Sony, Yamaha entertainment cart goes big on monitors, sensors

27 August 2019, by Nancy Cohen

Sony and Yamaha have collaborated to bring out an autonomous vehicle that goes big on carrying the fruits of Sony's imaging technologies. This vehicle was officially announced as a joint development with Yamaha Motor Co. The vehicle is called the SC-1 Sociable Cart, promoted as wheeling out "a new mobility experience" for audiences.

The Japan Times said this was "an entertainment space unmatched by any traditional vehicle, aiming to provide a more enjoyable low-speed mobility value to occupants and people nearby."

What to expect? A slow-moving cart ambling along a boardwalk, playing pop songs? Not even close. The SC-1 Sociable Cart, which leans on Yamaha Motor's autonomous driving tech and Sony's entertainment tech, will showcase sensors, monitors and mixed reality. It can carry up to five passengers and can ride at a speed of up to 19km/h or 11.8 miles per hour.

Sony's concept takes vehicles away from the conventional; one Sony source suggested thinking about the cart as a mobile device that can move people around. Seating capacity is five.

In a video posted last year, Sony team members said the team wanted to go beyond making smartphones...a new product showing the company's tech was their challenge.

Their first entry was a power-assist kick scooter. They said the big challenge was commercializing it. They said they needed someone who knew how to make vehicles. Someone on the team had a friend at Yamaha Motor. That became the start of their collaboration.

Then there was Xperia Bike. It was a concept resonating with bikes and smartphones. One of their Yamaha Motors contacts had worked on developing golf carts. So the Yamaha pairing continued. The further outgrowth was a concept for a "rideable smartphone." Fast-forward to a prototype unveiling that was scheduled.

Sony deployed sensors to capture surroundings; no windows. Expect high-definition displays installed in the area where windows would otherwise be.

Also, mixed reality technology developed by Sony can superimpose computer graphics onto the surroundings displayed on the monitor. "This turns the area that used to be taken up by windows, where passengers could only see the scenery, into an entertainment area."

The Japan Times said the mixed reality (MR) technology "uses lasers to detect the range and direction of objects by emitting laser light and measuring the time taken for it to bounce back."

The cart would stream ads and other content to people outside the vehicle. Even interactions via AI are in the mix.

According to Sony, "analyzing the images obtained via the image sensor with artificial intelligence (AI) enables the information being streamed to be interactive. The AI can determine the attributes (age, gender, etc.) of people outside the vehicle and optimize ads and other streaming info accordingly."

The listed specifications included, for the inside, one 49" 4K LCD monitor and for the outside, four 55" 4K LCD monitors. The image sensors included five 35 mm full-size Exmor CMOS sensors (four around the vehicle and one in the vehicle).

The news release described the brake system as a hydraulic-type four-wheel disc brake and motor rotation brake, and listed electromagnetic induction as the automatic driving method.

Practical business applications? The SC-1 has been designed to deliver an opportunity for entertainment at varied venues. "Sony and Yamaha Motor will deploy it to provide fun new diversions at venues such as golf courses, amusement parks, and commercial facilities," said the news release.

What has been the reaction over the cart's looks? The word "boxy" kept cropping up on numerous sites. *Digital Trends* thought it looked like it drove straight out of a cartoon.

What's next? The two companies plan to launch Japanese domestic services using this model, said *The Japan Times*.

A prototype last year was used for a "Moonlight Cruise" ride experience at Kanucha Bay Resort, said *Digital Trends*, "where customers were able to experience audio and video entertainment powered by augmented reality projected against night scenes on a golf course in Okinawa."

More information:
www.sony.net/SonyInfo/News/Pre …
8/19-077E/index.html

APA citation: Sony, Yamaha entertainment cart goes big on monitors, sensors (2019, August 27) retrieved 21 November 2019 from https://techxplore.com/news/2019-08-sony-yamaha-cart-big-

sensors.html