

EMBARGO (15 SEPTEMBER 2020)

The Origo Steering Wheel wins German Design Award 2021 for outstanding design quality

The concept steering wheel, developed by a Finnish automotive consortium, is named a Winner for Excellent Product Design – Human-Machine-Interface

HELSINKI, VANTAA and OULU Finland, September 15, 2020 — The Origo Steering Wheel concept has received recognition from the German Design Awards council for outstanding design quality. The project was chosen as a Winner in the category of Excellent Product Design – Human-Machine Interface. German Design Awards is one of the world’s most highly renowned design competitions. High standards are assured by an international jury recognizing only projects that truly represent pioneering contributions to the German and international design landscape. The Origo Steering Wheel was developed within the Finnish automotive ecosystem, in collaboration between Canatu, Siili Auto, TactoTek®, Rightware, and Northern Works as a part of the Multimodal In-Vehicle Interaction and Intelligent Information Presentation (MIVI) project.

“We are all proud that this new, jointly developed HMI solution has drawn great interest and has been awarded with such a prestigious prize. The Origo Steering Wheel shows the value of re-imagining user experiences by integrating inspired design, innovative 3D touch surfaces, and leading-edge software. By adapting the strengths of mobile device interaction patterns to driver controls, this team of Finnish companies has developed a solution that delivers convenience, style, and safety,” said Juha Kokkonen, CEO, Canatu Oy.

With the new Origo Steering Wheel, the driver can manage all key functions purely by thumbs without letting go of the steering wheel, minimizing distractions, and improving safety.

Transparent three-dimensional touch surfaces enable an intuitive HMI and enhance freedom by design. Only relevant information is displayed on-screen at any time to avoid overstimulation.

“The initial idea of the Origo steering wheel was to challenge the status quo of the existing steering wheel HMI and not just take the easy route of converting analog controls into digital versions. Our lives have become cluttered with information and overstimulated with choices, so we wanted to offer the driver clarity with our steering wheel concept and reduce functions and controls to just the bare necessities,” said Miika Heikkinen, Lead Designer, Northern Works.

“One way of overcoming the fear of new is to make it look familiar. Nowhere is this more true than in a car’s user interface, and the Origo concept does a superb job of incorporating new interactions into a familiar context,” said Väinö Leskinen, CEO, Siili Auto Oy.

While designing a minimalistic and intuitive HMI, the team wanted physical forms to be expressive, supporting the use of controls, something that the current touch screens and capacitive controls quite often lack. The final Origo design perfectly aligns physical controls with the digital UI, creating an intuitive and exciting user experience unlike anything seen on cars before.

German Design Awards council advances the design-oriented landscape by identifying unique design trends and rewarding the best entries across three main categories: “Excellent Product Design,” “Excellent Communications Design,” and “Excellent Architecture.” The 2021 competition attracted a total of 4,172 project submissions from 60 countries, and the international jury rewarded 955 participants with Special Mention, 362 with Winner, and 67 with Gold across 71 sub-categories. The winners will receive their prizes at the official award ceremony on February 19, 2021, as a part of the Ambiente 2021 trade show in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

The consortium partners have all brought their unique expertise to the project:

- Canatu is providing its transparent 3D touch surfaces integrated on the steering wheel wings enabling design freedom and intuitive user experience.
- Siili Auto designs and implements User Interface (UI) of the smart steering wheel. UI and the steering wheel physical form and innovate controls are seamlessly integrated to a unique user experience.
- Rightware is providing its market-leading HMI software tools including Kanzi UI, Kanzi Connect, and Kanzi Maps to enable rapid design, prototyping, and development of intuitive interaction models for this new concept.
- TactoTek® applies its Injection Molded Structural Electronics (IMSE™) technology to design and produce smart surfaces that include circuitry, touch controls and illumination in 3D injection molded designs.
- Northern Works is the design supplier for the project responsible for the industrial design.

For more information on the Origo Steering Wheel concept, please see this animation and contact the founding consortium members Canatu, Siili Auto, TactoTek, or Rightware:

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The Origo Steering Wheel has been named a Winner in the German Design Awards for Excellent Product Design – Human-Machine-Interface.

About Canatu

Canatu develops and manufactures 3D formable and stretchable films, touch sensors and automotive heaters. Transparent and conductive films can be integrated into plastic, glass, textile or leather enabling 3D touch displays, smart switches and other intuitive user interfaces. The extremely conductive CNB™ films are manufactured with a patented method using equipment developed by Canatu. Canatu supplies these unique CNB™ films and touch sensors to touch module vendors and OEM's in several industries, for example automotive and consumer electronics. Canatu is headquartered in Finland, with sales locations in Europe, US, Greater China and Taiwan, Japan and Korea. Canatu – Shaping surfaces into experiences. www.canatu.com

About Siili Auto

Siili Auto is the world's premier creative technology studio fully focused on product innovation and product creation for next generation mobility. In a short period of time Siili Auto, the start-up of OMX Helsinki listed company Siili Solution, has become a significant platform independent player in the global automotive industry software business focusing on the next generation car HMI solutions as well as innovating and prototyping creative technology solutions in the OEMs' product development processes. auto.siili.com

About TactoTek

TactoTek is a leading provider of solutions for Injection Molded Structural Electronics (IMSE™) that integrate printed circuitry and electronic components into 3D injection molded plastics. Leading use cases include in-vehicle applications, home/industrial appliances, and wearable technology. TactoTek develops and industrializes IMSE technology, develops mass production ready IMSE prototypes, and licenses IMSE technology for 3rd party mass production. TactoTek is funded by Conor Venture Partners, Voima Ventures, Nordic Option Oy, Valeado AB, Faurecia Ventures, 3M Ventures, Cornes Technologies Limited, Repsol Energy Ventures, Plastic Omnium, Nanogate, Ascend Capital Partners, Leaguer VC, Nordea, Finnvera, ELY Center, Business Finland, various European Union's funding programs and private angels. For more information, please visit www.tactotek.com

About Rightware

Rightware provides tools and services for development of advanced digital user interfaces. The Kanzi philosophy is based on designer empowerment, prioritizing ease of use, rapid prototyping, workflow efficiency, high performance, and cross-platform support. Our passion is to unleash creativity and to enable fantastic user experiences. As a ThunderSoft company, our combined skills and assets allow us to deliver fully integrated HMI solutions, engineering support, and design services for automotive customers across the globe. Rightware is headquartered in Finland with a presence in the United States, Germany, Italy, China, South Korea, and Japan. Trusted by over 50 car brands, we are on track to powering the user experience in over 40 million cars by 2024. www.rightware.com

About Northern Works

Northern Works is a small and agile design consultancy based in Finland with great connections to the global design- and technology experts. Northern Works specializes in Transportation-, Industrial and Concept Design and has been working with a global clientele since early 2014. Combining the past in-house OEM experience with the understanding of the needs of a smaller start-up makes the design process streamlined and truly unique. The strong connections to the Automotive OEM's, Tier one suppliers and different research organizations and start up's which gives Northern Works a holistic understanding on what can be achieved both long and short term. www.northernworks.fi

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