Google Glass app lets Tesla owners check on cars from afar

July 6 2013, by Catherine Green

If Telsa Motors Inc. Chief Executive Elon Musk was at all concerned about the automaker's status as the technological leader in electric cars, a new app designed for Google Glass just might cement the luxury brand's status.

Software engineer Sahas Katta, who at 24 years old has already founded two tech companies, has created an app that allows Tesla Model S owners to control a host of car functions from the head-up displays on

Google Glass.

GlassTesla lets drivers check how much battery and range their cars have left, stop and start charging to avoid paying higher rates at peak hours, and find the vehicles on a projected map - all done remotely through Google Glass' Internet connection.

Graphics show whether the trunk or doors have been left open, and drivers can honk or flash their car's lights from afar if they find themselves lost in parking garages. On hot days, Tesla owners will be able to turn on the AC from inside their homes while the vehicle is still plugged in to avoid draining batteries once they start driving.

Although many of the features would benefit all EV drivers, Katta said he chose the Model S as his springboard because it's the only car with 3G network capabilities. GlassTesla was officially released Monday. Katta said 300,000 people accessed the app's website within 24 hours. Seven hundred visitors signed up, though as of Tuesday, just 25 had activated the app with both Google Glass and their Tesla vehicles.

The designer of GlassTesla was a member of the invite-only Google Glass Explorer program - just 2,000 people were selected to pre-order the specialty spectacles last year - and had access to a Tesla Model S through a family member who owned one. "It was an obvious thing to do when I had the opportunity," he said.

Building the app took 3 { days, Katta said, though he'd started mulling it over a month before that.

The next step, Katta said, is to let Tesla drivers control their cars by voice.

"This is just the beginning," he explained by phone. "As for the niche

market thing - it definitely is at the moment."

Katta compared Google Glass' current high price and low access to that of the iPhone when it first came out. Both that technology and electric cars will get less expensive in the near future, he said, making them viable for wider audiences.

When they do, his app - free for Google Glass owners - could fall seamlessly into the everyday ease these tech owners seek. "This is a great example of how computing will play into our lives," Katta said, "and the tools we interact with every day."

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