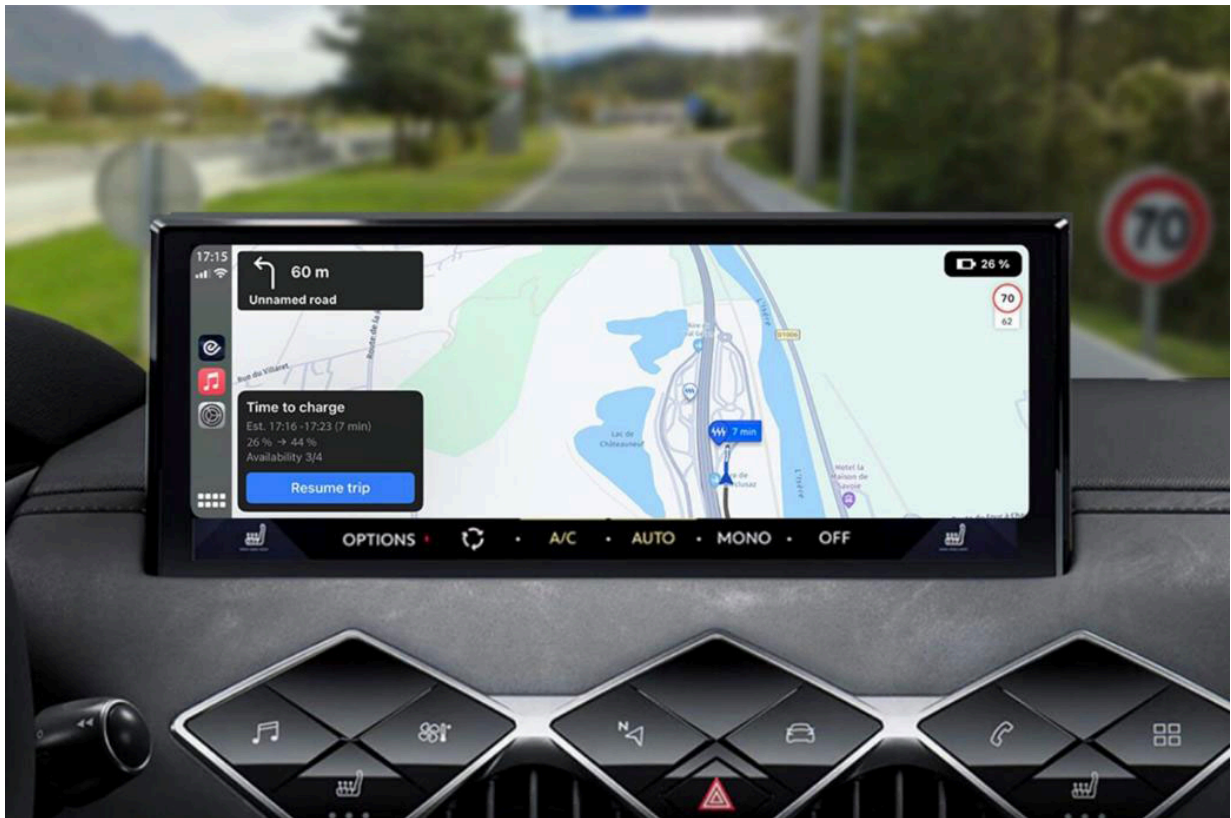


Editorial

Apps For Enhanced Driving Experience



STELLANTIS IMAGE

CES this year highlighted the growing integration of digital in-car technology, making driving safer, more comfortable, and more personalized. Apps on a personal screen are the most visible part of the digital iceberg increasingly governing our lives, and that's rapidly spreading to the automotive realm—which up until recently was lagging in that area. This week's in-depth piece is a look at this latest step toward vehicle 'appification'.

And this week's interior news looks at that same trend from a different angle, with Google AI Agent integrated into Mercedes MBUX, Porsche's new infotainment on Android Auto, and several audio enhancement projects —like Sonic Studio Experience with Harman, and Antolin Audio with Bongiovi.

These app-based integrations are meant to enhance the in-car experience by making it safer, more personalized, and easier to operate by dint of simpler, more intuitive HMI.

Speaking of which, HMI is an important focus of the upcoming DVN Interior Workshop. It is time to [register online](#) and plan your presence, including your product exhibition and lecture. Looking forward to meeting you there!

Sincerely yours,

Philippe Aumont
DVN-Interior General Editor

In Depth Interior Technology

Enhancing the Driving Experience With Apps



DVN IMAGE

It feels like apps are becoming a part of almost every aspect of our lives, doesn't it? Social networks, maps, news, finances, fitness, home appliances...the list is endless.

The automotive sector has lagged behind the rest, but recent announcements and the exhibits at this year's CES show cars are catching up. Let's take a look:

Android

Android Auto is a mobile app itself, developed by Google to mirror an Android device's interface on the car's infotainment system. That allows the use of Android apps like Google Maps, Waze, and Spotify, giving access in a way that's easier and safer than any alternative devised so far. It is a native OS that leverages the processing power of a vehicle's infotainment system and onboard data package to offer a deeper, more connected experience in the car, whether en route or parked (like when recharging your EV).

Apple's similar service is Apple CarPlay. Both systems allow you to connect your smartphone to your car's infotainment system, providing access to navigation, communication, and entertainment apps.

Android operating systems are becoming more commonplace in new cars and commercial vehicles, particularly all the recently released EVs that are gradually becoming prevalent.

OEM trends



RENAULT IMAGE

The list of automakers using a Google-infused infotainment offering (or planning to in the near future) includes Audi, Renault, Nissan, Polestar/Volvo, GM, Ford, Rivian, and more.

Other makers, such as BMW and Porsche, use Android software but without Google's services and app store. There are alternative app platforms for car companies who do not wish to make full use of the US company's services; more about those later in this article.

In Android Auto, apps can be downloaded from the Google Play Store to the tabletlike infotainment touchscreen, and users can sign into Google accounts and third-party apps like Netflix and Spotify and then control them with the vehicle's voice assistant, as well as controlling connected items in the home or office with Google Home integration.

Popular apps

Automotive infotainment systems have become quite advanced, integrating various apps to enhance the driving experience. Some particularly popular types of apps are navigation (Google Maps, Waze...), music and podcasts (Spotify, YouTube Music...), communication (WhatsApp...), EV charging (PlugShare...), and entertainment (Netflix, Disney...).

The range of apps for cars is growing rapidly. Google is launching a program in February to make it easier for developers to make phone or tablet apps car-compatible. According to a report by Android Authority, the focus will be on streaming and entertainment services.

Now, let's have a look at some recent topical announcements:

Appning: Forvia's Rebranded App Store



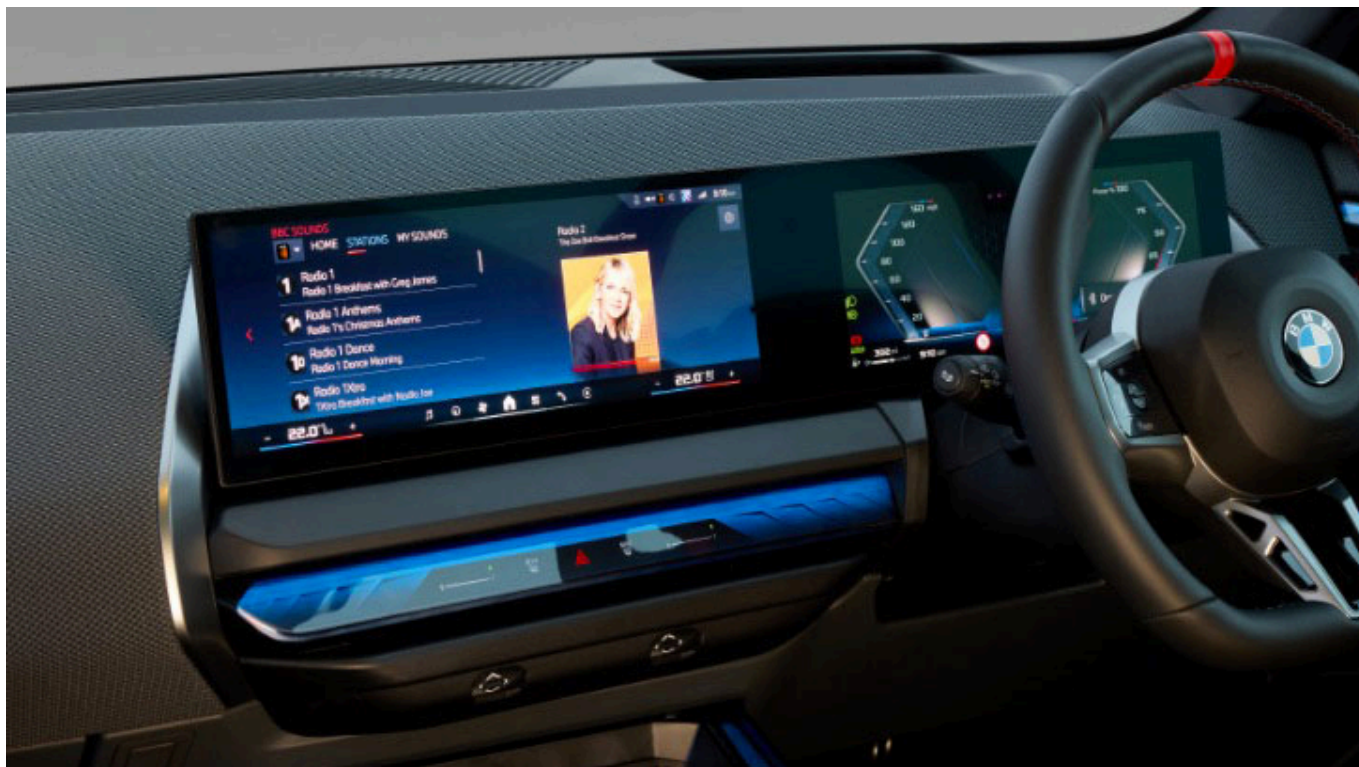
Forvia has renamed their popular applications marketplace. Now it's called Appning, a portmanteau of *app* and *happening*. It is a scalable, white-label applications marketplace to let users to take advantage of in-vehicle connectivity through the seamless integration of more than 200 applications.

Appning was originally founded in 2019, and currently is the market leader for automakers and app developers alike. It's in 23 car brands worldwide—including BMW, Mini, Mercedes-Benz, VW, SAIC, LeapMotor, and Lotus. By fostering a collaborative environment for developers and manufacturers, Forvia strives toward their goal to achieve a 20-per-cent share of the segment by the end of 2025.

Appning is based on the Android Automotive OS, and is customizable and fully managed by the automaker, from its look and feel to the apps included. It's a flexible solution with deployment to any cloud provider, ensuring privacy and compliance.

It contains a curated selection of global and local apps, including the likes of Spotify, Amazon music and TuneIn, Cityseeker, and Legible. OTA updates ensure the latest app versions and eliminate the need for hands-on system updates, guaranteeing optimal monetization for the entire ecosystem.

BMW, Mini to Integrate BBC Sounds



BMW IMAGE

BMW and Mini drivers in the UK can now enjoy their favorite BBC podcasts, radio, and music; those are the first car brands to integrate the BBC Sounds app directly into their vehicles' built-in app store.

Before, listeners needed a smartphone to access BBC Sounds via Android Auto or Apple CarPlay. Now, drivers of certain models with BMW or Mini Operating System 9 and a subscription to BMW Digital Premium or the Mini Connected package can stream content from the BBC Sounds app directly in the vehicle operating system.

Once installed in the car, drivers and passengers can enjoy a personalized experience by signing in with their BBC account, synchronizing playback history across all their devices. For example, if a listener were to start a true crime podcast—the new series of *Bad People*, for example—on their smartphone, they can continue where they left off when they get in the car.

Once downloaded, the BBC Sounds app is fully integrated into the vehicle's UI and can be easily accessed via the All Apps (BMW) or Media Selection (Mini). Additionally, data usage for streaming content is included in the connectivity provided by the BMW Digital Premium or Mini Connected subscription.

Over 50,000 BMW and Mini vehicles on the road in the UK support the new BBC Sounds in-car app, and this figure is expected to rise to around 150,000 by the end of 2025.

Sony RideVu Entertainment in Mercedes Cars



MERCEDES-BENZ IMAGE

Mercedes-Benz is expanding their in-vehicle entertainment portfolio with the RideVu app from Sony Pictures Entertainment. Leveraging Mercedes' MBUX infotainment system, the RideVu app offers streaming content on up to six screens.

Customers with applicable vehicles equipped with the MBUX Entertainment Package Plus and an active Mercedes-Benz Connect subscription can create a RideVu account via the in-car app. Once set up, customers can access a variety of content, updated regularly, as well as rent or buy from an even larger catalog of movies.

The RideVu video entertainment service provides access to movies and more. The streaming package includes a large selection of titles, with more new ones added constantly. This also includes short-form content with extras (behind-the-scenes insights, additional footage, interviews...).

With a RideVu account, Mercedes-Benz customers also have the option to rent (VOD) or purchase movies from the catalog of feature films. The app is available on all multimedia screens in the vehicle, with each able to stream content individually. The easy and intuitive interface makes it easy for users to choose and watch movies.

People can use their phones to access content inside *and* outside of the vehicle, and can cast to a TV or download to continue watching offline.

My Hyundai with Bluelink



The MyHyundai with Bluelink app offers a range of features, including remote control (start or stop the engine; lock/unlock doors, adjust climate control)...vehicle health reports (trouble codes, maintenance alerts)...safety features (emergency assistance, collision notification, geofencing, curfews, speed alerts), and convenience features (find your car, schedule service appointments, access the vehicle's service history).

There are three packages available: Connected Car, which includes comprehensive emergency assistance, Remote Package, which offers access to features such as remote start and remote climate control, and Guidance Package, which includes destination search. Each package costs about USD \$100 per year.

Perspective: as in the air, so on the road



DVN IMAGE

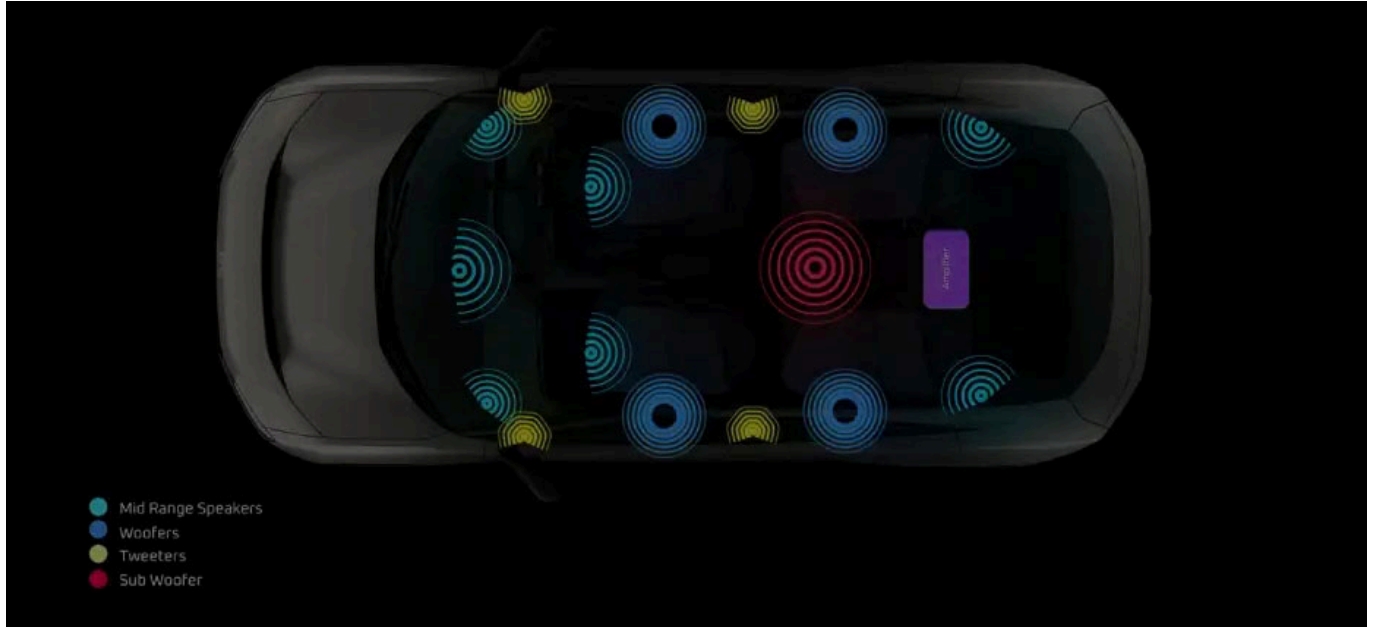
Delta Airlines has partnered with YouTube as part of the new Delta Sync experience. It aims to improve in-flight entertainment with music, podcasts, and a more personalized and accessible experience.

Delta's effort to leverage technology like this to improve the travel experience seems to be the future. As in the air, so on the road; the in-car experience looks to be following the same route!

Interior News

Sonic Studio Experience: Mahindra + Harman Kardon

INTERIOR NEWS



MAHINDRA IMAGE

Mahindra's new BE 6e and XEV 9e electric SUVs feature a bespoke 1,400-watt, 16-speaker Harman Kardon sound system and Dolby Atmos. But wait, there's more: they have the Sonic Studio Experience, curated by Academy Award winner A R Rahman and multiple Grammy-winning recording engineer Richard King.

Sonic Studio Experience is integrated with Harman Kardon's technology and enhanced by Dolby Atmos alongside VenueScapes (LIVE) and QuantumLogic Immersion, adding a new dimension to the listening experience. Rahman and King have created a personalized sonic suite of 'delight sounds', experience modes (calm, cozy, club), and chimes and alerts.

Rahman says, "By envisioning the emotions passengers might be experiencing on their travels, my goal was to design sounds that not only enhance the driving experience but also complement the journey and make it uniquely enjoyable".

Harman Kardon's innovative VenueScapes Live authentically recreates the acoustics of some of the world's most iconic concert venues, including the Royal Opera House in Mumbai, Boston Symphony Hall and Wembley Stadium. The sound has been finely tuned by Harman Kardon's experts in collaboration with Mahindra. Through rigorous objective and subjective tests, the audio has been optimized for every seat, ensuring unparalleled clarity and depth.

Mercedes, Google Partner on MBUX AI Agent

INTERIOR NEWS



MERCEDES-BENZ IMAGE

Mercedes-Benz and Google Cloud have introduced new conversational capabilities to the MBUX Virtual Assistant, powered by Google Cloud's new Automotive AI Agent.

Built using Gemini on Vertex AI, Google Cloud's Automotive AI Agent is specially tailored for the automotive industry and can pick information from Google Maps to give users detailed and personalized conversational responses on navigation, points of interest, and more.

Google Maps provides Mercedes-Benz owners with information about 250 million places around the world, updated in near-real time with over 100 million updates each day.

Users can converse with the MBUX Virtual Assistant and get answers to questions. For instance, a passenger could ask, "Could you guide me to the nearest fine dining restaurant for a unique culinary experience?" and then follow up with questions such as, "Does the restaurant have good reviews?" or "What is the chef's signature dish?", and the MBUX Virtual Assistant would be able to respond with accurate, up-to-date information.

The AI Agent will also enable the MBUX Virtual Assistant to handle complex, multi-turn dialog and retain memory of conversations, meaning users can continue conversations and reference information throughout their drives. The new experience will be available first in the new Mercedes-Benz CLA, and in more models in the future.

Google and Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai says, "Our new Automotive AI Agent will help drivers navigate and search with in-vehicle assistants, so those interactions are more natural and helpful. This is just the beginning of how agentic capabilities can transform the automotive industry and I'm excited to see our partnership drive progress forward".

Porsche Macan: Interior Highlights

INTERIOR NEWS



The Macan cockpit design combines elegance, sportiness, high-quality materials, and precise workmanship. There's a classic Porsche clock on the dashboard. The ambient lighting, which can be set in various colors, creates a modern atmosphere.

The steering wheel has a functional design with six buttons and a drive mode switch that can be used to select Normal, Sport and Sport Plus driving modes.

The infotainment system is based on Android Automotive. The central display is clearly laid out and allows quick access to essential functions such as navigation, telephone, vehicle settings and music.

The Porsche app allows routes to be planned and sent to the vehicle. This function offers real added value, especially on long journeys, as charging stops and arrival times are calculated reliably. The integration of Apple Car Play also works smoothly. Users can use Siri from Apple or the Porsche voice assistant. While Siri is versatile, the Porsche Assistant is more limited to vehicle-specific functions.

HUD offers a clear and easy-to-read display of speed, battery status and navigation instructions. A special feature is the 10.9" display on the passenger side. This allows the front passenger to call up content from the central display, adjust settings, or stream videos, even while driving. Entertainment options such as YouTube, live TV in the ZDF (German TV) media library, and games such as a karaoke app are state of the art.

The driving experience is complemented by the Porsche Electric Sport Sound specially developed for the SUV. A control algorithm adapts the sound to the driving situation and the torques and speeds of the electric

motors. The sound of the Macan is then reproduced both via the entertainment sound system and via two exterior sound loudspeakers.

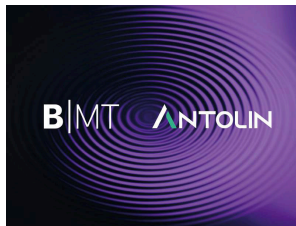
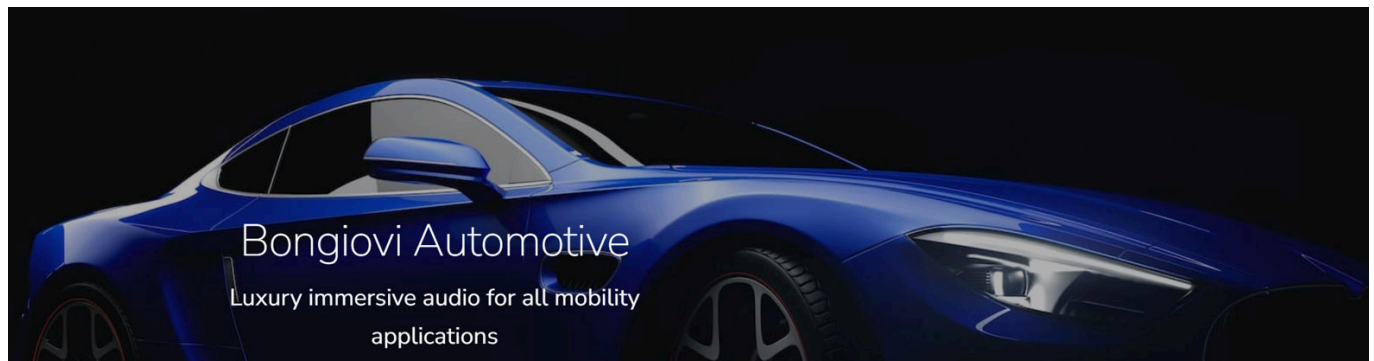
The Macan models offer the Sound Package Plus with ten loudspeakers and a total output of 150 watts as standard. The optional sound systems from Bose and Burmester has 14 loudspeakers, a separate subwoofer, 14 amplifier channels and a total output of 710 watts.

The Macan is equipped with a wide range of assistance systems. The assistance systems are individually configurable and can be switched on and off as required. The visual feedback in the display is particularly noteworthy: if assisted driving is activated, the steering wheel lights up green. When assistance is deactivated, the wheel light goes off and the driver takes full control. It takes up to 15 seconds before an orange warning symbol appears if the steering wheel is not touched. After a further 15 seconds, the symbol flashes red. This allows the driver to drive hands-free for a short period without the systems intervening. On the highway, adaptive cruise control reliably maintains the distance to the vehicle in front and accelerates gently after braking.

The 12.6-inch, fully digital curved display, freestanding and positioned directly in the driver's line of vision, and a central assistance screen also make it easier to operate the driver assistance systems and offer good, clear visualization. The driver can use the steering wheel buttons to customize the display of the instrument cluster and the optional augmented reality head-up display.

Antolin, Bongiovi in Auto Audio Pact

INTERIOR NEWS



Antolin and Bongiovi Media & Technology, specialists in advanced audio technologies, have partnered to offer the transport industry new audio solutions.

Bongiovi creates 'virtual environments' for vehicles through dynamic upmixing and immersive audio techniques. Their mobility solutions include:

- Advanced sound staging technology creating a 'virtual center channel' that can be positioned in front of the driver, front-seat passenger, or both. All passengers get a rich, detailed listening environment with personalized stereo imaging.
- Automatic Gain Controller (AGC), which maintains the clarity of music and voice as road noise and other environmental sounds increase.
- Virtual Subwoofer technology, providing a deep, rich bass without extra subwoofer hardware.
- The MAI software framework providing best-in-class acoustic tuning capabilities for the latest multichannel platforms.

The companies have partnered to deliver new audio solutions to automakers, so they can enhance in-vehicle experiences through advanced technology and material integration. The collaboration combines proprietary hardware, software, artificial intelligence, and material innovations that provide in-vehicle, immersive audio experiences for entertainment, safety, and communication.

Aside from advanced audio, the solutions offer additional value propositions, including:

- Weight reduction compared to traditional sound systems
- Focus on efficiency, sustainability, and cost-efficacy
- High-quality sound experience where every listening position is the 'sweet spot'.
- New functionalities enabled by interior design freedom.
- Road noise mitigation and enhanced communication benefits.

"Our partnership with Bongiovi Media & Technology marks a significant step forward in automotive audio innovation," said Javier Villacampa, Head of Innovation & Sustainability at Antolin. "Bongiovi's unparalleled expertise in custom sound sculpting technologies, combined with our integration and vehicle interiors expertise, allows us to deliver new, innovative solutions, that provide immersive, high-quality audio experiences that reshape in-vehicle entertainment and communication."

"We are pleased to collaborate with an industry leader like Antolin," said Ron Simmons, Managing Director of BMT. "Their global manufacturing and distribution footprint, along with decades of automotive innovation experience, make them an ideal partner for helping us to provide market-disrupting audio solutions on a global scale. Our companies have been a natural and comfortable cultural fit from day one."

Novares, NaturePlast Work to Lower Carbon Emissions

INTERIOR NEWS



HUGO MESTRE (L, NOVARES INNOVATION DIRECTOR) AND THOMAS LEFEVRE (R, NATUREPLAST CEO) — NOVARES IMAGE

A new partnership combines Novares' expertise in automotive plastic solutions with NaturePlast's advancements in bio-based and recycled plastics, creating sustainable materials that could significantly reduce environmental impact.

Together, the two companies will provide automakers with eco-friendly materials tailored to help them meet ambitious carbon emissions-reduction targets.

NaturePlast is a French company specializing in bioplastic materials since 2007, supports manufacturers in the transfer of technology to these new materials. Through their subsidiary BiopolyNov, Europe's only R&D center for bioplastic materials, Natureplast develops a wide range of compounds integrating various co-products from French industries (shells, agri-food residues, etc). These new materials make it possible to obtain natural aspects while working towards a more circular economy and reducing the environmental footprint of plastic materials.

Novares achieved a turnover of €1.1bn in 2024, with presence in 22 countries. They have 37 manufacturing plants, 6 centers of expertise, 7 technical centers, and 17 customer service centers around the world.

Fraunhofer IMWS Awarded for Light Plastic Sandwich Molding

INTERIOR NEWS

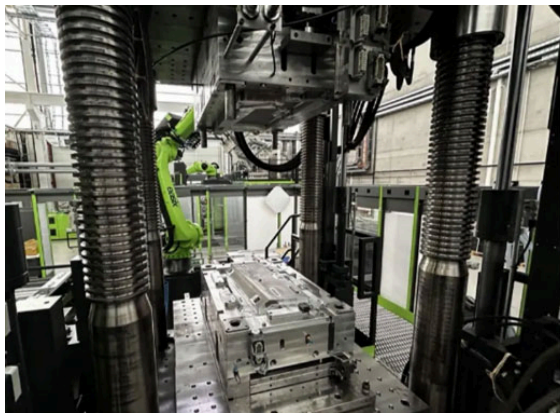


DEMONSTRATOR FLAP (LEFT, CENTER); ANOTHER POSSIBLE TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION (RIGHT)

The Fraunhofer Institute for Microstructure of Materials and Systems IMWS has developed a storage compartment flap in a lightweight sandwich construction for a truck driver's cab in the HyWaSand project. The solution—in particular, its manufacturing process—was awarded the JEC Composites Innovation Award 2025 in the Automotive & Road Transportation Process category in Paris.

Sandwich structures consist of highly rigid and strong cover layers and a lightweight core, a combination which enables very high weight-specific bending and buckling stiffness. The design is therefore also suitable for highly resilient structural components in vehicle and aerospace applications and can slash component weight by up to 70 per cent compared to monolithic structures, with a load-bearing capacity of the components equal or better than metal components.

The 3D shape of the part is realized by thermoforming of a semi-finished thermoplastic sandwich panel in a closed tool, which also enables additional functionalization by injection molding for integration of hinges and fasteners.



"The approach contributes significantly to improving sustainability through weight savings, reduced material requirements and the possibility of using recyclable materials," says Prof. Dr. Maik Feldmann, head of the polymer applications business unit at Fraunhofer IMWS. "The JEC Award gives us a boost for the further development of technology. We are looking at applications in the bodywork sector, **interior components with decorative surfaces**, [and] sandwich materials made of high-performance thermoplastics".

The continuous and fully automated manufacturing process is suitable for molded components and for use in large series. The latter in particular is crucial for use in the automotive industry, where large quantities and short cycle times are required. At the same time, the HyWaSand project developed virtual engineering methods for process and component development as well as suitable non-destructive testing methods to ensure component quality.

Key benefits include light, stable sandwich construction; reduced use of materials, efficient processability suitable for large-scale production, design and functional integration, and recyclability.

The storage compartment flap produced as a demonstrator will be on display at the JEC World plastics trade fair in Paris from 4-6 March at the ThermHex Waben exhibit (booth 6P108).

JEC Composites supports the use of composite materials in various sectors and brings together experts from industry, research, and education. Every year, they honor pioneering technologies with the JEC Composites Innovation Award. Fraunhofer IMWS received the award this year together with project partners Daimler Truck, ElringKlinger, Engel Austria, ThermHex Waben, and Edevis.

The Design Lounge

The Rolls-Royce Phantom Dragon's Unique Interior

THE DESIGN LOUNGE



ROLLS-ROYCE IMAGE



Rolls-Royce has showcased a new one-off commission called the Phantom Dragon. Celebrating the Chinese Year of the Dragon, the car—commissioned by a Chinese client—features intricate interior design incorporating Chinese cultural elements.

The Phantom Dragon offers a contemporary rendition of the Chinese legend of two dragons with a pearl. The dashboard features a bespoke gallery with a floating effect, achieved through the art of marquetrie—one of the most demanding techniques applied in a motor car interior.

The gallery runs the full span of the center console and is made of 297 individual pieces and four different wood species. A Rolls-Royce artisan spent three months intricately cutting out veneer shapes, then assembling and fixing them by hand. The base layer is crafted from smoked eucalyptus; the outline of the shapes is rendered in sycamore veneer and filled with ash burr.

Striking woodcraft is portrayed throughout the commission, including high gloss smoked eucalyptus elements, and Canadel door panels fashioned from natural open pore smoked eucalyptus. This is complemented by ardent red and black leathers on the front and rear reclining seats respectively, complete with the buyer's family name in ancient Chinese calligraphy.



ROLLS-ROYCE IMAGE

The theme continues with the starlight headliner, now showing two dragons and rendered in red and white. This composition features 768 red and 576 white fiber-optic lights, each -fitted and surrounded by 24 shooting stars. The whole interior is finished in iced diamond black to contrast with the unique design elements.

"Our goal for this project was to express China's most revered symbols and the client's personal iconography impactfully yet respectfully, while also subtly incorporating Rolls-Royce's design handwriting. In this motor car, our artisans have accomplished this using different mediums, capturing the rich legacy of the region, the client and the Rolls-Royce brand," said Shuai Feng, who is Rolls-Royce's lead bespoke designer in their Shanghai private office.

News Mobility

GM Can't Sell Driver Data for 5 Years

NEWS MOBILITY



GM HEADQUARTERS IN DETROIT (GM IMAGE)

General Motors and subsidiary OnStar will be barred for five years from sharing drivers' precise geolocation and driving behavior data with consumer reporting agencies, under a settlement with the US Federal Trade Commission, the FTC said in a release Thursday.

The action addresses privacy concerns about GM's now-discontinued Smart Driver program, which allegedly collected and sold private data from millions of vehicles without properly notifying consumers or obtaining their consent. Such data could potentially be used to determine insurance rates.



The settlement also aims to address issues around GM's OnStar service, which was marketed as an emergency aid and navigation tool. The FTC alleged that GM's enrollment process was unclear, leading some customers to unknowingly share sensitive location data that could reveal intimate aspects of their daily lives, such as a late-night visit to a hospital.

The FTC said GM and OnStar must also implement new measures to provide greater transparency and give consumers more control over how their connected vehicle data is collected and used.

GM said in a release that it's already taken steps to improve consumer privacy, including discontinuing its Smart Driver program across all vehicles and ending its relationship with third-party data brokers.

"The FTC consent order includes new measures that go above and beyond existing law, while capturing steps we've already taken to establish choices for customer data collection and communications about how the information is used," GM said.

This case reflects the privacy issues related to most of in-sensing systems in the vehicle, such as DMS, and especially the ones going beyond with emotions and related proposals to monitor

General News

Aptiv to Split Out Electrical Distribution Biz

GENERAL NEWS



APTIV IMAGE

Aptiv—formerly Delphi—has announced a unanimous decision by their board of directors to separate the company's electrical distribution systems business from Aptiv, creating two independent companies.

Following the separation, Aptiv—comprising Advanced Safety & User Experience and the Engineered Components Group—will offer a full sensor-to-cloud technology stack, including industry-leading open-architected ADAS and **in-cabin user experience software platforms**, and a broad range of interconnects and components that optimize the distribution of signal, power, and data for next-generation applications across diverse end markets, including aerospace and defense, telecommunications, **automotive** and commercial vehicle, and industrial. Aptiv's portfolio of advanced software, hardware, compute, and interconnect solutions is in the sweet spot of long-term secular trends that include advanced safety, electrification, digitalization, artificial intelligence, and automation.

Aptiv delivers, among other things, UX solutions including infotainment computational platforms, integrated cockpit controllers, and interior sensing technologies.

As separate companies, Aptiv and EDS are each expected to benefit from:

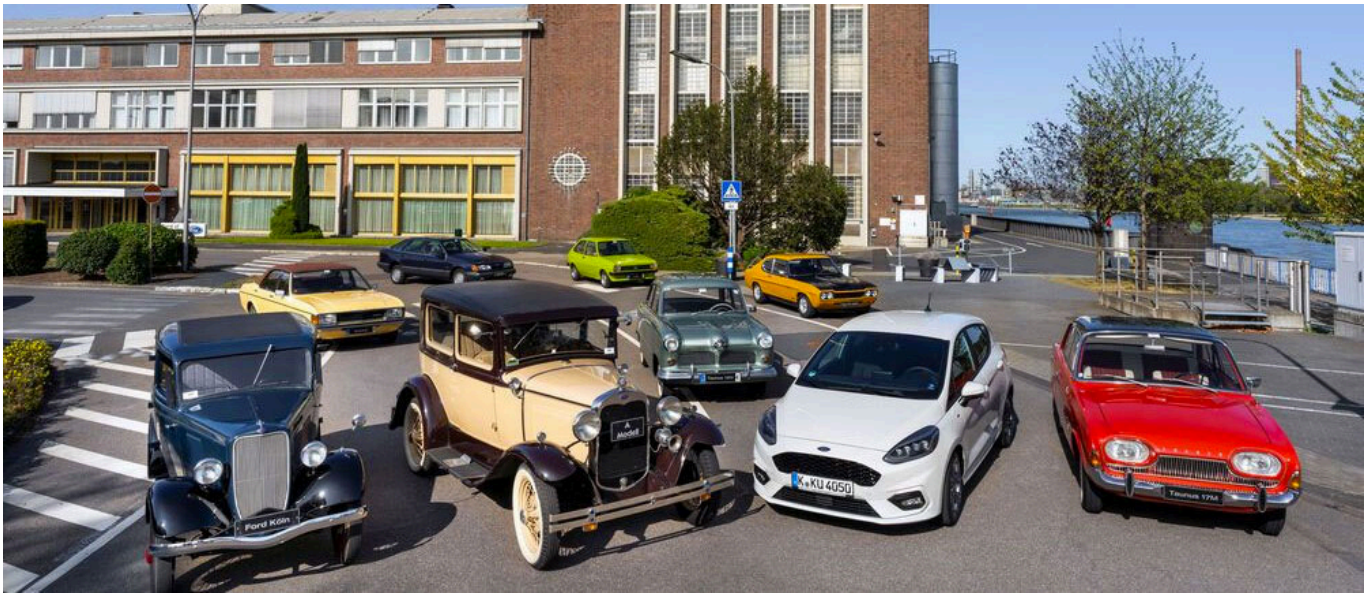
- Strategies and operating initiatives focused on each company's product portfolio, customer challenges, market opportunities, and financial objectives;
- Resources and investments concentrated on the distinct opportunities and growth drivers of each business;
- Capital structures and capital allocation strategies that are tailored to each company's most value-creating prospects;

- Investor bases best suited for their unique value propositions, operating model, and financial characteristics, and
- A global employee base committed to developing and delivering world-class products and solutions with career opportunities and compensation programs more closely aligned with the operating and financial outcomes of their individual business.

The company estimates that Aptiv had USD \$12.1bn in revenues, including intercompany sales to EDS currently eliminated in consolidation; \$1.4bn in U.S. GAAP operating income, and \$2.3bn in adjusted EBITDA for 2024, excluding the EDS business to be separated.

Ford's Masterpieces and Monuments

GENERAL NEWS



FORD IMAGES

The history of Ford Germany began 100 years ago not in Cologne, but in Berlin. Henry Ford had his legendary Model T assembled on the River Spree before series such as the Taunus, Capri, and Fiesta catapulted the Ford brand to third place in the German registration rankings.

Henry Ford the First wanted to produce the world's first assembly line vehicle, the Model T, in Germany from 1925. He realized that ambition with an assembly plant in Berlin. With popular model series such as the Taunus and Transit, and later the Escort, Capri, Granada, Fiesta, Mondeo, and Focus as well as with SUVs, Ford established itself as a mass brand in Germany, and the Transit even overtook the indigenous VW Bulli.

After 100 years, Ford will cease to be a full-range supplier; the US mother ship wants to make the Cologne subsidiary fit for the future as an EV center. For the time being, however, the electric models are experiencing sales problems. The names Mustang (Mach-E), Explorer, Capri and Puma (Gen-E), which are familiar from combustion models, will not change this for the time being; car buyers are not yet sufficiently impressed by the electric Ford Phalanx. The compact SUV Kuga remains popular, as does the Puma with a combustion engine. Nevertheless, Ford dropped to under 100,000 units and a 3.5-per-cent market share in Germany in 2024. It's hard to believe that they once celebrated over half a million cars built per year and an 18.5-per-cent market share in Cologne, for the first time in 1965.

Ford eventually became a "great car for the money" brand, with affordable luxury in a stately format, celebrated in the Granada from 1972 to 1984. The Capri became a mega-seller among the family-friendly sports coupés; neither the Opel Manta nor the VW Scirocco could keep up. In contrast, the compact Escort (1968-2000) remained in eternal third place in the battle with the VW Golf and Opel Kadett/Astra. Only the Focus was able to take the global lead for a short time. Then there was the Fiesta, the world's most modern small car in 1976 and a unique work of art, which sits enthroned on the roof of the Cologne City Museum. The streamlined Sierra (from 1982) and Scorpio (from 1985) initially ventured into the successful avant-garde and inspired new design and vehicle concepts such as the small Ka (from 1996) in the New Edge design, and the large Ford S-Max (from 2006); its crossover concept was later even adopted by competitors such as the Renault Espace. Not forgetting the medium-sized family and company car models such as the Mondeo (from 1993) and Kuga (from 2013)—Ford apparently knew how to be successful in Germany and Europe.

Some models didn't do so well, notably American ones. The Scorpio from 1995, the too-large Windstar van (1998), and the Probe coupé imported from the USA (1993). Nevertheless, Ford wants to drive into the all-electric future in Cologne with American 'adventure spirit', which is what they say the electric Mustang Mach-E has stood for since 2021. And the new Capri wears the name of its European ancestor, which sold 1.9 million units, and as an SUV coupé it tries to strike a chord with families as it once did.