



Distracted Driving Awareness Month: How Technology Enables a Safer Experience

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October will always be a reflective time here at Cerence as we [celebrate our anniversary](#) of becoming a standalone, independent company. With that reflection comes a natural examination of what drives us in our day-to-day work and, on a higher level, our vision as a company: a safer, more enjoyable journey for everyone. In light of our commitment to safety, it's important that we recognize [Distracted Driving Awareness Month](#), which is being observed this October in the US.

Distracted driving has been largely synonymous with the use of mobile devices behind the wheel, creating a serious safety problem that has rightfully garnered increased attention at both the state and federal levels. In fact, the state of Massachusetts (where Cerence is headquartered) became the sixteenth state to ban drivers from even holding their phones, tablets, or other electronic devices when it passed its Distracted Driving Law earlier this year. When Massachusetts enacted the law, Governor Charlie Baker stated, "Operators driving a car should not be holding a phone to text, check social media or email," and "When a driver on an electronic device hits something or someone, that's not an accident. It's a crash that was avoidable."

However, distracted driving isn't limited to just mobile devices. Many activities in the car, from adjusting the radio or temperature to drinking a cup of coffee or dealing with noisy passengers takes drivers' eyes and attention away from the road and can lead to the consequences stated by Governor Baker. It is a real, serious, and significant problem.

While our smartphones are a big part of the problem, other technologies deliver solutions by allowing drivers to remain focused and vigilant while operating their vehicles. Today, there are a myriad of hands-free technologies that enable drivers to make phone calls, navigate to a destination, or search for their favorite radio station or playlist – using just their voice. And consumers are taking notice, actively seeking out voice-powered interaction during the car buying process: according to Voicebot.ai's latest [In-Car Voice Assistant Consumer Adoption report](#), 60% of consumers say that voice assistants are now a factor in their new car purchase criteria. They're doing so with safety in mind, too; in our recent [Driver's Seat Survey](#), more than half (54%) of respondents said the biggest benefit of a car's voice assistant is keeping them safe while driving. Beyond voice, new modes of interaction like gaze and gesture will make interacting with the vehicle even easier, delivering a seamless, natural experience that further minimizes distractions.

In today's connected world, we can't expect people to disconnect just because they're driving. At Cerence, we're committed to the development of [technologies and solutions](#) to ensure they do so safely.