

COMMERCE

Jaguar Land Rover invests in autonomous driving development programs

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Jaguar Land Rover connected car technology

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

British automaker Jaguar Land Rover is investing in a "living laboratory" to help develop connected and autonomous vehicles.

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Forty-one miles of roads running through Coventry and Solihull in the United Kingdom will be made into a laboratory for testing new connected and autonomous vehicle (CAV) technologies. Although autonomous vehicles are attractive in theory, many consumers still have reservations about the real world effectiveness and driving experience.

"The whole industry is moving towards more intelligent and connected vehicles," said Dr. Wolfgang Epple, director of research and technology for **Jaguar Land Rover**. "One reason is to improve road safety. These technologies can also enhance the driving experience and of course customers more than ever want to be connected whilst on the move.

"As our cars become more intelligent it is important to ensure this doesn't take away driving pleasure," he said. "We are developing semi autonomous and fully autonomous technologies, but our aim is to offer drivers the choice.

"Ultimately this means the car could drive itself during the less stimulating parts of the journey if the driver chooses and have intelligent systems that can be adjusted for a more engaging and involved drive."

Emergency recognition

For the UK-CITE program, 100 "smart" cars will be outfitted with CAV equipment, testing to see how cars could communicate with one another on the road in real time. Connected cars could work with one another to make lane changing, and freeway exits and entrances easier, and detect emergency vehicles from farther away than the human eye or ear and move out of the way.



Jaguar Land Rover Emergency Vehicle Warning Research

Such vehicles could also gather data that authorities could use to help monitor and manage traffic flow. Such uses, however, could also bring about privacy worries for some drivers.

Cars that transmit information sound futuristic, but it is comparable to a driver scanning far out in front of the vehicle and checking mirrors, making notes of street signs, stop lights, the road and surrounding vehicles. An autonomous vehicle, like a driver, needs sufficient information to be a safer, better driver.

For the separate but related MOVE-UK, test vehicles will also be outfitted with sensors that will take note of humans' driving behaviors, such as easing forward at intersections, reacting to emergency vehicles, entering roundabouts and weather-related behavioral changes. Research shows that drivers will be more trusting of autonomous cars that more closely resemble human driving rather than a more robotic process.



Jaguar Land Rover in-car Gantry Research

Such data will also help develop insurance policies. The liability of particular scenarios will be assessed based on the data accrued by the test vehicles.

"It is currently a race between many manufacturers, including Tesla and Apple, to get to market first with this technology," said Brett Levine, cofounder of [Drive Anything](#), Huntingdon Valley, PA. "Not only for purposes of being the first to market and benefiting from a competitive advantage, but moreover it will ultimately increase the safety of the occupants on the road.

"Any luxury brand aspires to [present] the image that their products are on the forefront of the industry," he said.

"Those companies being perceived to lead the way in the automotive market will benefit greatly."



Jaguar Land Rover Emergency Vehicle Research

Autonomous vehicles are still several years away, and it is important to remember that their introduction to the road will be gradual, not all at once. Not only will autonomous vehicles that behave like humans be more attractive to consumers, but they will also be more effective during the early life of publicly available autonomous vehicles.

"Being the current time, where technologically the vehicles are with their autonomous functions, it's important that the car behaves and the computers controlling it acts in a manner that is predictable and humanlike, as most of the other drivers on the road will not be autonomous," Mr. Levine said.

Ahead in the race

Autonomous and connected vehicles represent a point of convergence between the tech and automotive industries.

German automakers Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi are among the leaders in strategy and execution in autonomous cars, with Tesla and Jaguar a bit further behind, according to a new report by Navigant Research.

Although fully self-driving cars may still be a decade away, pieces of the technology are already being implemented into vehicles today, meaning that the battle to be first is already waging. Because of the safety and ease of such a vehicle, the first brand to release an effective, fully autonomous car could capture a sizable segment of the market ([see story](#)).



Jaguar Land Rover emergency braking research

In the case of Jaguar Land Rover, positioning itself on the forefront of the tech industry is a common tactic.

Last October, the automaker British automaker partnered with Wired magazine to reach a new market segment with its latest innovations.

The luxury carmaker unveiled the XF C-X75 supercar, featured in the recent James Bond film "Spectre," while the Land Rover brand unveiled its new "Mind Sense," "Air Bubble," "Predictive Infotainment" and "Cargo Sense" technologies. By coupling a hyped vehicle that has wide interest among consumers with technological advances, Jaguar was able to reach a larger audience when it details its innovations ([see story](#)).

"Today, a Jaguar or Land Rover is a capable, desirable vehicle which offers a premium experience," Jaguar Land Rover's Dr. Eppler said. "We have a great heritage of innovation - whether that's lightweighting or off-road capability.

"While it's important that we continue to offer the latest technology to our customers, all of our vehicles reflect our brand values - and this is what our customers tell us they want," he said. "The desire from customers for a capable and desirable car will not diminish as cars become more digital."

"Our research ensures that when these smart, connected or clean technologies are launched they are robust, meet customer expectations and offer an improvement to the driving experience."

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