

B Y D's Layout in Electrification, Connectivity, Intelligence and Sharing and Strategy Analysis Report, 2023-2024

BYD deploys vehicle-mounted drones, and the autonomous driving charging robot market is expected to boom

Insight: BYD deploys vehicle-mounted drones, and the autonomous driving charging robot market is expected to boom.

BYD and Dongfeng M-Hero make cross-border layout of drones.

In recent years, as vehicle intelligence and civilian drone technology and regulations became mature, drones have also been mentioned by ever more OEMs. They have made the layout by way of cross-border cooperation with drone companies. Recently, BYD, Tesla and Dongfeng among others have announced their drone solutions based on their production models.

In January 2024, BYD and DJI announced a cooperative drone solution and a plan of investing RMB5 billion, which will be implemented in phases in the years to come. The first model to be equipped is Yangwang U8 Player Edition. With the navigation system, sensor technology and intelligent control algorithms, the drone enables such functions as autonomous takeoff and landing, automatic cruise control, and intelligent obstacle avoidance.







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The exclusive drone module co-developed by BYD and DJI provides a landing platform on the vehicle roof

The exclusive drone module co-developed by BYD and DJI provides a landing platform on the vehicle roof. The drone can be flown here to detect routes, and can also become a companion of off-road vehicles to check road conditions at any time. During recovery, the drone hangar on the roof is opened to reveal the landing platform. The recovery device will fix the drone, and also replace its battery through the mechanical structure to achieve continuous use of the drone.

Yangwang U8 Player Edition will be equipped with this drone system, with 3 backup batteries, in-car video monitoring and a hangar for charging the drone battery outside the car. This system consists of hangar assembly, drone, battery, remote sensing module, remote control handle, and vehicle flight control APP. It has multiple functions such as one-button takeoff, intelligent follow, one-button photography, and onebutton landing.

After taking off, the drone will automatically lock the vehicle and enter the intelligent following state, with a maximum following speed of 50km/h, and also has automatic omnidirectional obstacle avoidance function. As for the photography mode, it carries three camera movement templates: adventure, lightness, and epic.





In August 2023, Dongfeng M-Hero announced a drone solution in cooperation with GDU Technology. M-Hero 917 is equipped with Oriental Hawkeye drone system. With dual infrared and visible light channels and the road monitoring function, GDU Technology's S400 drone can survey environmental information such as road terrain, slope and angle. It supports synchronous intelligent path planning, and has a mounting capacity of 3 kg.

Dongfeng M-Hero 917 & GDU Technology S400 UAV



Source: GDU Technology



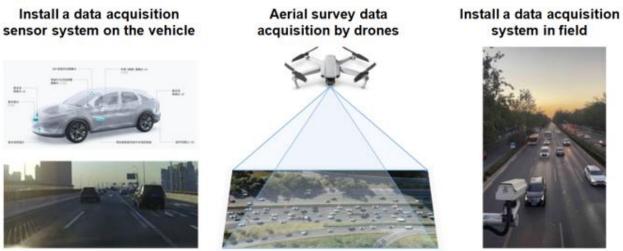
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Use drone technologies for data acquisition and simulation

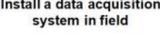
Among the three autonomous driving data acquisition methods, acquisition by vehicles is the most common, but the proportion of effective data is low, and it is easy to interfere with real behaviors of surrounding vehicles, and it is unable to record data in blind spots of sensors. Another method is acquisition in field, with low flexibility and insufficient reliability, a result of angle skew and low image accuracy.

According to the in-depth research by fka, the automotive technology research institute of RWTH Aachen University, and DJI Automotive's own practices in the past two years, aerial survey data acquisition by drones has obvious advantages. Drones can collect richer and more complete scenario data, and can directly collect aerial objective shots of all vehicles in blind spots of the target vehicle without obstruction, reflecting more realistic and interference-free human driving behaviors, and more efficiently collecting data in specific road sections and special driving scenarios, for example, on/off-ramps and frequent cut-ins.

Three Natural Traffic Data Acquisition Methods and Typical Driving Scenario Extraction Methods



Source: DJI Automotive







Why does the implementation of vision-only autonomous driving suddenly accelerate?

Why has the pace of implementing vision-only technology solutions suddenly quicken since 2024? The answer is foundation models. The research shows that a truly autonomous driving system needs at least about 17 billion kilometers of road verification before being production-ready. The reason is that even if the existing technology can handle more than 95% of common driving scenarios, problems may still occur in the remaining 5% corner cases.

Generally, learning a new corner case requires collecting more than 10,000 samples, and the entire cycle is more than 2 weeks. Even if a team has 100 autonomous vehicles conducting road tests 24 hours a day, the time required to accumulate data is measured in "hundred years" - which is obviously unrealistic.

Foundation models are used to quickly restore real scenarios and generate corner cases in various complex scenarios for model training. Foundation models (such as Pangu model) can shorten the closed-loop cycle of autonomous driving corner cases from more than two weeks to two days.

Currently, DJI Automotive, Baidu, PhiGent Robotics, GAC, Tesla and Megvii among others have launched their vision-only autonomous driving solutions. This weekly report summarizes and analyzes vision-only autonomous driving routes.



Table of Content (1)

1. BYD's Automotive Platforms

1.1 New Energy Modular Platform Planning
1.2 Modular Platform - Development History of Major Technologies
1.3 Modular Platform - BYD New Architecture (BNA)
1.4 Modular Platform - e4 Technology Platform
1.6 Electric Technology Platform - e Platform (1)
1.6 Electric Technology Platform - e Platform (2)
1.6 Electric Technology Platform - e Platform (3)
1.6 Electric Technology Platform - e Platform (3)
1.6 Electric Technology Platform - e Platform (4)
1.6 e Platform 3.0
1.7 Software Platform for e Platform 3.0 - BYD OS
1.8 BYD OS Realizes Decoupling of Hardware and Software
1.9 Data Closed-Loop System Construction
1.10 Big Data Accumulation
1.11 Data-Driven Foundation Model R&D Route
1.12 Next Step: Full-process Data-Driven Foundation Model

2. BYD's EEA

2.1 EEA Evolution Route
2.2 3.0 EEA: e Platform 3.0 - System Design
2.3 3.0 EEA: e Platform 3.0 - Multi-Domain Computing Ideas
2.4 3.0 EEA: e Platform 3.0 - Integrated Left and Right Body Controllers
2.5 3.0 EEA: e Platform 3.0 - Intelligent Power Domain (1)
2.6 3.0 EEA: e Platform 3.0 - Intelligent Power Domain (2)
2.7 4.0 EEA: Xuanji Architecture
2.8 4.0 EEA: Xuanji Architecture - One Brain, Two Ends
2.9 4.0 EEA: Xuanji Architecture - Three Networks
2.10 4.0 EEA: Xuanji Architecture - Vehicle Intelligence

2.12 4.0 EEA: Xuanji Architecture - Dual Gigabit Ethernet Ring Communication Networks

2.13 4.0 EEA: Xuanji Architecture - Security Redundancy and Perception Protection

3. BYD's Electrification Layout

3.1 Development of Battery Technology 3.2 CTP Product: Blade Battery 3.3 Cell To Body (CTB) Technology 3.4 Features of CTB Technology 3.5 Vehicle Models with CTB Technology 3.6 Cell To Chassis (CTC) Technology 3.7 Subsidiary: FinDreams Battery 3.8 Battery Capacity Planning 3.9 Eight-in-one Powertrain 3.10 Eight-in-one Powertrain Dismantling 3.11 Self-developed Power Domain Controller 3.12 Power Domain Controller: Integration of Drive, Brake and Steering Functions 3.13 Intelligent Power Domain: Intelligent Control and Intelligent Customization 3.14 Intelligent Power Domain: Intelligent Monitoring and Challenges 3.15 Power Domain Controller of BYD Dolphin 3.16 Introduction to Thermal Management for New Energy Vehicles 3.17 Development Stages of Automotive Thermal Management System 3.18 Electrification Platform - Charging Facility Development 3.19 Electrification Platform - 800V High Voltage Flash Charging Technology 3.20 Electrification Platform - Denza D9's Dual Charging Technology

4. BYD's Chassis Layout

- 4.1 Wholly-owned Subsidiary FinDreams Powertrain
- 4.2 Self-development History of Braking Products



Table of Content (2)

4.3 Self-developed Brake-by-wire Products
4.4 Intelligent Chassis Fusion Control (1)
4.5 Intelligent Chassis Fusion Control (2)
4.6 Intelligent Chassis Fusion Control (3)
4.7 Intelligent Chassis Fusion Control (4)
4.8 DiSus Intelligent Computing Control Center
4.9 DiSus Technology Matrix (C/A/P/X)
4.10 DiSus-C (First Available to Han EV models)
4.11 Upgrade DiSus-C: Intelligent Damping Body Control System
4.12 DiSus-A
4.13 DiSus-P
4.14 DiSus-P: Chassis Parts
4.15 DiSus-P: Chassis Performance
4.16 DiSus-X
4.17 e4 Technology Platform

5. BYD's Intelligent Driving System

5.1 ADAS Development History
5.2 Overall ADAS Layout
5.3 ADAS Team
5.4 ADAS Development Route
5.5 ADAS: DiPilot
5.6 High-level ADAS: Eyes of God
5.7 ADAS: All-scenario Parking
5.8 Typical ADAS-enabled Models
5.9 Chip Layout
5.10 ADAS Hardware Layout: Domain Controller
5.11 ADAS Software Layout
5.12 ADAS Algorithm Layout: Data Driven

5.13 ADAS Algorithm Layout: Perception Algorithm5.14 ADAS Algorithm Layout: Planning & Decision Algorithms5.15 Autonomous Driving Test5.16 ADAS Cooperation Ecosystem Layout

6 BYD's Intelligent Cockpit and Telematics

6.1 Intelligent Cockpit Development
6.2 DiLink Intelligent Cockpit 2024 Platform and Name
6.3 Introduction of DiLink
6.4 Development History of Telematics Systems (1)
6.4 Development History of Telematics Systems (2)
6.5 Installations and Installation Rate of Telematics System
6.6 DiLink System Function Iteration
6.7 Functions of DiLink 4.0 System
6.8 Models with DiLink 4.0 (1)
6.9 Models with DiLink 5.0 (2)
6.10 Cockpit Software Architecture
6.11 Cockpit Chip Configuration of Major Models
6.12 Intelligent Cockpit Ecosystem
6.13 Dynamics in Telematics Services

7. BYD's Entertainment and Comfort Systems

- 7.1 Greening System
- 7.2 Fragrance System
- 7.3 Intelligent Entry System (Digital Key, Biometrics)
- 7.4 All-scenario Intelligent Voice & Xuanji Al Foundation Model
- 7.5 Decoupling Game Vehicle
- 7.6 Vehicle-mounted Drone
- 7.7 Automotive APP



Table of Content (3)

7.8 Cockpit Entertainment Ecosystem

8. BYD's Major Models and Suppliers

8.1 Passenger Car Brand Layout 8.2 Sales Volume 8.3 R&D Centers 8.4 Technology Planning (1) 8.4 Technology Planning (2) 8.4 Technology Planning (3) 8.4 Technology Planning (4) 8.5 Sales of BYD (Dynasty & Ocean) Brand Models 8.6 Positioning of BYD (Dynasty & Ocean) Brand Models and Production Plants 8.7 Typical BYD Brand Models (1) 8.8 Typical BYD Brand Models (2) 8.9 Denza Brand Model Planning 8.10 Typical Denza Brand Models (1) 8.10 Typical Denza Brand Models (2) 8.11 Yangwang Brand Model Planning 8.12 Fangchengbao Brand Model Planning 8.13 Parts Suppliers of Song L (Part) 8.14 Parts Suppliers of Yangwang (Part)

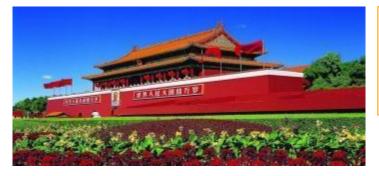
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- 8.15 Parts Suppliers of Han (Part)
- 9. BYD's Other Businesses and Overseas Layout
- 9.1 Overseas Development History
- 9.2 Overseas Plant Layout (1)
- 9.3 Overseas Plant Layout (2)
- 9.4 Overseas Channel Construction
- 9.5 Overseas Strategy



9.6 Overseas Sales9.7 Overseas Flagship Model Layout9.8 Vehicle-mounted Drone Hanger

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