

AUTOMOTIVE

Audi ups driver connectivity by embedding SIM cards into new models

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2017 Audi A4

By STAFF REPORTS

German automaker Audi is equipping a number of its new models with a SIM card to unlock the advantages of its connected infotainment services.

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The permanently installed SIM cards will be found in many of Audi's latest models, including the new A3, A4, Q2 and Q7 range. By including a connected SIM card within its models, Audi is allowing drivers to go "online without borders" and get the most out of its in-car features.

Mobile hotspot

Audi will factory-install the SIM cards in new models that use the second-generation modular infotainment platform. Doing so will give drivers in Europe access to Audi's connect services and will include a data flat rate for both domestic use and while abroad.

With the addition of the SIM, Audi's connect services onboard will have a download speed of up to 100 MBit/s, with functions that include navigation with Google Earth and Google Street View, travel, traffic and parking information.

Also, drivers can access their Twitter and email accounts as well as their smartphone's calendar. The SIM cards will have unlimited data to give drivers freedom to use the services as much as they would like. Audi is offering a complimentary three-month trial for the service.

The addition is beneficial mainly for European countries, because the Audi connect SIM will automatically access the provider of each specific country, as needed. This will eliminate high, country-specific roaming charges.

In the coming months, drivers will be able to purchase additional data packages for a WiFi hotspot within their Audi, for up to eight mobile devices. As with the SIM, the WiFi hotspot package will account for international borders in Europe to avoid charges.



Audi connect infotainment services

Likewise, drivers will be able to use the SIM card to create a WiFi hotspot within the car via their own cellular provider.

The offer is the first result of the collaboration between Audi and Irish company Cubic Telecom, a supplier of connectivity solutions.

Similarly, Ferrari and Germany's Mercedes-Benz were early adopters of Apple's CarPlay infotainment system, launched in 2014, that syncs up dashboard and wheel controls to the consumer's Apple device.

A major draw of Apple CarPlay is that it cuts down on distractions. Rather than digging around for a phone, punching in commands and waiting for a response, the system synchronizes with the driver's phones and can be activated by voice or on the easily accessed dashboard ([see story](#)).

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