Mobility E-Health 2022: Software République incubator tackling vehicle passenger health

Software République and its partners are incubating global innovators, entrepreneurs, and startups across Europe, and the World, and have recently launched a "Call for Projects" to develop health detection and diagnostic solutions for the benefit of conductors and passengers.

Temps de lecture : minute

9 December 2022

Software République is a European collaborative ecosystem providing secure and sustainable mobility solutions. Based in France, the organisation is made up of six industry leading partners who each bring different skills to the table. The partners are Atos, Dassault Systems, Orange, Renault Group, and STMicroelectronics, and Thales.

They aim to provide individuals, companies and local governments with business solutions with everything from user interfaces to vehicle to grid energy management.

Software République runs two types of incubators. The first incubates business projects - offering software and hardware, product and services. Each project is supported by the skills and resources at least two of their important partners. They work on five main domains which they have branded: connected vehicle; data-driven mobility services; charging ecosystems; Talent Academy, and industrial metaverse. In just 18 months since Software République came together, 5 projects and 11 startups have been incubated.

Mobility e-health: what is it?

For this call for projects, Software République is looking to partner with global innovators, entrepreneurs, and startups to develop health detection and diagnostic solutions for terrestrial transport vehicles, for the benefit of conductors and passengers.

Their stated aim is to generate novel use cases and applications, thereby promoting wellbeing and health benefits in the widest possible sense. They explain the potential solutions should ideally be linked to the native vehicle systems but could eventually also include additional devices connected to a device (eg. phones, smart watches).

The phrase ‘mobility e-health’ is a bit of a mouthful. Put simply, however, it means any product or service targeted at monitoring or assisting the health of vehicle passengers by electronic means. This is wide-ranging – it includes simple tasks such as measuring the weight of passengers using seat detectors, or more advanced drowsiness detection using in-built cameras.

Startup Ecosystem Director Richard de Cabrol tells me the project came about due to the intersecting interests of Software République’s partners. It was a use case where they each could provide different technologies and skills: at Orange and Dassault Systems there are people working in the health sector, for example. From here – they realised they could use the cabin of the vehicle (car, train etc) as a place where they could monitor the health of individuals. Richard comments this is illustrative of how Software République innovates in general: by pooling their skillsets and finding under-served niches. Richard stresses the incubator is based around the needs of the startup; it doesn’t eat into their time unnecessarily but simply equips them with the technical and soft skills they need to thrive.

The initial ideation for the project focused on improving the comfort and safety of the passenger, before Software République realised the, untapped potential for cars to become health-monitoring diagnostic devices. Much like wearables – cars (and other vehicles) will be able to passively collect millions of actionable data points which can be shared with passengers directly, or anonymised to provide a range of health and behavioural insights.

Richard is bullish on the market for mobility e-health for two main reasons. The first is because he envisions safety becoming even more of a differentiating factor when choosing a vehicle; as behavioural psychology suggests, people don't scrimp on life-saving services (services he thinks will be developed by the startups in the incubator). He also points out with the rise of AVs, there is going to be an appropriate regulatory environment for increasing the level of passenger tracking measures which these innovations will bring. Driver monitoring, for example, will become mandatory within three years.

The call for projects went live earlier this year, and they recently confirmed they have since had 22 applications from candidates across 7 countries – spanning from Europe to North America, a neat demonstration of the global reach of this French based ecosystem. The finalists will be announced in January, and from there any number of 'winners' will be chosen further down the line. As they say, the world needs more software, more république.

Article by Max Lunn