

Ford goes Silicon Valley with new research center

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"At Ford, we view ourselves as both a mobility and an auto company, as we drive innovation in every part of our business," said chief executive

Mark Fields as he opened the new center in Palo Alto, California.

"This new research center shows Ford's commitment to be part of the Silicon Valley innovation ecosystem—anticipating customers' wants and needs, especially on connectivity, mobility and [autonomous vehicles](#). We are working to make these new technologies accessible to everyone, not just luxury customers."

The move comes as global automakers work to add new kinds of technologies to their vehicles, including "infotainment," crash avoidance and self-driving systems.

Ford said it expects to have one of the largest automotive manufacturer research centers in America's Silicon Valley by the end of the year, with 125 researchers, engineers and scientists.

The research center is headed by Dragos Maciuca, an engineer who joins Ford from Apple with a background in consumer electronics, semiconductor manufacturing as well as aerospace and automotive technology.

"Future mobility solutions will require fresh ideas and vigorous collaboration between researchers inside Ford and with other technology leaders outside the automotive industry," said Raj Nair, Ford vice president and [chief technical officer](#).

"Our Palo Alto research team will build on existing relationships with universities and technology companies, and forge new ones to help us create and apply the appropriate technology working together."

At the opening, Ford previewed a system that integrates with the Google Nest smart home [technology](#) that allows a vehicle to communicate with a thermostat to make changes when leaving or returning from a home.

Ford is also testing systems for [autonomous driving](#) and parking.

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