

SMARTPHONING YOUR WAY TO SMARTER VEHICLE SECURITY

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THE RANGE OF TECHNOLOGY IS CAR-RELATED APPS IS NOTHING SHORT OF BREATHTAKING AND PHONE VEHICLE SECURITY IS JUST THE LATEST AREA THAT'S ENTERING AN EXCITING PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT.

As winter tightens its frigid grip on us, our early morning ritual of starting the car and letting it warm up before driving away is becoming more of a bone-chilling chore. Sadly, the longer winter runs the more frequently we hear of someone starting up their car, running inside for a moment only to return to find that their car has been stolen. Short of sitting there and freezing, waiting for the heat to come on, there has to be a better way.

Well now by utilizing your smartphone there is! With any number of readily available remote access apps you are able to start your vehicle from the comfort of your own

system you now have the ability to not only remotely communicate with your vehicle but also receive alerts confirming that your commands have been received by your vehicle. Heck, these systems will even let you know if there has been an error and your instructions weren't carried out! With Remote Access apps you're able to start your vehicle from your own home, from across the mall parking lot or even from across town. If you travel a lot and leave the vehicle parked in an outside parking lot your can even re-

motely start your vehicle once a day so that it will be ready to go when you get home.

In the summer

baking hot days you can use it to remotely start your vehicle. Then just turn on the vehicle's air conditioner and let it run for a bit and you will be able to get into a vehicle with sit-able seats. Additionally--and this works both in the boiling heat or freezing cold--you can pop the trunk as you are walking up, place your items inside and hurry into your vehicle.

At some point in our driving careers, we all lock the keys in the vehicle at least once. With the assistance of your smartphone app you can remotely unlock the doors. And in event of lost keys you can even start the engine from wherever you are and get them quickly and safely back on the road.

A downloaded smartphone app can also receive text message notifications alerting you – wherever you are – if your vehicle has been broken into or stolen. Then by using remote GPS information you can pinpoint your vehicle's location via real time tracking. The police can then be called and you can not only report the theft but also supply them with your vehicle's current whereabouts.

Vehicles are at a lower risk of being stolen when they have an anti-theft device installed and insurance providers reward this with discounts. If you are beefing up your vehicle's security system, maybe with a starter interrupt device, checking with your insurance company may be sound advice as you might be open for additional discounts which may further reduce the premiums that you are paying.

living room. The major plus – security wise – is that you don't have to unlock, nor do you need to leave the vehicle doors unlocked while you are doing it.

VEHICLE SECURITY SMARTPHONE APPS

With a smartphone-operated security

merit, on those

PERSONAL SECURITY SMARTPHONE APPS

If you're one of those people who constantly find themselves



wandering around a parking lot trying to remember where you parked your vehicle, a remote access app could prove to be a lifesaver.

By operating the “find” feature their vehicle will flash its lights and honk its horn to alert you to where it’s been hiding.

Incidentally, your Bluetooth-enabled smartphone can also automatically unlock your vehicle’s doors – even while sitting inside a pocket or purse and with no button pushing required – as soon as it comes within range of your vehicle.

Upon exiting the vehicle its doors will automatically lock behind you once your Bluetooth enabled smartphone has passed a certain distance from the vehicle.

If you experience an emergency situation while driving, be it accident-or-health related, a smartphone app can be programmed to send out alerts via email, text or phone. Alerts can be sent to 911 or to whomever you program it to with a message stating that you have had an emergency and including your last known GPS location.

In another scenario you could be driving in an unfamiliar part of town, running low on fuel or food, and in need of a safe and secure place to stop.

A smartphone app would use your current position and then furnish you with the locations of the nearest safe gas station or restaurant. It will even provide you with a convenient from here-to-there route plan.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...as you constantly upgrade to the newest generation of smartphone, that you can still put your old smartphone to good use? It can be used to test drive apps before you download them on your new smartphone. That way you can check out: 1) That the app really does what it says it does and 2) It doesn’t slow down or take up tons of memory on your smartphone.

You can use a downloadable app to transform your smartphone into a wireless dashboard camera. It could also be turned into a vehicle baby monitor or a back of the van camera to keep an eagle eye on the kiddies. Also, it could be converted into a standalone GPS navigator to help keep you safely on track.

COMING SOON TO A VEHICLE NEAR YOU

As technology continues to advance so do the toys and gadgets that go along with it. Dick Tracy type watches – once only envisioned in the comics – have now reached store shelves. Wearable technology is now able to complete some of the tasks that smartphones are currently doing and are allowing drivers to interact with their vehicles in new and exciting ways.

And for those drivers who just got to have it, the next generation of wearable technology, will be able to park your car with the driver inside it – or even remotely. By employing a combination of more advanced sensors and software this wearable technology will be able to “put the car away” and shut it off when it’s done.

THE FINAL WORD

Let’s not forget the safety – or the legality of using cell phones while behind the wheel –aspects of distracted driving i.e. peeking at your smartphone to check out your GPS location. If you are going to have your smartphone in your vehicle with you, be sure to mount and secure it correctly, so that you can properly take advantage of its hands-free capabilities. As technology moves forward so should we. With the myriad of choices that are currently available, it’s becoming much easier to ensure that our vehicles and passengers are safe and secure. After all, there is much more to your smartphone than just allowing you to make phone calls over your vehicle’s speakers.

For those drivers who want or are using add-on technology; some smartphone apps, independently marketed security plans and smartphone data usage will probably cost you some extra money. However, if you invested in your vehicle, doesn’t it make sense to do all that you can to keep it in your driveway? Perhaps spending a little now will save you from a much larger headache later.

There are many free downloadable apps that are currently available to drivers and already many vehicle owners taking advantage of them. With a little research you may find one that’s just right for you. However, it’s always great advice to remember that wise old adage, “You get what you pay for!” 🚗

HERE ARE SOME SMARTPHONE VEHICLE SYSTEMS AND ARE IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER.



DroneMobile - (App is free and prices vary according to plan chosen - Android and iPhone apps) is an award-winning smartphone solution for staying connected to your vehicle from anywhere in the world. Using the Drone-Mobile Android app, you can lock your doors, remote start your engine, and even track your vehicle’s exact location.

Directed SmartStart - (Prices vary according to plan chosen - Android and iPhone apps) Start, control or locate your car from virtually anywhere with your SmartPhone. You can also control multiple vehicles and assign more than one user to control a vehicle. You can lock and unlock doors, remote start your vehicle, release its trunk and so much more.



Keyfree Technologies - (System comes with a cost and is currently compatible with iPhones and will soon include Android and Windows phones) Control your vehicle with your smartphone. With Keyfree, your car will automatically unlock as you approach. Starting the car can be done with a push of a button either on your phone or Keyfree’s push to start button in the car. Additionally, Keyfree makes it easy to share keys with family members. 🚗