

AUTOMOTIVE

Mercedes tests autonomous driving in new initiative

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Mercedes intelligent world drive. Image credit: Mercedes

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is anticipating the future shift to autonomous driving with a trip around the world while gaining insights on intelligence technology along the way.

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In what the brand is calling the first-ever automated test drive around the world, Mercedes' "Intelligent World Drive" visits five continents. A series of video installments will document the travels online.

"In the not too distant future, technology first driven by the luxury brands from the top down from Tesla to now all the major manufacturers will include autonomous driving," said Brett Levine, automobile consultant at DriveAnything.com. "In addition to electric vehicles, autonomous driving will be the next major step forward for our transport.

"Being that Mercedes invented the automobile, it is an important step for them to be one of the first to pioneer autonomous driving," he said.

Mr. Levine is not affiliated with Mercedes, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Mercedes](#) was reached for comment.

Autonomous research

Mercedes is on a mission to gain insight on autonomous driving in various markets around the world. Its S-Class vehicle will collect data on five continents in five months, learning about various adjustments for different locations.

Bernhard Weidemann acts a spokesman for Mercedes' autonomous division in the film series debut in "Part 1: Europe."

5 continents in 5 months. Mercedes-Benz starts the "Intelligent World Drive", 1st automated test drive around the : <https://t.co/e7ePC12juP>

The special S-Class is branded with a logo for "Intelligent World Drive," and will be testing autonomous driving and driver assistance technology in areas such as Europe, China, Africa, Australia and the United States.

Two other Mercedes autonomous experts will be joining Mr. Weidemann on the journey. The experts will be looking at different cultures in different markets, so the autonomous driving tools can be adjusted for each location.

Mercedes hopes to reach a level four or five one day in driverless technology, which means no human assistance would be needed at all to drive the vehicle.

The campaign started its journey at the 2017 IAA Frankfurt Sept. 14-24 to garner visibility and excitement. Autonomous mobility is a hot button topic in the automotive world today, which makes Mercedes' campaign extremely important.

Autonomous in automotive

While younger generations are much more likely to embrace technological advances, Ketchum has discovered that the millennial and Gen Z groups are actually wary of autonomous vehicles.

In a new study, hacking and safety is shown to still be a real concern for the group Ketchum is labeling GenZennials in terms of driverless cars. Research is also showing that 16-to-24-year-olds are interested in ride sharing instead of vehicle owning, but many still desire the freedom of driving ([see more](#)).

In competition with Mercedes, Audi made significant steps forward in keeping up with the race for autonomy with the release of its A8 model.

Revealed at the Audi Summit in Barcelona, Spain on July 11, the Audi A8 has been created as a luxury automobile with significant advancements in driverless piloting. Alongside a new, more natural voice control operating system, drivers will be able to make use of driverless features such as its AI Traffic Jam pilot ([see more](#)).

Mercedes' unique initiative might give it a leg up in the race for driverless vehicles.

"It's a creative promotional tool to make not only their customer base but the entire world aware of where they are going as a company and what products they have in the pipeline that or cutting edge," DriveAnything.com's Mr. Levine said.