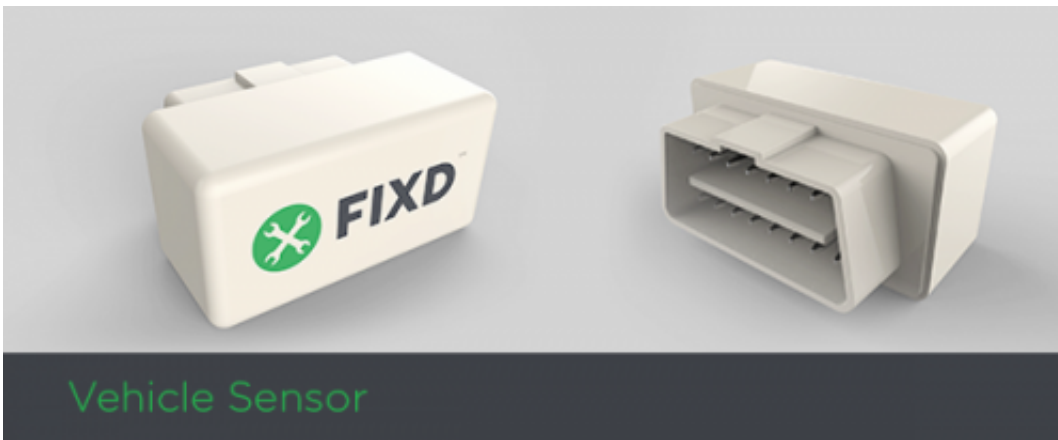


FIXD tells car drivers via smartphone what is wrong

August 29 2014, by Nancy Owano



A key source of anxiety while driving solo, when even a bothersome back-seat driver's comments would have made you listen: the "check engine" light is on but you do not feel, smell or see anything wrong. What to do? Rush to the repair shop or try your luck and make it all the way home? FIXD, a plug-in sensor and phone app, wants to give you the answers by sending information to your phone when problems arise. A summary of the problem is provided in simple terms. Drivers are also told the consequences of continued driving. The driver is told the severity of the problem and provides instructions on what to do. The system even offers an estimate of the repair costs that the problem would involve. "We want to take the guess work out of maintaining your car,"

said the FIXD team in a promotional video. "We want to give you confidence when dealing with repair shops."

Specifically, the vehicle sensor plugs into a car's On Board Diagnostics-II (OBD-II) port and connects to the [smartphone app](#) via Bluetooth. FIXD works with any car model sold in the United States since 1996, since 1996 models and newer have an On Board Diagnostics-II port, designed for the monitoring of car components.

The team behind FIXD, from Georgia Tech, include those with training in biomedical engineering, computer science and mechanical engineering. Their solution's edge is in its very simplicity. The driver does not need to be very expert in car mechanics or repair to understand the information provided. They said, "FIXD is different because we [started](#) from people's problems. Our customer discovery revolved around car diagnostics and the troubles people have when a check engine light comes on. This allowed us to learn exactly what the customer wanted. We found that people wanted to know: if they could drive the car home safely, what would happen to their [car](#) if they kept driving and how much it would cost to get the problem repaired."

The creators are targeting the beta version of the Android app for release in October, and the iPhone app will follow. There currently is no plan for Windows Phone. They aim for an iPhone app launch in April next year.

The FIXD team has turned to Kickstarter in a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for moving FIXD closer to market. On their to-do list is finishing the development of the Android app, developing the iPhone app and developing the sensor to work with the iPhone. Pledges of \$50 or more get Android users the vehicle sensor and smartphone [app](#). Estimated delivery is November 2014.

More information: www.kickstarter.com/projects/8...ou-are-you-listening

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