

CES Las Vegas 2018: Rinspeed presents comprehensive mobility ecosystem that also offers stationary use

SNAP - and it “clicked“

Self-driving electric cars full of IT components are supposed to relieve the burden on congested streets and polluted cities. With the “Snap” concept vehicle, Swiss think tank Rinspeed shows off a comprehensive approach for how this could work: For the first time, the vehicles also offer meaningful immobile use, because the chassis and the body structures go their separate ways.

As a result, unused sheet metal or “rolling stock” are things of the past. Mobility visionary Frank M. Rinderknecht simply relegates all components susceptible to wear and aging as well as all technology relevant to data processing to the so-called “skateboard,” the consequently “intelligent” and fully automated chassis of the electric vehicle. The body structures go by the umbrella term “pod” and consist of long-lived modules. They are virtually free from mechanical wear and only contain long-lasting IT components that are not bound to be outdated quickly. “Up top” it is all about the particular purpose of use - from a versatile delivery pod to a breathtaking, fully connected user experience for the occupants of a passenger pod.

With it, the clever Swiss solve a problem that many of us know from the navigation system in our own car: The thing no longer finds the way, because the software and map data are outdated. What is only irritating in this context, can quickly become a matter of safety in the near future in self-driving cars. Because after just a few short years, most conventional IT components can no longer be updated owing to the fact that the rapid software development has simply rendered the hardware obsolete. The rest of the vehicle may stay on the roads for the entire service life of a car - that is to say, 18 years and more.

The ingenious idea behind it: While the classic automakers celebrate the moment when the body and the chassis come together (“marriage”) as a highlight of every plant tour, “skateboards” and “pods” of the “Snap” are only temporary companions, which in turn however are together day and night. Versatile pods - such as for passenger transport, delivery or parcel services or the weekend adventure trip with the entire family - use whatever chassis happens to be available at the time. The pods can also be put to stationary use - for example, as a temporary office in the heart of the city. And the skateboards? After a few short but intense years, they are completely recycled, because they have reached the end of their useful life. As a result, they elegantly elude an expensive and complicated hardware upgrade.

“Snap” - rarely before did the name of a vehicle better describe a solution for the problems of the entire industry. It would be nice if the concept car from the Swiss made it go “click” for the mobility industry.

The partners and suppliers in the realization of the „Snap“ are:

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Bader GmbH & Co. KG - www.bader-leather.com
Borbet GmbH - www.borbet.de
Dekra Automobil GmbH - www.dekra.com
Esoro AG - www.esoro.ch
Ernst & Young GmbH - www.de.ey.com/automotive
Gentex Corporation - www.gentex.com
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