



IFR ANNOUNCES VEHICLE RADIO TEST SYSTEM TO REDUCE WARRANTY COSTS OF AUTOMOTIVE INFORMATION AND ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS

Stevenage, U.K. January 7, 2002 IFR Systems, Inc. (Nasdaq: IFRS) announced today it has launched the Vehicle Radio Test System (VRTS), designed to significantly reduce warranty costs associated with in-vehicle information and entertainment systems. VRTS verifies the quality of the assembly and installation of these systems by using automated functional testing as part of the production line process.

[\(PRWEB\)](#) January 11, 2002 -- Tests are conducted in background without adding to existing production flow warranty savings could reach as high as \$750,000 per year

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IFR's vehicle test system is capable of testing AM/FM radios, GSM cellular phones with hands-free capability, navigational and traffic warning systems, as well as television and loudspeaker circuits. In addition, the VRTS system can be upgraded to accommodate future developments in vehicle communications and entertainment systems such as GPS (global positioning system), DAB (digital audio broadcasting), road tolling, and collision avoidance systems.

"The increasing complexity of in-vehicle information and entertainment systems, coupled with customers' high expectations, demand that automotive manufacturers review their approach to RF and audio testing," said Tony Rudkin, manager, IFR Solutions Business. "Current manual test processes are too subjective, relying on the human ear or eye for a decision on the test outcome, leading to inconsistent and poor fault reporting that results in poor equipment performance. The focus needs to be on automated testing of RF and audio signal path connectivity, as they are the areas where experience suggests that most process-related faults are introduced. However, we also verify component functionality so that the small percentage of truly faulty equipment is also captured by the testing."

Savings up to \$750,000 per year

Attempting to correct post-sale problems usually involves exchanging equipment under warranty, and typically does not solve the problem. The average warranty cost associated with a radio equipment problem is around \$2.50 per vehicle, which is significant when multiplied by the number of



cars manufactured each year. Early work with a major European automotive manufacturer has established that full-scale introduction of IFR's VRTS system could realize warranty savings of \$750,000 per year.

The VRTS system can be incorporated at any point on the assembly line where the vehicle is stationary for a period of time, such as during wheel alignment or headlight tests. The system works as a "background process" while other assembly functions are being performed, ensuring that the manufacturing process is not extended.

VRTS test antennas are mounted in protective enclosures and placed at carefully controlled points to ensure that the signals received by the vehicle radio equipment are of a consistent level. Controlled by a personal computer and mounted in a standard rack enclosure, the freestanding VRTS is linked to the manufacturer's data system, receiving control information and feeding back test results. The test controller within the vehicle initiates the test and controls in the in-vehicle equipment, sending commands to the IFR radio test set via an infrared link or network connection.

"Dealerships have relatively sophisticated equipment to resolve mechanical problems, but they have very little to help them diagnose faults in RF and audio-related items. The increasing use of wireless equipment will compound their problems. Catching the faults in the assembly process will not only save costs, but retain customers as well," concluded Tony Rudkin. Price and Availability.

The Vehicle Radio Test System is a complete test system that can be configured to meet the needs of each automotive manufacturer. For more information on price and availability, contact the nearest IFR sales office or via email at info@ifrsys.com.

IFR - Advancing Wireless Test

IFR is a leading designer and manufacturer of advanced wireless test solutions for communications, avionics and general test and measurement applications. For more information about IFR in the United States, contact: IFR, 10200 West York Street, Wichita, Kan., 67215-8999. Contact IFR via e-mail at info@ifrsys.com, on the Web at www.ifrsys.com, or by telephone at (800) 835-2352 or (316) 522-4981.

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