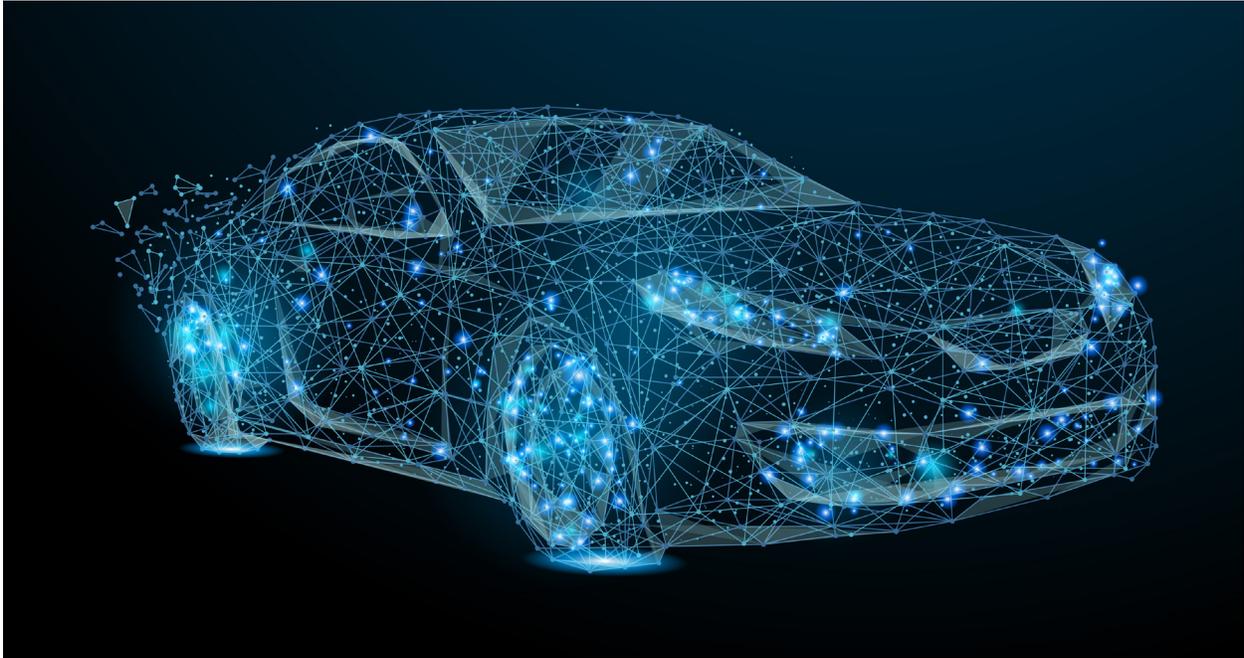


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Globetouch



Why a Truly Ubiquitous Platform Solution Rewards Everyone, Especially the Customer

By Steve Bell, Senior Analyst, Heavy Reading

One of the biggest challenges that automotive manufacturers have is the creation of a single platform that can be easily sold into local markets, governed by different standards and regulations, without much adjustment. This skillset is the mechanism that enables them to create compelling designs, that have global scale and are cost competitive. It's a tough challenge, but most global automotive brand names have perfected the art.

Going forward, the challenges they face will be numerous, and include ever more compelling and cost effective electric cars that reduce the complexity of manufacture, and therefore reduce the >>



barriers to entry for startups. In China, which has the single largest car market, the government is actively promoting the adoption of electric cars and the development of domestic electric car manufacturers. If they can scale and perfect the art of car design and development, then the global stage is their next beach head.

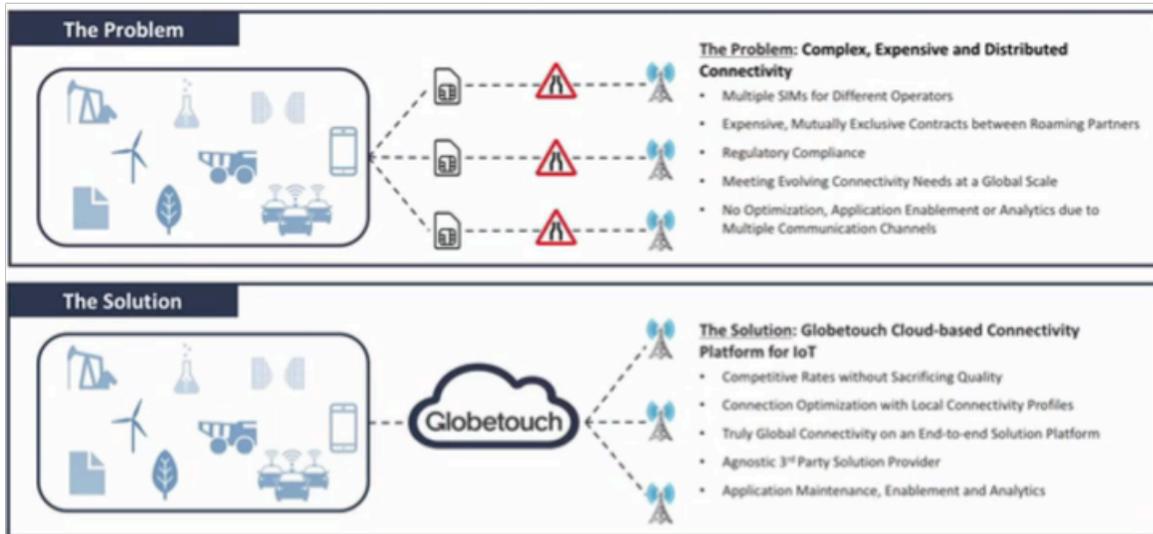
As if this isn't enough, the auto industry is coping with a continuous rise in vehicle connectivity, and bracing for the evolution of advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) toward ever increasing degrees of autonomous vehicles. Adding to the angst of these developments is the reality that vehicle-to-everything communication systems - the so called V2X solutions - are on the brink of being approved by some governments, although there's a high probability that there may not be a common system globally.

All of this means that there's an increasing level of data being generated by these vehicles across the globe, much of which needs to be shared with various entities. The data is set to continuously increase as more sensors and greater compute power is added to cars. The challenge is how to cope with increasing communications complexity; by this I mean that OEMs are faced with a difficult dilemma: global platforms and numerous local markets with different communications networks, ranging from 2G, 3G and, increasingly, 4G cellular technologies.

On the other side of the equation are the regional and national mobile operators that are confronting the situation, where global operators are trying to lock up the OEMs to be a single provider of global connectivity. In many cases, this results in the local operator being nothing more than a roaming partner. In recent Heavy Reading surveys among global mobile operators, asking about which IoT markets they are focusing on, the smaller operators all rate "connected car" as close to the bottom. The issue behind this is their inability to offer anything unique to the car manufacturers, and the stark reality that these manufacturers don't have the time and resources to strike deals with every operator in every country on the planet.

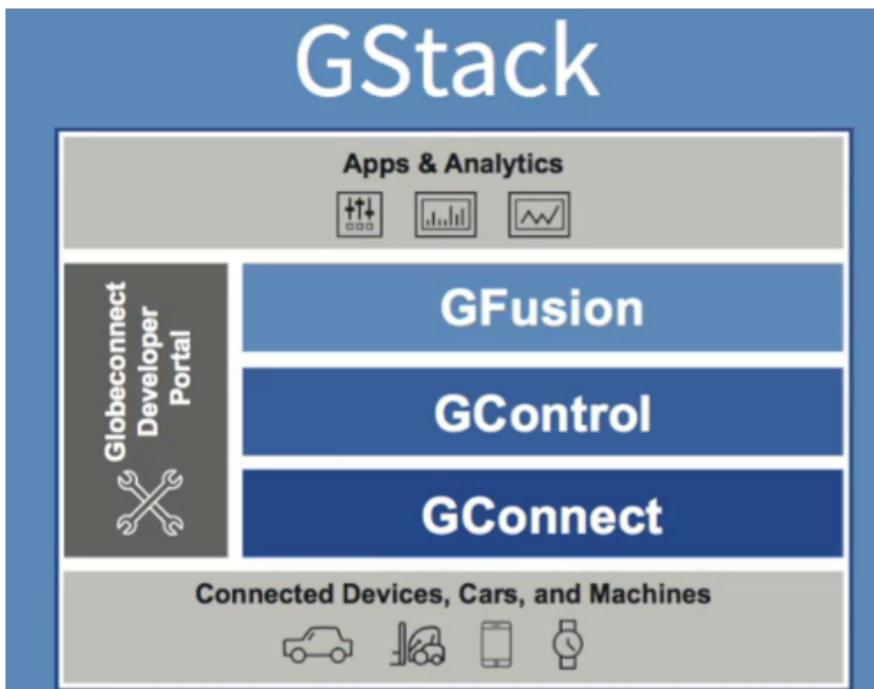
Against this backdrop, the question is: Can Globetouch be the fairy dust that automotive OEMs and smaller local cellular operators have been waiting for? Can it solve the complexity problems for automotive OEMs, at the same time as providing a unique value-add to local operators?

The term "platform" is an extremely popular expression in the IoT world, where there are north of 450 different platforms currently available. So, it's interesting to come across a situation where a platform seems to be a win-win for not only the vendor, but also the customers and partners! Globetouch is a relatively new company that's been in existence for approximately four years. During an interview at Mobile World Congress Americas with CEO, Riccardo Di Blasio, he explained that the company's mission is to create a worldwide fabric of virtualized connectivity. Globetouch is intent on challenging the existing business model of how mobile operators have delivered connectivity; this was created nearly 40 years ago with early analogue systems, and refined with the evolution of GSM in 1991 and the invention of the SIM card. >>



This new business model is based on agreements with mobile operators in 180 countries that provide access to their pipes, and then Globetouch aggregates this capacity into its architecture in nine locations around the globe where it has its packet core. This aggregated global capacity is then made available as a platform to automotive OEMs, as well as other industrials, such as automotive tier one suppliers around the world, providing these companies with a simple single dashboard on a single pane of glass to control their assets and operations worldwide.

The distinction is that this platform is delivered as a service, giving automotive customers the sense of owning their own common platform, as opposed to being required to rent access to multiple different platforms from the operators they deal with around the globe. >>





Trying to understand the background and essence of the platform, I spoke with Globetouch sales manager, Luis Arreguin, who explained that the cloud-based platform sits between the automotive OEM and the multiple operators in the various countries where their cars are sold. Historically, each operator had its own IoT service delivery platform, and it could take more than a year to do all the necessary integration to establish connected car solutions in any particular country. Tackling this need for global coverage, reduced lead times and complexity, Globetouch partnered with global operators to improve connectivity integration and created the GStack platform, powered by its patented CloudSIM connectivity technology.

The platform comprises of three tiers: GConnect, GControl and GFusion. GConnect handles the overall connectivity with the Globetouch ecosystem, in particular the SIM in each device, and this can be soft SIM, embedded SIM, and UICC. GFusion is the analytic engine that collects and interprets data from telematic and diagnostic systems on the vehicle. All this is orchestrated and managed by the GControl element.

Going forward, there will obviously be a need to address the impending V2X deployments, and the challenge will be: how can the Globetouch platform handle the low latency requirements? I posed this question to Munish Kumar, Assistant VP of New Products. For the vehicle to network (V2N) connection, Kumar acknowledged that there will be a need to bring compute power closer to the edge – i.e. within the vehicle. This will require mobile edge compute capability that can perform the analytics closer to the source of the data. Kumar confirmed that the Globetouch network is architected to handle this requirement, as the physical networks are deployed in each country, as well as scale efficiently as demand grows. To achieve this, it will require setting up an instance in the cloud that uses standard interfaces, and fits well with their system-in-a-box design. They can very easily establish the instance in multiple geographies, or multiple instances in a single geography.

Globetouch has created a mechanism for multiple operators to participate in the connected car market, at the same time as simplifying the process of creating a single global connectivity platform and control mechanism for automakers. The thing that caps it all - and which should be appealing to all players, including governments - is that the cloud as a service platform appears to be able to accommodate future technology evolutions. This takes a big unknown out of the equation for everyone.