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## **How DKW changed the automotive world**

- **80 years ago: the DKW F1 was the world's first volume-produced car with front-wheel drive**
- **Its triumphal career began in 1931**
- **The last DKW models left the assembly lines in Argentina and Brazil in 1968**

**Ingolstadt, February 16, 2011 – The first Audi advertising with the ‘Vorsprung durch Technik’ slogan appeared 40 years ago, in 1971. Even then this technical leadership claim was well and truly justified. If we look back another 40 years we find DKW, one of the companies that later became Audi, introducing its F1 model at the 1931 International Automobile Exhibition in Berlin – the world’s first high-volume production car with front-wheel drive.**

Jörgen Skafte Rasmussen acquired a majority shareholding in Audi Werke AG of Zwickau, Germany in August 1928. He planned to stimulate sales by installing his eight-cylinder engines in the large Audi models, but competition from America was strong, and during the world economic crisis from the end of 1929 onwards Audi found itself facing increasingly severe financial problems. A new product with greater market appeal was urgently needed to ensure the company’s survival.

In October 1930 Rasmussen decided that an entirely new small car should be developed in the shortest possible time. Its design was to be based on the water-cooled DKW twin-cylinder motorcycle engine, with front-wheel drive and a lightweight steel chassis frame. Rasmussen allowed the designers only six weeks to finish their work. The ‘F1’ project was successful, and the new DKW front-wheel-drive model had its first test run at the end of November 1930. DKW exhibited it at the Berlin IAA Motor Show in February 1931, and it rapidly became a sales success. Various versions went on sale, and the F1 was soon the Auto Union’s top-selling model. By the time production ceased in 1942 about 270,000 had left the Audi assembly lines.



DKW cars with front-wheel drive also formed the basis for reconstruction of the Auto Union in West Germany after the Second World War. Between 1949 and 1966 the Ingolstadt and Düsseldorf factories (Düsseldorf until 1962) built no fewer than 887,000 DKW passenger cars before production switched over to the new Audi model range first shown to the public in the summer of 1965.

The very last DKW passenger cars, however, saw the light of day far from their country of origin. Auto Union models continued to be built under licence in Argentina and Brazil until 1968.

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The four rings of the Audi badge symbolise the brands Audi, DKW, Horch and Wanderer, which were combined to form Auto Union in 1932. Auto Union and NSU, which merged in 1969, both made many significant contributions towards the development of the car. AUDI AG was formed from Audi NSU Auto Union AG in 1985. Together with the two traditional companies Auto Union GmbH and NSU GmbH, Audi Tradition has nurtured the extensive, diverse history of Audi for many years and presented it to the public. The Audi museum mobile at the Audi Forum Ingolstadt is open daily from Monday to Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The August Horch Museum in Zwickau is open from Tuesday to Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. [www.audi.de/tradition](http://www.audi.de/tradition)

Audi Tradition supports the work of Audi Club International e.V. (ACI). Officially recognised by AUDI AG, this umbrella organisation represents all Audi brand clubs and the clubs of the predecessor brands of the present-day AUDI AG. Information at [www.audi-club-international.de](http://www.audi-club-international.de)

The Audi Group sold around 1,092,400 cars of the Audi brand in 2010. The Company posted revenue of €29.8 billion and an operating profit of €1.6 billion in 2009. Audi produces vehicles in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm (Germany), Győr (Hungary), Changchun (China) and Brussels (Belgium). Aurangabad in India saw the start of CKD production of the Audi A6 at the end of 2007, of the Audi A4 in early October 2008 and of the Audi Q5 in July 2010. Production of the new Audi A1 has been running at the Brussels plant since May 2010. The Company is active in more than 100 markets worldwide. AUDI AG's wholly owned subsidiaries include AUDI HUNGARIA MOTOR Kft., Automobili Lamborghini Holding S.p.A. in Sant'Agata Bolognese (Italy) and quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm. Audi currently employs around 60,000 people worldwide, including around 46,600 in Germany. Between 2011 and 2015 the brand with the four rings is planning to invest around €11.6 billion, mainly in new products, in order to sustain the Company's technological lead embodied in its "Vorsprung durch Technik" slogan. By 2015, Audi plans to increase the number of models in its portfolio to 42. AUDI AG will present the full results for the 2010 fiscal year at its Annual Press Conference on March 8, 2011.

Audi has long been fulfilling its social responsibility on many levels – with the aim of making the future worth living for generations to come. The basis for Audi's lasting success is therefore formed by environmental protection, the conservation of resources, international competitiveness and a forward-looking human resources policy. One example of AUDI AG's commitment to environmental issues is the newly established Audi Environmental Foundation.