

AUTOMOTIVE

## BMW to eliminate physical touch for future dashboard control

January 9, 2018



BMW's futuristic operating system concept unveiled at CES. Image credit: BMW.

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

German automaker BMW demonstrated its commitment to creating innovative and intuitive technological advances in the auto industry with a futuristic unveiling at CES.

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

On Jan. 8, ahead of the general admission period of Las Vegas' International Consumer Electronics Show, BMW revealed a new driver interface for its cars of the future in which consumers can control their vehicles by touching the air. BMW's HoloActive Touch System is its concept for a future operating platform that exists in a hologram-like form, using cameras and motion sensors to interact with drivers.

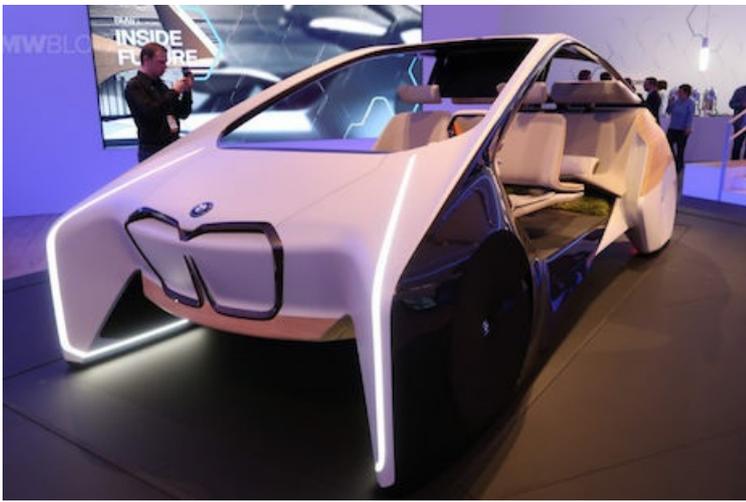
"BMW's new HoloActive Touch concept is an important step toward envisioning a new future," said Michael Becker, managing partner at **Identity Praxis**, San Francisco. "HoloActive Touch is giving rise to an essential managerial insight that every executive must heed; that is, in a world increasingly driven by connected computing the user experience is changing.

"Our society is increasingly being controlled by voice and gesture commands, a phenomenon that is and will continue to fundamentally change the relationship people have with the world around them, including the brands and services they love," he said. "When it comes to the future of driving it is critical for business to consider life without driving.

"We will no longer drive but ride. When we're riding, rather than driving, the question is what will we do with our newly found time. Certainly, we can use this new time to be entertained, to work, or perhaps engage in new and old forms of shopping. I would hope, however, that we also aspire to use this gift of time for exploration of the arts, education, and socializing with our fellow riders."

Driving into the future

Built from the automaker's LCD-based operating system, iDrive, the HoloActive Touch System is a look into how BMW drivers will be able to control their vehicles in the future. BMW claims this is how its driver will interact with its autonomous cars.



*BMW's installation at CES for its HoloActive Touch System. Image credit: BMW Blog.*

Instead of a single panel screen built within the dashboard, BMW has imagined that the entire dashboard will become the operating system controls. The new interface uses BMW's Head-Up Display and gesture control to create a futuristic control system.

Users will no longer have to make physical contact with a single button. Instead, the operating system will detect what selection an individual is making based on fingertip positions and movement tracked through cameras.

A pulse is emitted once the user "makes contact" with a button in the HoloActive Touch System.

Drivers will be able to adjust where the virtual control panel will rest based on their preference in an ergonomic environment.

The experience is similar to BMW's already established Heads-Up Display, but it is interactive.

During its reveal at CES, BMW also made claims that drivers will be able to make purchases through Amazon as part of the futuristic operating system.



*BMW looks to innovate in operating systems. Image credit: BMW Blog.*

The system was on display in a stationary installation that resembled a car of the future. To support BMW's idea of creating a living-room-like atmosphere in vehicles of the future, the installation resembled a furniture piece.

Innovation in automaking

BMW is no stranger to innovation. The automaker is continually striving to make an impact with connectivity, mobility, electric vehicle and autonomous driving.

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

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 ([see more](#)).

Despite consumers still being relatively uninterested, BMW also recently celebrated reaching a milestone number of electric vehicles sold in 2017.

BMW has surpassed 100,000 electric vehicles (EVs) sold this past year and is celebrating by transforming its headquarters in Munich into batteries. The landmark milestone comes at a time when auto brands are flocking to electric while consumers are still holding back ([see more](#)).

"HoloActive Touch is certainly innovative in that it is putting in to practice technological vision that has been with us for decades," Identity Praxis' Mr. Becker said. "It is an important first step in which will most certainly be a revolution in user interface and user experience design, and software development, as we look to strive for ever-increasing interactive and personalize mediums of engagement."

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.