

AUTOMOTIVE

Jaguar beams ahead with autonomous vehicle research

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Light projections are meant to help pedestrians trust autonomous cars. Image credit: Jaguar Land Rover

By SARAH RAMIREZ

British automaker Jaguar Land Rover has created a new system that it hopes will increase consumer trust in autonomous vehicles as the development of self-driving cars continues.

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As automakers continue to invest resources into self-driving vehicles, consumers are still apprehensive about the new technology, particularly about sharing the road with autonomous cars. Jaguar is testing new projection pods that are designed as one way to help ease drivers' concerns.

Pod pilot

Studies have shown that up to 41 percent of drivers and pedestrians have concerns about sharing the road with self-driving cars.

Jaguar's new technology gives drivers and pedestrians advance notice of an autonomous vehicle's intentions by projecting images onto the road.



Psychologists and engineers supervised the project. Image credit: Jaguar Land Rover

The test pods, created by British transport solution company Aurigo, emit a series of spaced out bars that adjust based on movement.

For instance, the bars move closer as a pod decelerates before compressing once the vehicle reaches a full stop. Similarly, the lines extend as the pod begins to speed up.

The illuminated bars will also fan out to the left or right to indicate the direction a pod will go as it approaches a turn.

Jaguar engineers and cognitive psychologists supervised the tests to record trust levels reported by pedestrians both with and without the projections.



Jaguar also tested driverless pods with virtual eyes. Image credit: Jaguar Land Rover

In an earlier pilot program, driverless pods were outfitted with virtual eyes that made eye contact with pedestrians for acknowledgement purposes.

More than 500 test subjects have been part of Jaguar's research with autonomous vehicles.

Tech efforts

The premium automaker continues to test driverless vehicles and other automated technology to improve driving experiences.

Jaguar's Green Light Optimal Speed Advisory (GLOSA) system allows cars to communicate with traffic lights and inform drivers what the optimal driving speed is to help free up congestion.

Many drivers have a habit of speeding up in attempts to beat out traffic lights. However, harshly accelerating can adversely affect brakes and increase air pollution ([see story](#)).

The automaker is also making a push for accessibility by developing a solution to an emerging problem created by the rise of quieter electric cars.

Despite the environmental benefits associated with electric vehicles, the faint noise made by the motors makes it more difficult for the visually-impaired to be aware of cars approaching while they are near roadways. Jaguar worked with the United Kingdom's Guide Dogs for the Blind to develop a warning system for pedestrians that works with its nearly-silent I-Pace ([see story](#)).