Cyclist's helmet, Volvo car to communicate for safety

December 21 2014, by Nancy Owano

In a ground-breaking collaboration, Volvo Cars, protective gravity sports gear manufacturer POC and Ericsson will present an innovative safety technology connecting drivers and cyclists for the first time ever at the International CES in Las Vegas (6-9 January 2015). The technology consists of a connected car and helmet prototype that will establish 2-way communication offering proximity alerts to Volvo drivers and cyclists and thereby avoid accidents. No car manufacturer has previously put a stake in the ground to help address the problem by using Connected Safety technology – until now.

Volvo calls it "a life-saving wearable cycling tech concept." The car maker is referring to a connected car and helmet prototype that enables

two-way communication between Volvo drivers and cyclists for proximity alerts. And why not?

According to the company, 50 percent of all cyclists killed in European traffic alone collided with a car. Volvo has partnered with POC and Ericsson to devise this solution to avoid accidents with their heavy tolls between cars and bikes. Their helmet technology concept will be presented at the International CES 2015 in Las Vegas next month.

Volvo also noted in its announcement its "City Safety" system - standard on the all-new XC90, arriving Spring 2015, as a technology that can detect, warn and auto-brake to avoid collisions with cyclists. How does the two-way communication work? "Using a popular smartphone app for bicyclists, like Strava, the cyclist's position can be shared through the Volvo cloud to the car, and vice versa," said Volvo. If imminent collision is calculated, both road users are warned. Even if the driver happens to be in a blind spot, as behind a bend or another vehicle or hardly visible during night time, the driver still will be alerted to a cyclist nearby. The information is delivered through a head-up display alert. The cyclist will be warned via a helmet-mounted alert light.

The announcement on Friday comes as little surprise for those who saw Volvo's announcement earlier this year that the Volvo Car Group was exploring safety and design ideas with Swedish protective sports gear developer POC. While many car-maker announcements have focused on the next-gen connected car in terms of being able to communicate with other cars for safety, one can see where stretching the connected concept to cyclists is not only beneficial but needed. Data from various agencies have different focal points but taken as a whole reveal a connected picture of more cyclists on the road and more risks of collisions with cars.

On the road, serious injuries for UK cyclists in 2013 were 31 percent higher than in 2009. In the Swedish city of Gothenburg alone, the number of bikers rose 30 percent in 2013. In Germany, The Netherlands and Poland more than 85 percent of cyclist fatalities occurred at crossroads. In some countries, according to a WHO fact sheet, pedestrians and cyclists constitute more than 75 percent of road deaths.

Writing in *SlashGear*, Nate Swanner said that the solution's reliance on the cloud with a smartphone app calls into question just how fast the system can respond to both bicyclists and drivers. Still, he said, attempting such a thing is applaudable.

Volvo Cars continues to emphasize its commitment to safety and said it "believes that fatalities and severe injuries in traffic are unacceptable." The company adopted a Vision 2020. That vision is that nobody should die or be seriously injured in a new Volvo by the year 2020.

More information: www.media.volvocars.com/us/en- … nternational-ces-201