

Talk-to-text utility meets safety concerns

by UPI

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - A new voice-to-text technology reportedly meets the safety challenges in the United States posed by a more mobile and more connected society. North Carolina's Yap Inc. developed software that converts voice to cellular text messages, an application seen as necessary after a 2007 Zogby poll showed 66 percent of drivers young than 24 years old send text messages while driving, The Washington Times said Monday. A Nationwide Insurance study from 2006 found that one-fifth of all drivers use text messaging while driving, though several states banned or are considering banning the practice following several traffic-related deaths allegedly linked to text messaging. Yap Inc. said it will offer the software for "minimal to nothing" by mid-2008 once distribution agreements are made, the Times said. Several car manufacturers offer similar factory-installed devices using text-to-speech software but the application is limited to certain preset phrases for sending messages. Consumer survey groups expressed skepticism of the use of hands-free text messaging services. "If you're doing that because you can't handle the phone, then you may as just well make a (hands-free) call," Kent German, an editor at technology Web site CNET.com, told the Times.

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