

Self-parking chairs at conference tables show Nissan's auto push

15 February 2016, by Nancy Owano



An amusing video has surfaced about an intelligent parking chair inspired by Nissan; the video shows the chairs swinging into action, self-guiding to finally park at a table in response to a person's claps.

They can also reverse and turn. *T3* called them "robo thrones." Its story said, "Japanese car manufacturer Nissan continues its foray into the world of robotics with a series of experimental motorized chairs." Nissan, it said, pulled this off, in step with Okamura; the latter is a furniture maker with a portfolio that includes business-ready furniture for offices and conference rooms.

Nissan sent out a news release on its self-moving chairs on Monday. The company stated, "The 'Intelligent Parking Chair' is a unique chair that automatically moves to a set position. The chair includes a roller to automatically move 360 degrees paired with a system that indicates the target position. Four cameras placed on the room's ceiling generate a bird's-eye view to wirelessly transmit the chair's position and its route to destination."

Nissan, said *T3*, took an Okamura chair and fitted motors to drive the wheels at its base. "The chairs themselves are controlled over Wi-Fi via a series of four motion-sensitive cameras positioned around a room, which direct the chairs to neatly fill gaps on a given [table](#)."

But wait a minute. Nissan's announcement referred to a lift from the "troublesome task" of [arranging](#) chairs. How lazy are we? Or would self-parking chairs be a genuine boost to efficiency considering manual labor deployed to set up conference rooms? Would it shave labor off assistants having to position numerous tables and [chairs](#) according to meeting mode and head count?

Do not feel guilty if you think this is just a publicity stunt to show off Nissan's expert handling of driver-assist technology. The tech was used as publicity to promote Nissan's new [intelligent](#) parking assist technology; the message being, if the technology can park a chair properly, then it can help you park a car just as easily, noted *T3*.

Nissan's announcement confirmed the reason behind the video. "The Intelligent Parking Chair is a promotional project that materializes Nissan's corporate vision of 'enriching people's lives through [technology](#).' It was produced in collaboration with the award-winning creative team BIRDMAN. This concept aims at increasing knowledge around the latest technology adopted by Nissan vehicles, while showing how this is slowly changing our daily lives."

Last month, *Fortune* reported on a test drive with the autonomous all-electric LEAF, made by Nissan. "Using a combination of 12 cameras, four side-panel laser scanners, a trunk full of computing power and access to detailed mapping data, the self-piloted car can mostly drive itself."

Nissan is moving with considerable focus on getting this right.

Fortune said Nissan brought its self-driving car to Silicon Valley to start testing on U.S. roads; its Silicon Valley Research center "is critical for Nissan's research into artificial intelligence and connected [cars](#)."

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APA citation: Self-parking chairs at conference tables show Nissan's auto push (2016, February 15) retrieved 27 January 2021 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2016-02-self-parking-chairs-conference-tables-nissan.html>

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