

AUTOMOTIVE

Jaguar Land Rover invests in in-seat experience with tech research expansion

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Jaguar Land Rover Roadwork Assist technology

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

British automaker Jaguar Land Rover is responding to changes in the automotive sector by furthering its technology research operations.

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Jaguar Land Rover's Portland, OR-based research center is expanding engineering facilities and workforce and welcoming three new start-ups into its Tech Incubator program. The company is increasingly investing in technology to stay ahead as the industry braces for major changes.

"While design and drivability of our vehicles are still crucial to our customers, their expectations of the driving experience itself are being set by their consumer devices," said Rupert Poole, Portland senior collaboration manager at **Jaguar Land Rover**. "Working with startups provides us access to diverse new technologies and will help us continue building better experiences for drivers and passengers."

Influencing infotainment

A new, 20,000-square-foot vehicle center is planned to open within the Portland location later this year. The center will serve as a testing and development ground for "next generation in-vehicle experiences."

Accordingly, Jaguar has acquired three start-ups for its Tech Incubator program, opened in January to encourage and cultivate innovation in connected car and infotainment system technologies.



Jaguar XE infotainment system

The first of these start-ups, AVE, aims to optimize content display and distribution on in-vehicle infotainment. With autonomous vehicles approaching and changes to vehicular seating arrangements a likely corollary, infotainment displays will need to keep up as the vehicle transforms into an entertainment hub for long journeys.

The second, Validated, is live in Seattle, Portland and Los Angeles. It allows businesses to buy customers a ride or pay for parking, improving customer loyalty and increasing spend as well.

Lyfeboat, the last in this round of acquisitions, provides logistical and online booking tools for auto service centers to streamline communication with customers.

"The latest start-ups to join our Tech Incubator, AVE, Validated and Lyfeboat share our spirit of innovation and we're excited to work with them to explore ways of enhancing the driver experience for our customers by building solutions that they will use, enjoy and benefit from," Mr. Poole said.

To manage the growing space, Rupert Poole has been appointed senior collaborations manager for future technology and will run the technology centers in Portland and manage Tech Incubator collaborations. Mr. Poole has been with Jaguar Land Rover for 14 years and was previously head of future infotainment.



Jaguar F-Pace

"With the rapid growth and evolution of future technology, it's an incredibly exciting time to be leading Jaguar Land

Rover's Technology Center and Incubator program in Portland," Mr. Poole said in a statement. "The latest start-ups to join our Tech Incubator, AVE, Validated and Lyfeboat, share our spirit of innovation and we're excited to work with them to explore ways of enhancing the driver experience for our customers."

Jaguar Land Rover will also hire 30 new developers and engineers to work in the expanded center, a sizable increase from the current 80 employees. The sizable expansion within one year of opening is testament to the success it has had so far.



Land Rover Defender

The investments reinforce the company's dedication to standing out and getting ahead of the field as automakers scramble to establish themselves as technological frontrunners via infotainment and other technologies in the short-term. Continued investment in tech will also help introduce safer, more efficient and more advanced autonomous and connected vehicles in the longer term.

Tech trepidation

Technology and vehicles have always been in close proximity, but with automobiles on the verge of undergoing such radical shifts signaled by connected and autonomous cars, Jaguar Land Rover has been making ambitious, highly visible investments into technology.

Jaguar Land Rover is beginning real-world testing for autonomous vehicles.

Over the next four years, the automaker plans to have a fleet of more than 100 research automobiles for development and testing of Connected and Autonomous Vehicle technologies. The announcement came immediately after the company detailed plans for all-terrain autonomous driving ([see story](#)), signaling the urgency of the goal ([see story](#)).

As automakers work toward something of a holy grail, they would be wise not to shirk on security.

Nearly all consumers would be less likely to stay loyal to an automaker if it is hacked, according to the 2016 KPMG Consumer Loss Barometer study.

With connected and autonomous vehicles penetrating public consciousness, fear of cyber attacks not on automakers' data but on vehicles themselves has been the corollary. Despite public worries and dangers, however, automakers are not sufficiently investing in cyber security ([see story](#)).

"Jaguar Land Rover is actively embracing the connected car," Mr. Poole said. "Today we have over 80 developers in Portland working with connected technologies such as InControl Remote and InControl Touch Pro infotainment systems.

"The Incubator companies we have selected have a connected element, and we are working with them to explore fantastic connected experiences for our customers," he said.