

Bluetooth Panic Button Potential to Save Lives



Background to Securecom

Securecom was established in 2001 by George Brosnan and Michael O'Connor in Tralee, a town in the south-west of Ireland. It wasn't long before they were joined by Dr Pat Hartigan, who has had many years experience working in wireless technology research and development.

Their mission was to exploit the growing global need to improve personal safety using today's technology. The solution needed to be centred on the mobile phone. But as they reasoned, in the case of an emergency your phone may not be in easy reach, or you may feel too threatened to make a call. Securecom decided that the alarm needed to be separate to the mobile phone but use its technology...the answer was bluetooth.

Securecom developed a wireless personal alarm, the size of a button, with Bluetooth, which works with both GSM and Satellite phones, to send emergency text messages to pre-determined numbers.

In September 2005 Securecom completed the ARTES-3 project with the European Space Agency which part funded the project concept to its present level, of pre-production.

How does it work?

Just imagine you are out walking in the countryside. You wander off the beaten track, slip on some wet autumn leaves, fall down a crevice and twist your ankle. You look around for your mobile, but it has disappeared somewhere into the undergrowth. You can't move your leg. You are stuck and in pain. How do you signal for help? Who knows you are out there?

Securecom's Wireless Personal Alarm allows you to send a message from your mobile phone to a pre-determined emergency number of your choice; you just need to be within 10 metres of the handset (Class 2) or within 100 metres if the handset has Class 1 bluetooth.

The device can be worn around your neck, wrist, attached to your belt or pinned to your top like a badge or a brooch. It can even be kept in your pocket, wherever is most comfortable and easy for you to reach.

All you have to do in the case of an emergency is activate it by squeezing the buttons on it. This will trigger an SMS message from your mobile to your emergency numbers. You can now be secure in the knowledge that help is on its way to you as your location co-ordinates have also been sent to your emergency number.

Subscription-Based-Services

Everyone will require a different level of service from their device. For example, users could subscribe to a monitoring service, which would notify the local emergency services or indeed conduct a search themselves. The device can also be used to activate the internal automated emergency response system of a company in the case of a lone worker. It can also be used to notify your breakdown assistance service or rental car company that you are in trouble – no need to make a call to the call centre; especially handy when you are not too sure where exactly you are, or if you've locked your mobile and your keys into the car!

Each owner of a wireless personal alarm will subscribe to a location based service, or use a mobile that has location capabilities within in it. So why does the Wireless Personal Alarm not come with GPS? It was during the early stages of development that the team at Securecom decided not to include GPS technology in the device, as it would have increased the weight, price and battery consumption of the product, therefore making it less attractive to users.



This strategy has paid off for Securecom, as wireless carriers in both Europe and the U.S. are now working towards implementing location capabilities into their devices and networks. The E112 initiative in Europe and E911 in the U.S. require wireless carriers to be able to inform emergency services of any caller's location.

Bluetooth Panic Alarm

Driving LBS Revenues

This is good news for Securecom as it looks for a strategic alliance to bring the Bluetooth Personal Alarm to market. Operators will be looking for initiatives to drive the demand for location based services and create varied revenue streams for their newly upgraded handsets and systems. The operators could derive revenues from charging premium rates for the service, or through a pay-as-you-go top-up revenue models.

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