

AUTOMOTIVE

## BMW, Alibaba team to bring vehicles closer to AI

January 2, 2018



*BMW 5 Series also has a variety of connected mobility services. Image credit: BMW*

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

German automaker BMW is developing new ways to control vehicle services in China by tapping Alibaba's Internet of Things (IoT) division.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

While electric vehicle initiatives and driverless technology have dominated automotive brand news, consumer interest lies more with connected capabilities in their automobiles. To this point, BMW is looking to bring automotive services and experiences into IoT of the home with Alibaba Cloud.

"The global home automation market is projected to reach \$72 billion by 2022," said Julie Blackley, automotive relations specialist at [iSeeCars](#). "It is no surprise that the auto industry is adopting technology for drivers to have the same level of connectivity in their car infotainment systems as they do in their homes and seamlessly integrate the two."

### Driving technology

BMW is hoping to create initiatives where consumers will be able to interact with smart speakers such as Google Home for capabilities related to its vehicles.

Owners, for instance, will be able to ask how far they can travel with the current amount of gas in the tank, when an oil change is needed and if any windows or doors have been left open.

In a statement, an Alibaba scientist explained that the goal is to reach a place in which drivers can control their vehicles remotely. The Alibaba scientist gave the example of drivers being able to wake up in the morning and turn on their car's heating system through voice activation.

Alibaba also recently developed a vending machine for purchasing vehicles, as it looks to continue innovating in the auto space ([see more](#)).



*Alibaba car vending machine*

BMW believes that China is a powerhouse for developing advanced technologies that will take mobility into the future, making the Asian country a perfect place to test its new IoT services.

The automaker's vice president in China also revealed the company is hoping to shift from just a traditional luxury auto manufacturer to an innovator in technology, IoT services, mobility and electricity.

"BMW Group is working to shift from a traditional luxury auto manufacturer and service provider to a technology company, with automated driving, digital connectivity, mobility services and electrification as some of the central pillars of our new strategy," said Joseph Zheng, vice president of digital services and business models at BMW China, in a statement.

"China is an innovation powerhouse and important ground for realizing our global strategy," he said. "We will continue to put customers first, and provide customers with customized, multi-tiered connected services through BMW Connected."

#### Automotive and beyond

Many automakers, including BMW, are looking to follow in the footsteps of brands such as Tesla who have taken auto-manufacturing business and turned them into well-rounded innovators in technology.

German automaker Mercedes-Benz similarly brought artificial intelligence-powered chatbots to the automotive world to allow drivers to ask questions at any time.

Daimler, Mercedes' parent company, is working on a new voice activated chatbot solution accessed through an application on mobile devices or in their cars. "Ask Mercedes" will interact with consumers to answer their queries and help build a series of customer support prototypes ([see more](#)).



*Mercedes-Benz has previously partnered with Google Home*

Also, German automaker Porsche's U.S. importer is using augmented reality to aid remote assistance for its service technicians.

Porsche Cars North America's "Tech Live Look" employs smart glasses with a built-in camera and LED light, allowing workers to take and share images and video from their perspective. While AR has been incorporated into consumer-facing experiences, the technology is also finding a place behind-the-scenes ([see more](#)).

"Problems with car technology such as bluetooth connectivity are among the factors that most negatively impact car

reliability ratings in the United States, so the user-friendliness of this technology will be imperative in order for it to resonate with American consumers," Ms. Blackley said.

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.