

## The first Connected Fleets Conference

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**Last month, Fleet Europe held its very first Connected Fleets Conference in Brussels – offering attendees the chance to ‘discover innovation in connected vehicle services and meet expert data solution providers’.**



It was a well-timed event. Connected cars are here – and more are coming. Over 125 million passenger cars with embedded connectivity are forecast to shipped worldwide between 2018 and 2022.

Along with the US, Germany and the UK are leading the field in connected cars. There are estimated to be more than 8 million connected vehicles in the UK, expected to rise to 20 million in 2022 – compared with only 4 million in 2016.

What’s more, so-called ‘black boxes,’ which log driving behaviour, have become increasingly accepted, with almost one million UK drivers, and as many as four out of five young drivers, opting for a telematics policy. Because of their success in reducing road accidents, the EU is also reportedly considering mandating data loggers in all new vehicles.

The amount of information collected and processed by cars is increasing all the time – and will leap exponentially with the arrival of autonomous cars and their banks of sensors.

Telematics is already changing the way that fleet managers operate, by greatly improving the safety, efficiency, maintenance and compliance of the fleet – along with real-time asset tracking. But the full significance and potential of the telematics revolution, the spread of the Internet of Things, and what to do with the vast amount of data generated has barely begun to be grasped.

**The keynote presentation** – by Derek Baker of ALD Automotive and Mark Haidar CEO of the connected car platform provider Vinli – shared insights into the two organisations' new strategic collaboration.



Both speakers agreed there was no 'killer app' that unlocks everything for the fleet client, but rather that the collective experience creates a 'killer experience'. ALD Automotive's mission, said Baker, is to build a 'global platform that is hyper localised' – sharing with their clients and drivers what is of local relevance.

The value of data for leasing companies like ALD Automotive and their clients is twofold, he explained: managing risks and predicting needs.

ALD Automotive and Vinli also revealed that they have found a solution to privacy issues: the user can switch off, at any time, any data-sharing with their fleet manager on the platform and/or with other applications.

Other speakers at the Connected Fleets Conference addressed various issues, including how to overcome resistance from internal stakeholders; how next-generation telematics can help to your risk; and how artificial intelligence, along with Big Data, will revolutionise how fleet managers will manage their fleets.

What will this revolution look like? Imagine moving from a reactive approach in areas such as driver training, downtime management and fleet utilisation to a proactive approach that uses innovations such as predictive maintenance to identify vehicle issues before they occur – even pre-emptively calling a recovery service before the vehicle actually breaks down.

### **The main takeaways from the event were as follows:**

- **The race for fleet connectivity is definitely on – between car manufacturers, leasing companies, fleet management specialists and telematics providers.**
- **Who will win the race depends on who manages to create most value for the customer.**
- **Data is 'gold' – but only when it is surrounded by the right security and delivers useable insights.**
- **Cybersecurity is everyone's business**
- **If overdone, GDPR can stifle innovation. A balance has to be struck.**

Summing up, Steven Schoefs, the Chief Editor of Fleet Europe, said: *'Telematics and connectivity will be paramount for efficient fleet and mobility management in the future. No longer the endgame, it's now a tool to develop your business strategy in line with objectives such as safety, employee satisfaction and cost efficiency.'*

As the conference demonstrated, connected cars mean many things to many people. For ALD Automotive, it's about taking a customer-centric approach to delivering new, innovative solutions that meet the needs of fleets and their drivers – now and in the future.

Our ecosystem starts with a wealth of data – maintenance and repair data, accident statistics, fines and road toll information, and much more – collected through the vehicle’s built-in systems or an after-market telematics device. This data is then fed into an app for the driver and a web portal for the fleet manager. Armed with this information, companies are able to meet the changing needs of their mobility; whether by introducing proactive services or car-sharing services.

**The future of mobility is coming sooner than you think. In fact, it’s already here. ALD Automotive can help you make the transition.**