Under the skin with the Taycan AR Event App

21/05/2021 A new augmented reality app enables content creators to delve beneath the skin of the all-electric Taycan and share the sports car's depth of engineering detail, unique technical features and sophisticated charging infrastructure.

The smartphone revolution means we now do extraordinary things with our mobile devices. Video calls, streaming media-on-demand services, professional-quality photos and much more besides are all available at the swipe of a thumb. Now, thanks to a collaboration between Porsche and Frankfurt-based mixed-reality experts NSYNK, a mobile phone can be used to see the inner workings of the Porsche Taycan. The Taycan AR Event App has been created to enable content creators to shoot and publish augmented reality content that delves beneath the skin of the all-electric sports car. With it, users can show, using live-action video and audio, the depth of engineering detail, technical features and charging infrastructure that make the Taycan so special.

The Taycan AR Event App didn't start out as a tool for content creators, though. "Originally, we wanted something that would give people a more interactive way to see under the skin of the Taycan electric

sports car at our launch events," says Miro Demel, Manager Event Communication at Porsche. "There's a lot of fascinating engineering that goes into creating an electric sports car and we wanted a way to show it in a compelling, efficient and cost-effective way. In the past, you would have had to use a bare 'skateboard' chassis to show these sorts of features – basically the car with the bodywork and interior stripped away. But that is a costly thing to do. A team of engineers have to make it by hand, you can only build one of them and it is very fragile. And because you have to ship it to each location it is not a particularly sustainable way of doing things. With this you can show a lot more of the engineering detail of the car, in a much more flexible and interactive way. And you can do it at every single launch event."

Necessity is the mother of invention

As with so many projects and plans in 2020, the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic necessitated a change of plan. "Suddenly we weren't doing any live launch events at all, so we realised that we would have to effectively send out kits for content creators to use in a much less controlled environment, and without our own teams on hand to help out," explains Demel. "So we needed our AR Event App to be as user-friendly and robust as possible." This was a tough job for NSYNK, who had previously never focused on mobile applications. With a team of just four or five developers, designers and 3D artists, they built the product to a point where they were ready for an initial release in just six months.

Pushing the envelope of the possible

Porsche and NSYNK are working right at the very edge of what is possible with current smartphone technology. "At the moment we can only run the AR Event app with an Apple iPhone 12 Pro as it's right at the limit of the phone's capabilities," says Eno Henze, Founder and Creative Director at NSYNK. "This is because we're asking a lot of both the hardware and software. It has to scan and track the car correctly, and also to recognise the environment the car is situated in. So there are certain conditions you need to have where the AR works best" explains Demel.

"Yes, at the moment it's a little bit like a high-end DSLR camera in that respect," says Henze. "It requires a bit of practice to master, but the results are great. What we've created is something that, before now, would have required an expensive audio-visual technology set-up that would have cost hundreds of thousands of euros to implement. And of course, the usability and accessibility of this sort of media will improve over the next few years, as a lot of the major tech companies are working on AR technology at the moment. I think in the next three years we'll see more and more devices able to achieve this sort of result." Right now, Porsche is right at the vanguard of what is possible with the available technology. "That's what makes Porsche such an amazing partner to work with," says Henze. "They give us the confidence to create something that we weren't sure was even possible at the outset of the project. It's very unusual as a service provider to have such a supportive client."

Looking to tomorrow

Another advantage of an interactive piece of software, rather than a physical display model, is that it can be constantly improved and added to. “Initially, we released content showing the engineering details, charging infrastructure and aerodynamic properties of the Taycan,” says Demel. “Now, we’ve already added extra sections for the new Taycan Cross Turismo including a dirt road animation and a graphic that adds an e-bike onto the back of the car. We’d like to add more in the future.”

It’s this flexibility that holds the key to the app’s appeal – the ability to add models, add functionality, and to tweak and refine the way the app works, all in a cost-effective and resource-efficient way. What’s next? “We’d like it to provide more varied content for users,” says Henze. “At the moment it has a linear structure, with one animation flow so you move the story from one chapter to the next on a timeline. It would be great to build something with more variety in terms of the running order. That would give content creators even more scope to publish unique and compelling content.”

In the meantime, the app is transforming the way content creators gather content. “The way that the media presents news has changed radically in just a short space of time,” concludes Demel. “At one time, a huge crew and a big budget would be required to film something so complex and even then the idea of having these incredible movie-style special effects would have been out of the reach of most outlets. Now one person can turn up with just their smartphone and I find that absolutely amazing.” Whatever the future brings, what is certain is that NSYNK and Porsche will continue to make the very most out of the available technology in a bid to create ever-more interactive and innovative content.

Info

The Taycan AR Event app is currently available exclusively to members of the media and is not available to download from app stores.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Miro Demel

Team Lead Event Communications
+49 (0) 711 / 911 27633
miro.demel@porsche.de

Consumption data

Taycan Turbo (2023)
Fuel consumption / Emissions

WLTP*
Electric power consumption* combined (WLTP) 23.6 – 20.2 kWh/100 km
CO emissions* combined (WLTP) 0 g/km
CO2 class A Class

Taycan Cross Turismo Models (2023)
Fuel consumption / Emissions

WLTP*
Electric power consumption* combined (WLTP) 24.8 – 21.3 kWh/100 km
CO emissions* combined (WLTP) 0 g/km
CO2 class A Class

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, COEmissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/179956_en_3000000.mp4

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Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart