

# Inventor: Now's the time for telematics

It's been 20 years in development, but Mouhamad Naboulsi sees his automotive product to be more applicable than ever before.

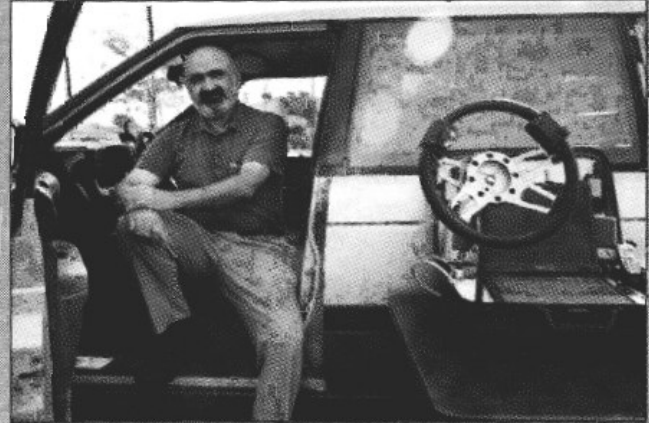
Naboulsi is president of Applied Computer Technologies Inc. in West Bloomfield. He has flirted with a few patented technologies over the years, but for two decades he has worked on a telematics device that allows a driver to seamlessly use a mobile phone while keeping both eyes fixed on the road.

Now, he says, the product, which he calls the Driver Distraction Solution, is closer than ever to going to market. Yet Naboulsi and his partners still face a significant challenge as they search for funding through private and public investors, venture capitalists or angel investors.

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Mouhamad Naboulsi: 'The testing ... has been through the roof.'

"The value that this product will give consumers is safety and convenience," Naboulsi said.

"The testing we've done with consumer groups has been through the roof with almost 90 percent of consumers saying that they would be interested in buy-

ing it."

Essentially the Driver Distraction Solution monitors and controls the telematics activity within a car while it is in motion. It is designed to be a learning de-

vice that will relax or tighten the rules of use to comply with local etiquette, driver history, driver habits and routine.

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It will give feedback audibly so that drivers remain focused on the road.

One patent has been granted in the United States and five additional patents are pending in Europe and Japan.

Freelance writer Mike Scott talked with Naboulsi about how he intends to make his longstanding vision a reality.

### Q.: How would the Driver Distraction Solution be installed?

**A.:** Installation would be simple and could connect under or on the steering wheel or in a cigarette lighter. A software program would easily download into a vehicle's computer system and would work with any make or model.

### Q.: Why do you feel there is a need for this product? Why are you confident that there is a market for it?

**A.:** The aftermarket product would likely include a docking station. It can easily be produced in the United States and I think when it does go to market, I would need to sell around 10,000 units to break even.

The proliferation of cellular phone usage while on the road gives this product added credence. I have talked with OEMs and tier-one suppliers for a number of years and (have received) some interest from Visteon. Some of their people were very encouraging and suggested that I look at other markets and distribution channels.

### Q.: What partnerships have you, or are planning to, establish?

**A.:** I'm trying to develop relationships with engineering and electronic companies and marketing firms. I developed a partnership with a Livonia telematics company, EnGenius, a company that develops microcontrollers inside of vehicles. I'll continue to market the product to aftermarket retail stores and distributors.

### Q.: How much do you think this product would cost?

**A.:** The entry point we are anticipating would be the mid-\$200s at the retail level.

### Q.: What has pushed you to continue pursuing market options for your Driver Distraction Solution?

**A.:** At this point it's a dream of mine and it's not even about the money anymore. I guess it's been a part of my life for so long, I don't want to let it go. Now I dream about seeing it in the (big-box) stores or developing an agreement with automakers.

I think my family and friends would say that I have a tenacity that is unique, but I think it really comes down to my belief in the device.

### Q.: What do you think separates the product from other options on the market today?

**A.:** There is nothing truly like this on the market today but I have heard there are some in development. My approach is different because I am trying to solve a problem first by creating a product rather than creating a product and then finding a use for it.

I'm focused on improving the driving experience. What I think the Driver Distraction device will do is integrate convenience and safety into the ability to multitask in a vehicle.