

INTERNET

Audi tricks consumers with autonomous office chair April Fools prank

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Audi's autonomous office chair

By NANCY BUCKLEY

Audi of America tricked consumers this April Fools' with a screen takeover video on The Onion to pretend to advertise an autonomous office chair.

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Luxury Daily

The chair does everything from avoid user's supervisors to deploy an airbag in case of a collision. The humorous intentions of this fake advertisement offers an amusing take on the autonomous vehicles and drives attention to Audi's advances in technology for its self-driving car.

"Luxury brands are often positioned in a very serious, "stuffy" light, which can sometimes alienate them from some key consumer audiences," said Matthew Marchak, CEO/president of [The Eighth Floor](#), New York.

"By incorporating a "spoof" on their own cutting edge technology, Audi is able to engage an expanded target audience through light, intellectual use of humor while maintaining the DNA of the brand," he said.

Mr. Marchak is not affiliated with Audi, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Audi was unable to comment by press deadline.

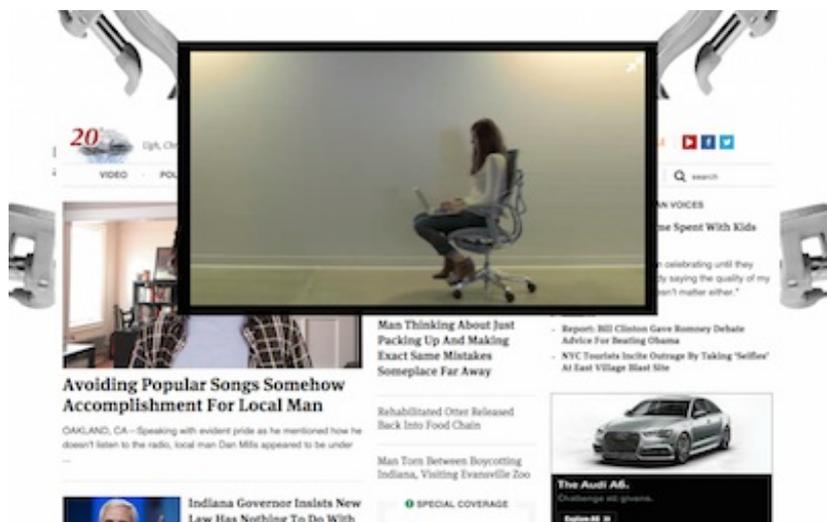
Fooled you

The Onion, a satirical news site, hosted Audi's ad on the top of the page as a drop down, screen takeover video that automatically plays when one logs onto The Onion's homepage.

"The Onion is a perfect fit for this type of advertisement as the dry, sarcastic tone of both the placement and the publication are parallel," Mr. Marchak said. "The Onion has long been established as the headquarters of satirical media and this latest, fresh approach by Audi works seamlessly with this platform."

Audi's video starts with a narrator introducing "the latest, autonomous, mobility innovation: The Audi Autonomous Office Chair." A woman is seen riding the chair with her laptop on her legs as the chair moves around her office.

The chair, much like a vehicle, is "designed and engineered for performance, intelligence and safety." The woman is seen driving through coffee spills and accelerating rapidly, as the chair adjust to the "adverse conditions." These speculations are supposedly so advanced because engineers spent thousands of hours testing the technology in a wind tunnel.



Audi on The Onion

By linking to work calendars, the chair knows when and where the person's next meeting is and can predict when the user needs coffee or has to use the restroom.

Facial recognition allows for supervisor avoidance technology. Also, airbag technology protects drivers and pedestrians if a collision occurs.

The technology and abilities of this chair is a twist on those of the autonomous vehicle Audi has been testing.

In January, Audi showed that its Audi A7 autonomous concept vehicle can seamlessly meld into traffic by going on a 560-mile test drive.

Audi piloted its concept vehicle, nicknamed "Jack," from Silicon Valley, CA to Las Vegas for the annual Consumer Electronics Show, which concluded on Jan. 9. In a time when many automakers are unveiling and testing autonomous driving experiences, showing the realistic implications can help consumers learn to trust the latest technologies ([see story](#)).

On Facebook, the video was also shared. The brand takes a serious approach to the "all-new 2016 Audi Autonomous Office Chair," even having a section on its Web site for the chair.

Everyone, please take your seats. Introducing the Audi Autonomous Office Chair. Visit <http://audi.us/homepage> for more.

Posted by Audi USA on Wednesday, April 1, 2015

The humorous spin on the autonomous car, a concept some people think is ridiculous in itself, allows Audi to appeal to consumers who may not be certain about the advanced technology of self-driving vehicles.

Laugh a little

Humor in a video or ad can create an easily shareable link that not only spreads the name of the brand, but makes viewers smile.

For instance, German automaker BMW compared its new electronic car to the creation of the Internet with a humorous commercial that aired during Super Bowl XLIX Feb. 1.

The brand released the video on YouTube along with outtake footage, a behind-the-scenes look and two short teasers. Katie Couric and Bryant Gumbel star in the ad, which recreates a clip of the two journalists discussing the Internet on NBC's Today Show back in 1994 ([see story](#)).

Also, Audi of America parodied rehearsed living with the final spot in its Emmy Awards promotions.

The automaker began the series with a number of commercials featuring actors such as Fred Armisen going off-script in seemingly improvised moments. The final spot took a more relatable approach by showing how easily a person's life can slip into a rehearsed routine, and presents the Q3 model as the antidote to an otherwise constraining script ([see story](#)).

Adding humor lets a brand showcase a lighter side.

"While no one can really pinpoint the origin of April Fools Day, it's turned into a playground for even the most buttoned-up corporations to break free of their static stereotypes and explore some territories typically uncharted by these brands," Mr. Marchak said.

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/dvz2dXfkX6Y>

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