Ford to launch Personal Mobility Experience Innovation project

The Ford European Research & Innovation Centre in Aachen, Germany, and the Technology and Innovation Management Institute of RWTH Aachen University have announced that they will be launching the Personal Mobility Experience Innovation project later this month.

The project aims to identify the features, technologies, services and solutions that could enable Ford to meet customers' changing preferences and expectations for personal mobility and help address societal challenges such as traffic congestion and environmental issues.

"Without question, we are embarking on one of the most transformative eras in the history of the auto industry - and in the history of Ford," said Mark Fields, Ford president and chief executive officer, during a keynote address to the International CAR Symposium in Bochum, Germany. "This can be a threat or an opportunity. We see it as an opportunity to provide real solutions and exciting new products for millions - and ultimately help change the way the world moves."

The Personal Mobility Experience Innovation project brings experts from Ford and the university together to study business models from a range of industries and the transformations made by other innovators, to learn how they could be applied to the automotive industry and help deliver mobility solutions.

Full ecosystem

Ford will look at examples such as Apple and Amazon - who have expanded from being single product and service providers to delivering a full ecosystem of hardware and software platforms and services.

"This is an exciting time because while we are confronting real challenges to mobility as the world becomes more crowded and urbanised, we are also in the midst of a technological sea change that will help us find solutions," said Pim van der Jagt, executive technical leader of Ford Research & Advanced Engineering. "This project is about tapping into the best

thinking from other industries and sectors to deliver new mobility solutions."

Ford also announced that during 2015 it will contribute to the UK government-sponsored UK Autodrive initiative. They will work alongside other manufacturers to study how driverless and connected cars can be integrated into everyday life, and will provide two prototype cars with vehicle-to-vehicle communication capability to help test an innovative public transport system.

Vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure connectivity technologies such as those tested in real-world urban environments during the UK Autodrive initiative, also will contribute to the development of fully autonomous vehicles.