

AUTOMOTIVE

Jaguar Land Rover advertorial criticized for promoting distracted driving

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Jaguar XE

By STAFF REPORTS

British automaker Jaguar Land Rover's sponsored content push for its connected cars has been deemed reckless for suggesting that "driving is no longer downtime."

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An advertorial that appeared in newspaper the Guardian on Sept. 24, 2016 positioned the vehicle as a mobile office for busy executives, highlighting features such as the model's WiFi connectivity and infotainment system. After receiving complaints, Britain's Advertising Standards Authority reviewed the placement and decided Jaguar's content was irresponsible.

Under fire

According to Jaguar, its marketing copy was written in collaboration with the Guardian. The placement included mentions of productivity touchpoints being integrated into its vehicles, including the XE. Referring to commutes as "reclaimed time," the ad mentions the possibility of keeping up with loved ones or scheduling meetings while on-the-go through Bluetooth connectivity.

Jaguar's ad also features the car-optimized apps that can be used.

The marketing copy does note that these features should only be used when they will not compromise safety. In Jaguar's response to these complaints, the automaker says that the hands-free technology featured within the ad are also safer than the alternative, offering a way to multitask while keeping their eyes on the road.



Interior of Jaguar XE

Guardian News and Media also upheld that the ad was more about safety than recklessness.

In the ASA's ruling, the watchdog wrote, "Whilst we understood that the work related activities and communicating with family could be carried out in the car via hands-free technology, we considered that they were likely to distract a driver's attention from the road and therefore preventing them from having full control of the vehicle. Therefore, we concluded that the advertorial was irresponsible because it was likely to encourage unsafe driving practices."

Part of the ASA's decision was based on The Highway Code's suggestion that drivers should not use hands-free technology while driving, but should instead find a place to park to make calls. While using these features is not necessarily illegal, it is still considered unsafe.

The ASA ruled that Jaguar's ad cannot appear again in its current form. The organization also told the automaker it could not push multitasking that would take drivers' eyes off the road.

Other automakers have faced criticism from the ASA for promoting unsafe driving practices.

Audi UK has been ordered not to run a television commercial again in its same form after the ASA found it irresponsibly depicted acceleration as a thrill.

The automaker's "The Eye," conceived by agency BBH Partners, portrayed the experience of driving the Audi's R8 by zooming in on the eye's involuntary responses while behind the wheel. While Audi said that the ad was intended to communicate the focused drive of the vehicle and its brakes, the ASA upheld the complaint, barring Audi from running the commercial again ([see story](#)).

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