

MOBILE

McLaren keeps it simple and smooth for 650S app

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By JOE MCCARTHY

British automaker McLaren is inviting fans to explore its new 650S model with an iPad application that places usability over breadth of content.

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Luxury Daily

Unlike other configurator apps that exhaust a brand's product line, McLaren's app tries to get the most out of a single model. This abbreviated objective is part of a growing trend that integrates apps into larger strategies.

"We wanted to create a way for our fans around the world to be able to closely engage with our new product in an innovative and fun way," said Dave Eden, global public relations manager at **McLaren**, Surrey, England.

"Both beautiful design and the very latest technology are at the heart of what McLaren is all about and we wanted to design an app that allows users to explore both," he said.

"The social media sharing element was included as a way of allowing McLaren fans from around the world to share content with each other and begin discussions about McLaren's products."

Peering on the pier

The McLaren 650S made its debut at the Geneva Auto Show to plenty of fanfare. The Coupe version starts at \$441,500 and the Spider starts at \$486,250.



McLaren 650S at the Geneva Auto Show

The automaker released a dedicated app for enthusiasts eager to get an up-close look at the vehicle and learn about some bespoke options.

The app opens with basic instructions and leads to the common image of a vehicle in profile.



McLaren 650S app

Consumers will likely begin by rotating the car and zooming in or out. The receptivity of the app allows for seamless motion without load times.

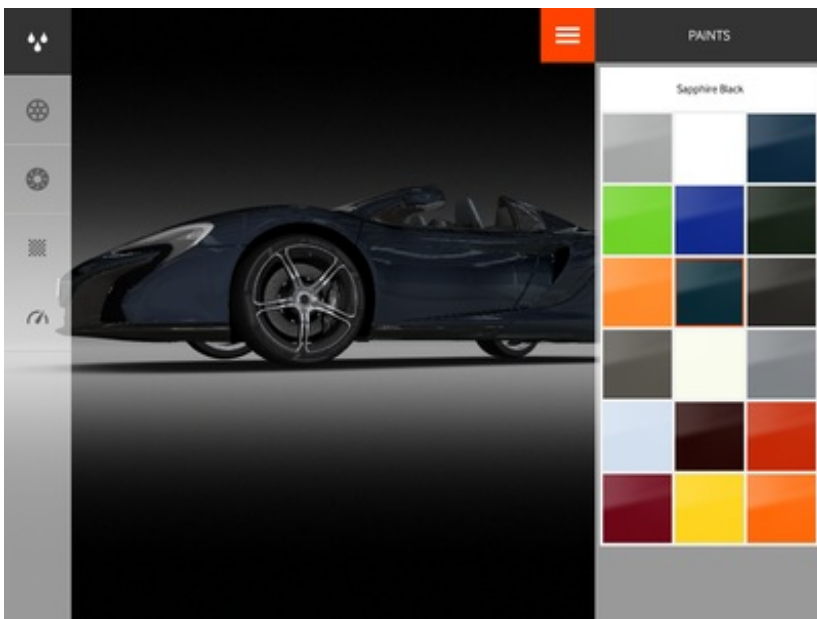
Many configurator apps have clunky rotation features that disrupt full immersion by loading for a few seconds with every turn. So McLaren's ability to provide fluid movement will be appreciated.

A cityscape, a gloomy pier, a gray and black scene or a personal image can be selected for a background on which the car can be flipped around.



McLaren 650S app

Eighteen color options for the exterior can be chosen and four colors for the interior. Wheel options include, Sport, Super Light-weight Forged, Light-weight Forged and Light-weight Forged II.



McLaren 650S app

Calipers and carbon fiber can also be altered.

After fiddling with the various options, consumers can then share their creation on social media, which may elicit a stronger response and sustain the conversation for longer.

By creating an app that doesn't trap users in an endless labyrinth, McLaren will likely see higher circulation rates and more cross-channel interaction.

"The app technology allows it to generate general reflections based upon the background image used to ensure the images look as realistic as possible," Mr. Eden said.

"The augmented reality feature also enables users to see their dream McLaren 650S in

3D," he said.

More than an app

Configurator apps have become a staple for luxury automakers.

For instance, British automaker Aston Martin showcased its bespoke capabilities with a new configurator application that lets enthusiasts play with possibilities.

The configurator app features the full range of Aston Martin models and allows fans to tinker with all the customizable details that a prospective consumer would encounter at a dealership. Also, the app gives consumers far more time to mull over their final vehicles, which may increase satisfaction ([see story](#)).

Other luxury brands have effectively tied apps into bigger picture as well.

Department store chain Neiman Marcus released an iOS mobile application that blends content and commerce to promote interaction with consumers on-the-go.

In addition to shopping features, Neiman Marcus' NM app houses the retailer's blog and Instagram feed. This separates the retailer from many of its competitors whose mobile apps serve only as commerce platforms ([see story](#)).

While a concise app makes sense for boosting cross-channel behavior, some products simply warrant their own space.

"Personalization puts the user in the driver's seat," said Jeff Hasen, Seattle-based chief marketing officer of [Mobivity](#). "The app speaks loudly to the McLaren customer or prospect who wants to be in control and move fast.

"Augmented reality might be the closest some come to the experience, but it's likely to be something shared over social networks and perhaps high-worth friends," he said.

"With the price of these vehicles so high, it makes sense that dollars are spent on individual models."

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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