

MOBILE

## Land Rover gets smart with watch face application

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*Land Rover Discovery Sport*

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By FORREST CARDAMENIS

British automaker Land Rover is providing some of its consumers with a decorative flourish in the form of a smartwatch application.

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**Luxury Daily**

The app, entitled Land Rover Watch Face, is currently available only for Android Wear, and is an exercise in form over function, providing a variety of images on the watch face but not affecting the driving experience directly. Land Rover Watch Face is part of the brand's larger campaign for the Land Rover Discovery Sport SUV and fits in with Land Rover's image.

"For those Land Rover owners who do have the wearable, the evolving landscape fits in with the brand's promise of adventure," said Jeff Hasen, founder/president of Gotta Mobilize, Seattle.

"We see smartwatches or wearables as an extension of mobile," said Kim Kyaw, digital marketing and social media manager of **Jaguar Land Rover**, New York. "This is the first time we're entering the wearable category and we're looking to provide utility to consumers similar to what we do on mobile. The goal was to provide value on top of the

normal wearable experience.

"The concept for the watch face is meant to align with the exploratory nature of the Discovery Sport, providing utility that inspires users to get up, get out, and 'Discover the #Undiscovered.'"

Watch closely

The app was developed in conjunction with Mindshare.

"To help promote downloads of the watch face, we partnered with Opera Mediaworks," said Karen Bennett, managing director of Mindshare, New York. "With their advanced targeting, the brand can identify consumers who have previously installed the Android Wear app on their phone. The media placements will then deep-link into the app store where a consumer can directly download the Land Rover watch face. This is a first-to-market approach for reaching Android Wear users."

The app provides a different landscape image for the watch face for each day of the month. In addition, the app works in conjunction with the Android Wear's altitude meter and adapts the position of the images on the watch face based on the wearer's altitude.



*Land Rover watch face*

The interface, which also includes a slight pan across the landscape every minute, ensures that the app will not wear down on users. Short of a wearer being in the same place at the same time on the same day of the month, every glance at the watch will reveal a different image.

Although the app does not have a function per se, it may create mental associations that could have an effect on consumers.



*Land Rover watch face*

The images may create associations for wearers between beautiful landscapes and Land Rover vehicles, which could in turn lead them to purchase the Discovery Sport. The interface also encourages wearers and Land Rover owners to explore, perhaps turning the vehicles into a larger part of their owners' lives.

Because smartwatches are still not widely worn, luxury brands have an opportunity to show their creativity and to cement themselves as crucial players in the new field. By creating an app that ensures smartwatch wearers variety to their watch faces, Land Rover is also planting a firm foot in the wearables market that it will be able to leverage in the future.

#### Head start

The form-over-function approach contrasts with that of other luxury automakers.

In January 2014, German automaker BMW announced that it is extending its BMW i Remote Application to the Samsung Galaxy Gear smartwatch at the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

The Galaxy Gear synchronizes with an owner's smartphone to display essential functions in a more accessible manner. The Remote App provides drivers with accurate assessments of their BMW i3's status and allows for communication between the two ([see story](#)).

Other automotive brands have also incorporated the smartwatch into their apps for functional purposes.

Additionally, German automaker Mercedes-Benz is helping drivers obtain the ultimate in

mobile connectivity with an application for the Apple Watch.

Mercedes is positioning its Apple Watch app, the MB Companion, as a way to help drivers be “guided all the way” while in their vehicles through navigational touch points. Although Apple Watch is not yet widely worn, implementing an app in the wearable’s early stage shows Mercedes’ modernity as a brand ([see story](#)).

We believe in a test and learn approach, said Ms. Kyaw. “We'll evaluate future opportunities based on what we learn about how receptive our target consumer is to brand experiences on a Smart Watch.”

Given Land Rover’s recent initiatives, it is unlikely that its efforts stop with this app or with Android Wear.

“My first question would be about the reach of this program given the relative adoption of the Android Wear smartwatch,” Mr. Hasen said. “I have to think that an Apple Watch app is forthcoming, given the makeup of the Land Rover client base and the brand's other initiatives in the Apple Store.”

Final Take

*Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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