This Time It's Personal: Now Your Car Learns What You Like – Tech Suggests When to Call Your Mum or Hit the Gym

- Debuting in the all-electric Mustang Mach-E, Ford's next-gen SYNC system keeps drivers in control with large touchscreens, intuitive design, conversational speech recognition
- Ford SYNC communication and entertainment system employs machine-learning to offer new levels of personalisation – learns from driver behaviours to make smart suggestions
- New Remote Vehicle Setup feature enables owners to pre-configure new car settings from home, before it arrives – from drive responsiveness to ambient cabin colours

COLOGNE, Germany, Sept. 4, 2020 – Many drivers get to know their cars like close companions over time, but how well do our cars know us? Vehicles soon will prompt their owners to make a regular phone call, work out at a favoured time, or stop off at a much-loved coffee shop – if those activities are part of their regular routine.

Making its debut in the all-new, all-electric Mustang Mach-E, Ford's next-generation SYNC technology actually learns from driver behaviours to make smart suggestions. It combines conversational speech recognition, internet search results and machine learning intelligence to make time-saving recommendations based upon previous journeys.

Ford showcased its new communication and entertainment system for the first time in Europe via an exclusive virtual event. Also revealed today is Remote Vehicle Setup – a new feature that enables owners to personalise their new car even before it arrives – pre-configuring settings from preferred drive modes to ambient cabin colours.

"We've worked obsessively to make sure that owning a Mustang Mach-E is the most personal, most connected driving experience achievable," said Jan Schroll, connectivity manager, Ford of Europe. "The next-generation SYNC is the smartest version yet and will continue to get smarter the longer you own your car. It is designed to know what you need – and when you need it – so you can just sit back and enjoy the drive."

Personal touch

The code for Ford's next generation of SYNC has been written from the ground-up to bring Ford's human-centric design philosophy right to the heart of driver experience. It enables more than 80 vehicle settings to be customised in the Mustang Mach-E, from cabin temperature and seat position to ambient lighting, making for a highly personalised in-car experience.

The system can even identify individual drivers by their smartphone or key fob and apply their settings as they approach the vehicle – before they get in – so each family member can instantly experience their own unique cabin, driving and entertainment experience.

The system employs a machine learning algorithm to better understand drivers' habits over time. Go to the gym every Friday? Call home on the way back from work? The next-generation SYNC system will learn each owner's routines to make the right navigation and communication suggestions at the right time, enabling drivers to concentrate on the road.

Inside the Mustang Mach-E, the next-generation SYNC system features a 15.5-inch full HD touch display. The large, user-friendly console is simple to read at a glance, while the interface has been pared back to deliver information in an organised, easily digestible way. Familiar pinch, zoom and rotate touch controls are all present, while the signature dial at the bottom of the screen makes for quick and tactile adjustment of the volume for music or conference calls.

Navigating the SYNC interface has been reimagined so drivers never are more than a touch or two away from any application, information or control they need. The large screen and card layout allow multiple applications to be displayed simultaneously, so receiving a call while navigating no longer means missing a turn as the directions disappear from the screen.

Ready, set-up, go!

With the Mustang Mach-E, owners will be able to pre-configure their new vehicle ahead of delivery using the new Remote Vehicle Setup feature. Owners simply create a personalised profile to save their favourite settings and frequent locations such as their place of work or a supermarket, and – for added peace of mind – identify nearby charging stations.

Setup can be done online or using FordPass, the Ford owners companion smartphone app, to customise vehicle settings such as daily departure times, preferred cabin comfort settings and battery charge levels, among other options. [1] Mustang Mach-E drive modes also can be personalised: choosing between Active, Whisper or Untamed will adjust the vehicle's responsiveness on the outside, while on the inside the vehicle sound and ambient colours can be customised to match.

The personalisation profile is stored in the cloud, so when the owner picks up the keys and first pairs their smartphone with their Mach-E, all settings are pushed to their vehicle – no more frustrating first-time setups, drivers can just get in and go. Future over-the-air updates will also allow for personalisation of radio presets prior to delivery.

"One-size-fits-all doesn't fit anyone," said Sheryl Connelly, Ford Global Consumer Trends and Futuring Manager. "Consumers want products, services and experiences that are uniquely suited to their needs – that is why Ford is enabling pre-delivery personalisation on the Mustang Mach-E. For those who take advantage of the feature, no two Mustang Mach-Es will ever be exactly alike".

Mach-E owners also can use their smartphone to unlock their vehicle. With the Phone-as-a-Key feature enabled, the vehicle will instantly recognise who is approaching, unlock the doors and enable their individual driver preferences and settings. [2] If the driver's smartphone battery runs dry, they can simply enter their personal passcode onto a keypad on the car door.

Conversational assistant

The next generation of SYNC delivers advanced conversational speech recognition allowing drivers to focus on driving instead of remembering set commands. The system understands natural, everyday speech in 15 European languages, enabling owners to talk to their vehicle just as they would a passenger, letting them control everything from entertainment and navigation features, to cabin environment and phone calls.

To provide the best responses to commands and questions, the next generation of SYNC complements on#board intelligence with results from internet searches, ensuring that requests for the nearest restaurant or closest chemist are as accurate and up to date as possible.

Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are both pre-installed at no extra cost and, now with cable-free connectivity, owners can benefit from safe and effortless access to their favourite smartphone apps and contacts using their voice or the vehicle's touchscreen.[3]

The large display means that Apple CarPlay or Android Auto can appear on the screen at the same time as other next-generation SYNC apps such as navigation or radio, enabling drivers always to remain in complete control and within quick reach of key features.

Connectivity is further enhanced with SYNC AppLink, with supported apps such as what3words, Waze and Webex delivering deeper integration between vehicle and smartphone.

In charge

The next generation of SYNC promotes confidence on the go for electric vehicle drivers by advising where and when to charge during journeys, as well as providing access to real-time charging station availability and pricing.

Intelligent Range technology provides drivers with up-to-date information about their electric vehicle's range, based on factors including traffic, terrain, weather and even data from other Ford electric vehicles using the roads ahead. If the vehicle range changes significantly, a notification highlights the new range estimate and explains why it changed.

Owners will have access to the largest public charging network in Europe, with the ability to pay using the FordPass smartphone app. [4] Mustang Mach-E drivers will be able to charge their vehicle's battery from 10 to 80 per cent in less than 40 minutes, adding an average of 119 km (73 miles) driving range in as little as 10 minutes, when using IONITY high-power chargers. [5]

Battery level and range information are available using the FordPass smartphone app, where owners can also schedule preferred charging times to take advantage of cost-efficient energy while ensuring there is enough range to complete their upcoming journeys.FordPass also enables drivers to set departure times, ensuring the cabin is pre-conditioned to the ideal temperature while the vehicle is on charge, to help achieve the best battery range possible.

Connected navigation

The new connected navigation system helps drivers reduce their travel times, avoiding hold-ups and re-routing around congestion. Real-time and predictive traffic information is provided by location specialists TomTom, while in-vehicle and in-cloud routing provided by Garmin ensures drivers are always offered the most efficient routes to their destination. [6]

The latest versions of maps are always stored in the vehicle, meaning navigation is efficient even in locations without a network connection.

When drivers arrive at their destination, they are able to view on- and off-street parking space availability in real-time to cut down on wasted time locating somewhere to leave the car. The FordPass app can even help owners quickly and accurately locate where they've left their car in unfamiliar towns or large car parks.

FordPass app further integrates with the next-generation SYNC's navigation system to make planning journeys easer, with features designed especially for electric vehicle owners. Journeys can be pre-planned to account for charging station stops, nearby amenities and points of interest. When drivers are ready to set off, they simply push their itinerary from the FordPass app to their car to begin.

Always evolving

Much like smartphone apps receive regular updates to provide enhancements and new capabilities, over#the#air updates ensure Ford vehicles continuously evolve and improve over time.

Updates silently and wirelessly deliver new features along with quality and performance enhancements to the SYNC system and computer modules throughout the vehicle, helping to reduce service centre visits.

Software is downloaded wirelessly in the background, with updates applied in less than two minutes. [7] Owners can choose when updates take place, and can even schedule them to be applied overnight or when the car is not in use so as not to delay a journey.

The new next-generation SYNC system will be available on select Ford vehicles in Europe beginning with the all-electric Mustang Mach-E. The Mach-E spearheads a rapidly expanding range of electrified vehicles from Ford, and is one of 17 new electrified vehicles the company is introducing to Europe before the end of 2021.

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[1] FordPass app compatible with Apple and Android smartphones and is available from the Apple App Store and Google Play store in 40 markets in Europe

[2] Phone-as-a-key feature not available in U.K. and Ireland

[3] Don’t drive distracted. Use voice operated systems where possible and don’t use handheld devices while driving

[4] Payment using FordPass smartphone app requires paid-for charging service subscription

[5] Targeted range and charge time based on manufacturer tested values and calculation according to the WLTP drive cycle. Estimated miles added are based on the first 10 minutes of charging, beginning when the vehicle begins receiving charge. Officially homologated energy efficiency figures will be published closer to on-sale date. The charging rate decreases as battery reaches full capacity. Your results may vary based on peak charging times and battery state of charge. Actual vehicle range varies with conditions such as external elements, driving behaviours, vehicle maintenance, and lithium-ion battery age and state of health

[6] Live Traffic feature requires separate paid subscription after an initial complimentary trial

[7] Updates can be activated in under two minutes, while any updates that may require the vehicle to be parked can be scheduled to take place when most convenient for the owner. Owners will receive a notification when software updates become available; these can then be applied using either Wi-Fi or mobile connection, depending upon the update