

Kia Announces "UVO" powered by Microsoft

Written by Cliff Murphy

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This week Kia has announced a partnership with Microsoft bringing a Ford SYNC like system to upcoming Kia models. Both the Kia UVO and Ford's SYNC system are based on the Windows Embedded Auto software and share many of the same features, including wireless iPod connectivity and voice commands. The difference? Whereas you have to bark commands through numerous "menus" to get to a point where you can actually "Play Artist Korn" on the current version of the SYNC system, UVO allows drivers to use more advanced Microsoft speech technology to remove many of those menus.

Here is the Press Release:

IRVINE, Calif., Jan. 5 /PRNewswire/ — Kia Motors America (KMA) today unveiled an innovative and intelligent in-car communications and entertainment system, "UVO powered by Microsoft®," to be available in select Kia vehicles starting this summer. UVO provides consumer friendly voice- and touch-activated experiences for simple management of music files and hands-free mobile phone operation. Co-developed with Microsoft and based on Windows Embedded Auto software, UVO is an easy-to-use, hands-free solution that allows drivers and passengers to answer and place phone calls, receive and respond to SMS text messages, access music from a variety of media sources and create custom music experiences.

Understanding drivers want and need intuitive controls, Kia Motors and Microsoft® designed UVO to enable a new level of voice recognition through Microsoft® speech technology. UVO users will be able to access media content and connect with people through simple, quick voice commands without having to navigate through menus. By supporting complex grammar, UVO needs only short voice commands to connect drivers and passengers with their desired functions. An interactive system, UVO responds to inquiries such as "What's playing?" and provides audible answers and related functions, helping to keep drivers' eyes safely focused on the road ahead of them.

UVO also brings advancements to in-car technology through an immersive user experience. The interface features a 4.3-inch, full-color display that provides detailed information on media content, phonebook data and vehicle information, and the screen also doubles as a rear-view camera when the shifter is put in reverse. UVO is an open platform that seamlessly integrates with a wide variety of mobile phones, music players and other devices, making it easy for drivers to quickly pair devices.

"UVO powered by Microsoft® is a breakthrough for in-vehicle infotainment that helps allow drivers and passengers to safely and easily use all of their personal technologies to create personalized in-vehicle communications and entertainment experiences," says Michael Sprague, vice president, marketing, KMA. "Collaborating with Microsoft, Kia Motors is able to offer drivers an experience that will provide our cars with a clear competitive advantage."

"We are very excited with the customized approach Kia Motors is bringing to in-car

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infotainment," says Kevin Dallas, General Manager of Microsoft's Windows Embedded Business division. "Kia's UVO system demonstrates how the power of Windows Embedded technology can keep consumers connected to the devices, information and entertainment that matters to them most."

Based on the award-winning Windows Embedded Auto platform, UVO can be updated easily as new consumer devices continue to be introduced to the market.

UVO will debut this summer in the all-new 2011 Kia Sorento CUV and will be extended to additional Kia vehicles as part of the brand's technological evolution. Kia Sorento, Soul, Forte and Forte KOUP already come standard and at no extra cost with Bluetooth® wireless technology connectivity, iPod®/MP3/USB connectivity, and a three-month SIRIUS® satellite radio subscription.(1)

UVO will be shown for the first time at the 2010 International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, January 7-10, in both the Kia Motors and Microsoft booths and representatives from both companies will be on-hand for demonstrations.

Key Features of UVO, powered by Microsoft:

- **Advanced Speech Recognition:** Intelligent Microsoft® speech technology is trained to the system operator's voice, creating a personal profile and allowing for up to two different voice profiles in various languages. Support for large grammar commands and faster response time means the content is delivered when you ask for it. Kia Motors' UVO system is the first in-vehicle solution to integrate full Microsoft® speech engine technology.
- **Natural Interface Advancements:** A full-color, easy-to-use in-dash monitor allows occupants to quickly scroll through media and mobile device content through intuitive voice and touch-screen commands.
- **Custom Media Experiences with MyMusic:** UVO's "Jukebox" function features a 1GB hard drive for media storage, allowing users to rip music from CDs or an MP3 player into personal MyMusic folders and store up to 250 songs sorted by title and/or artist - all through voice commands. The system can shuffle through an MP3 player or AM/FM and SIRIUS® radio stations and instantly identify what's playing all through simple voice commands.
- **Rear Backup Camera:** When the vehicle is put in reverse, a built-in rear backup camera uses UVO's in-dash display to provide clearer images of the environment behind the car assisting the driver to identify certain objects that otherwise may be difficult to see.
- **Ability to Continuously Update Features and Services:** Based on a flexible Windows Embedded Auto platform, updates and services can be delivered in a number of ways (over-the-air, over-the-Web) for Kia to continue to provide a superior user experience after the system enters the market.

Kia Motors is in the midst of a dramatic, design-led transformation, which has been delivering dynamically styled vehicles in several important segments at exactly the right time contributing to the brand's continued gains in U.S. market share. The launch of the all-new 2011 Sorento CUV, the official vehicle of the NBA and the first vehicle to be built(2) at Kia Motors' first U.S.-based manufacturing facilities in West Point, Georgia, will further enhance the Kia lineup.