POLICE FACE ALARMING ‘SKILLS GAP’ WITH TELEMATICS DATA

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- **Police lack know-how and resource to effectively examine post-accident data from telematics systems and 'connected' cars**
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The Police face an increasingly wide 'skills gap' as complex connected vehicles and telematics devices become commonplace, according to leading motor fraud investigator, Asset Protection Unit (APU).

Connected vehicles are rapidly becoming more prevalent and generate large quantities of data which can be used as vital clues in Police investigations and as evidence in court.

Up to 20% of vehicles sold worldwide in 2015 will include some form of embedded connectivity. That figure is set to increase six-fold to 152 million vehicles by 2020*, while telematics-based insurance policies soared nine percent in the UK between January 2014 and January 2015 (296,000 to 323,000)**.

But APU believes that the UK Police lack the resource, personnel and expertise to interrogate telematics data and package it into a format usable as evidence in court.

APU has been called upon more times in the last six months than in the previous two years combined to interpret data from a variety of 'black boxes' for Police forces across the UK. These include ongoing investigations into a collision that caused the death of a pedestrian and a major 'crash for cash' fraud operation.

Neil Thomas, Director of Investigative Services at APU, said: "The Police face a dilemma; in the age of the connected car, collecting the evidence isn't so much the problem, it's the interpretation of that information which causes the headaches.

"They know that telematics can be a valuable tool for them in bringing criminals to justice, but they don't have the right people, and IT capability to interrogate the data and package it into a meaningful, usable format.

"After an accident, for example, a car installed with an advanced telematics device is capable of providing a huge amount of detail about the accident – speed, braking, steering inputs, location, g-force, passenger information, impact angle and more – but the Police struggle to make sense of it.

"Academic research I conducted in association with Coventry University revealed a need for greater collaboration between the public and private sectors to improve criminal justice efficiency. APU, one of very few specialists in this area, have stepped in to help out, and provides a vital role in plugging the gaps.

"With more cuts on the way I would encourage the police to explore how existing cost effective private sector technology and expertise can help them investigate crime."

APU has been instrumental in the fight against criminals attempting to defraud motorists and insurance companies, particularly 'crash for cash' fraudsters. Its team of private investigators are solely responsible for the recovery of £200,000 worth of stolen vehicles and the halting of £150,000 worth of fraudulent insurance claims in the last 12 months, along with also providing telematics evidence for criminal court cases ranging from burglary to attempted murder.

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* http://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2015/01/27/connected-cars-by-the-numbers-infographic/

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