rate of change is the automotive industry, which in recent years has made great strides in creating intelligent vehicles that fit seamlessly into our hyper-connected world.



Source: [BMW ConnectedDrive](#)

At the heart of this is the digital platform; for BMW Group South Africa specifically, it's their ConnectedDrive suite. Powered by T-Systems' Connected Car technology, it enables drivers to remotely monitor their vehicles, provides detailed real-time traffic data, offers around-the-clock access to the a BMW call centre for assistance in planning one's journey, and the list goes on.

The Group's ConnectedDrive manager Claycia Johnson, and group product communications manager Edward Makwana, tell us all about it.

 ***Tell us about the BMW ConnectedDrive platform and its benefits.***

Johnson and Makwana: BMW ConnectedDrive connects the car with the world. It is the comprehensive, optimum connection from the driver to the vehicle and its environments. It comprises both 'Services and Apps' and 'Driver Assistance'. All cars built from July 2014 are equipped with the telematic communication box (TCB) with an integrated SIM card/chip. With the installation of the TCB, the BMW TeleServices and BMW Intelligent Emergency Call services are automatically switched on – meaning they are offered as standard with any new BMW. Other services on offer...

Real-time Traffic Information (RTTI): This standard feature uses the mobile phone network and the SIM card built into the vehicle for ultra-fast transmission of detailed data. The real-time information, which is taken into account when calculating routes and possible diversions, is relayed to the vehicle with reliability and precision. RTTI covers major highways, as well as country roads and main roads in urban areas.

In order to provide the driver with precise information on traffic density, GPS data from fleets and mobile radio units, road sensors, local authority traffic management systems and many more sources besides are used to obtain as much data as possible. A live traffic jam map with colour-coded road markings in green, yellow, orange and red now visualises the current traffic flow states even more sensitively as well as providing information on roadworks, accidents and other events affecting traffic.



Source: [BMW ConnectedDrive](#)

Remote Services: With this optional feature, customers can control their vehicle remotely by utilising functions such as viewing a status of their vehicle (fuel or electric charge, if all windows and doors are locked, locking/unlocking the vehicle, flashing the lights, operating the hooter and viewing where you have parked, etc.)

Soon, BMW South Africa will introduce the BMW Connected app, focused first and foremost on journey management for every aspect of the vehicle – digital services that simplify the day-to-day management of individual mobility requirements. Regardless of the selected mode of transport, BMW Connected guides the user to the desired destination on time without any stress. The app is enabled with the following functions.

- Personal learned destinations: places that users drive to regularly are automatically saved.
- Destinations can be stored with arrival times and incorporated into the user's transport plan.
- Appointments and destinations can be imported automatically from the user's personal calendar, extracted from emails, SMS messages, WhatsApp messages, etc.
- Time to leave notifications: alerts are sent to the user's smartphone to ensure they arrive at their appointment on time.
- Data is transferred seamlessly to the vehicle once the user has linked up their mobile device.
- All important information pooled together in the same place.
- Customers can continue to use existing services, including last mile navigation, remote services and assistance when searching for points of interest or destinations.

Concierge Services: This optional feature connects the car with a 24-hour BMW call centre, allowing a BMW driver to get assistance in finding points of interest such as restaurants, hotels, nearest pharmacy, ATMs, selecting destinations and planning a journey. Address data for the navigation system can be transmitted directly from the BMW call centre to the

vehicle and then accepted by the driver via the iDrive system.

■ ***What is the company's next wave of connected car technologies?***

Johnson and Makwana: We are pressing ahead with cutting-edge technologies, digitisation and sustainability as the basis for unique customer experiences. We see the change in our industry as an opportunity. In the years ahead we will focus on consolidating existing technological skills and developing new ones, on improving connectivity between people, vehicles and services, and on the continued evolution of sustainable mobility. In so doing, we ensure our own success and set the standards for the competition.

We have a clear vision of the synergy between cars and connectivity in tomorrow's world: it's called the BMW Vision Next 100. The vision vehicle looks not just 20, but even 30 years into the future, and shows how we imagine the seamless interaction between driver, car and the outside world within this timeframe. BMW Connected represents an important step in this direction.

■ ***Some fear that tech companies will overtake traditional organisations as the digital economy progresses. How is the BMW Group ensuring that they don't fall behind in the innovation race?***

Johnson and Makwana: Over the next decade, the automotive industry is going to change more than it has over the last 30 years. Digitalisation will play a key role in its transformation and, as a driver of innovation, the BMW Group intends to remain at the vanguard of these developments in the automotive industry. Right now, the company is on the verge of realising automated driving. With it will come a series of technical challenges, but also a major opportunity for revolutionising mobility. In the future, 'sheer driving pleasure' will also be defined as liberating drivers through automation.

In the next technological step, automated driving will enhance road safety and make travelling even more comfortable and efficient. Automated driving, of the kind demonstrated by the BMW i Vision Future Interaction unveiled at the CES 2016, will play a key role in shaping the future of personal and sustainable mobility.

Another area in which the BMW Group is building on the advantages of digitalisation is production. Here, connectivity between the real and digital worlds offers significant potential in many areas. The aim is to achieve an intelligent, connected production setup where complex processes can be made even more efficient through the application of IT-supported technologies.

ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

Managing editor and retail editor at Bizcommunity.com Cape Town apologist. Dog mom. Get in touch: lauren@bizcommunity.com
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