Audi starts further-training campaign for big data and artificial intelligence

- Moving towards the digital car company with the “data.camp” initiative
- Michael Schmid, Head of the Audi Academy: “Faster and more targeted skill acquisition in areas crucial for the future”
- Courses on data science and machine learning specifically for Audi employees at Udacity online platform

Ingolstadt, November 21, 2017 – Audi is making its employees fit for the digital future: Under the “data.camp” motto, the automobile manufacturer has started a further-training campaign focused on big data and artificial intelligence. Expertise in these areas is an essential basis for the development of cars driving in piloted mode, intelligent robots and digital mobility services. One important element here is Audi’s cooperation with the online platform Udacity.

“In our areas of the digital future, the rapid development of new IT skills is a critical competitive factor. The topics of artificial intelligence and big data play a key role here,” stated Michael Schmid, Head of the Audi Academy. In the context of the data.camp initiative, the company is therefore systematically analyzing the requirements of the various business units and preparing a comprehensive qualification portfolio.

This starts with basic programs for new entrants without any knowledge of programming, such as the basis of data analysis, and ends with courses at university level on topics such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. Agile project management with methods such as scrum, design thinking or prototyping is also included in big-data qualification. All courses offered are individually tailored to the needs of the various employees.

In addition to in-house training, Audi also integrates the expertise of external partners. In this way, the carmaker combines digital learning on the Udacity online platform from Silicon Valley with presence formats it has developed itself. Tutors from the relevant departments at Audi support the participants with queries and learning projects, and ensure a close technical connection with Audi. This further training takes place in parallel with the participants’ work; the “Audi students” are released to participate for ten hours per week. Following the successful conclusion of the complete program, the employees are awarded a so-called nanodegree from the online platform, for example as a data analyst or machine-learning engineer. “With purely
online courses, the dropout rate is often very high,” said Michael Schmid. “That’s why we decided in favor of a combination of the online courses offered by Udacity and presence courses here at Audi.”

In the coming years, employees from all departments will gain qualifications in the area of big data, thus helping to push forward with Audi’s transformation into a digital car company. Specific areas of application for big data at the company include block-chain technology, the analysis of large volumes of machine data for production optimization, machine learning in accounting processes and the development of cars that drive in piloted mode.

The Audi Academy is the main point of contact for training and further training at the company and encourages lifelong learning for Audi employees with the use of various formats. Blended learning, which is the combination of presence courses and digital courses, is playing an increasingly important role, not only with regard to big data. In the context of mobile learning, for example, apprentices use tablet computers in order to reinforce learned material anytime and anywhere. Audi trains logistics employees with the help of virtual reality, allowing them to practice packing processes. And online communities support language training for employees preparing for deployment abroad.

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The Audi Group, with its brands Audi, Ducati and Lamborghini, is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the premium segment. It is present in more than 100 markets worldwide and produces at 16 locations in twelve countries. 100 percent subsidiaries of AUDI AG include Audi Sport GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant’Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy).

In 2016, the Audi Group delivered to customers about 1.868 million automobiles of the Audi brand, 3,457 sports cars of the Lamborghini brand and 55,451 motorcycles of the Ducati brand. In the 2016 fiscal year, AUDI AG achieved total revenue of €59.3 billion and an operating profit of €3.1 billion. At present, approximately 88,000 people work for the company all over the world, more than 60,000 of them in Germany. Audi focuses on sustainable products and technologies for the future of mobility.