

Ford, Toyota to join hands on hybrid trucks

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Ford and Toyota announced Monday plans to jointly develop a new hybrid system for light trucks and sport utility vehicles. (c) 2011 AFP

The two companies, both leaders in the hybrid gasoline-electric car sector, said they aimed at bringing hybrid technology to pickups and SUVs "without compromising" what drivers expect from the more powerful, rear-wheel drive vehicles.

They said that cooperating rather than competing on developing the technology would help get it to market sooner.

"Ford and Toyota believe that their collaboration will allow them to bring these hybrid technologies to customers sooner and more affordably than either company could have accomplished alone," they said in a statement.

While jointly developed, the US and Japanese automakers will work separately to integrate the new system in their own vehicles, according to an already-signed memorandum of understanding on the project.

The cooperation will also extend to the standards and technologies involved in "next-generation" telematics systems -- the information technology systems increasingly crucial in operating a vehicle.

"We expect to create exciting and socially beneficial technologies with Ford, and we can do so because our two companies have enough experience to create a synergy effect in [hybrid technology](#) and in telematics," said Toyota executive vice president Takeshi Uchiyamada.

"At the same time, we will compete harder than ever in the spirit of 'making great cars.' Our competitive stance will help maximize benefits for customers and for society at large," he said.

The two companies said that they would sign a formal cooperation agreement by next year.

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