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UNIT 1

Pumping up Hydrogen

氢——未来的汽车燃料

随着能源和污染问题在世界范围内引起的关注，人们迫切地希望能找到一种能源替代物。德国汽车巨头宝马公司 (BMW) 正在进行把氢用作汽车燃料的能源替代物的实验。虽然氢燃料究竟在何时才能得到广泛的应用还不清楚，但公司以及环保官员们对于氢这种干净、切合实际的能源表现出极大的热情。

Words to Watch

smelly a. 难闻的

emission n. 散发, 排放物

uneven a. 不平衡的

fluctuating a. 波动的, 不定的

uproar n. 扰乱, 骚动, 吵闹

quandary n. 困惑, 窘境, 左右

为难

bivalent a. 两个, 一对的,

双的

cylinder n. 油缸, 汽缸

mindset n. 思想的形式,

思想倾向





infrastructure n. 基础设施 车顶的) 轿车

renewable a. 可更新的 aluminum n. 铝

Fahrenheit n. 华氏度(°F)

electrolysis n. 电解(作用)

Celsius n. 摄氏度(°C)

electrode n. 电极

fiberglass n. 纤维玻璃

catastrophe n. 骤然而来的

conjure v. 使想起, 使在
脑海中显现

灾难、灾祸

puncture n. 小孔, 小洞

clunky a. 发出沉闷金属声
的; 发出呼呼声的;

dissipate v. 分散, 消散

clog v. 堵塞, 塞满

sedan n. (有2~4扇门,
双排座、带固定

pilot a. (小规模)试验性的;
试点的; 实验的

Could the Simplest Element be the Car Fuel of the Future?

Summary: With energy and pollution concerns world-wide, German auto giant BMW¹ is experimenting with hydrogen as an alternative power source for its vehicles. The company's main obstacles are their current cars limited driving range and a lack of service stations to stock up on hydrogen². Although it is unclear when hydrogen fuel could become widely used, company and environmental officials are excited about its use as a clean, sensible power source.

MUNICH, Germany (CNN) — No more smelly fumes at the gas station. No more polluting CO₂ emissions. Far less dependence on uneven supplies of fossil fuels. An end to fluctuating gas prices, largely controlled by OPEC³, that caused an uproar in Europe and elsewhere in the world last fall.

Could hydrogen, the simplest and most abundant





element in the universe, address both energy, economic and clean air concerns?

The German luxury car company, BMW, is committing a great deal of engineering resources and money to find an answer to that question. But hydrogen's possibilities also pose a sort of "chicken and egg" quandary for the company.

How can they get consumers to buy hydrogen-fueled cars if drivers can't find fuel? And how do they get energy companies committed to building hydrogen service stations if few people own these cars?

BMW isn't putting all its eggs in one basket⁴. The German auto giant is working with governments, oil companies and transportation researchers to promote the long-term benefits of cars that use this pollution-free fuel.

The company demonstrated its hydrogen-powered vehicles during a global road show⁵, "The Clean Energy World Tour 2001," that kicked off⁶ in Dubai⁷ in February. By mid-year BMW will also have given like demonstrations in Brussels, Belgium; Milan, Italy; Tokyo, Japan; and Los Angeles, California.

Alternative-fueled vehicles often conjure up visions of heavy and clunky electric cars, a good idea that's just "not quite there yet" — and certainly not the image of speed and performance BMW cultivates. So it was important to BMW that their hydrogen vehicle look like their other products.

"It feels like a normal car.

It can be operated like a normal car. And so the feeling for our customers will be, they have a high powered car, a normal car with clean emissions," said Klaus Pehr, head of concept cars for BMW in Munich.





Speaking at the first — and only — public, mechanically-operated hydrogen fueling station located at the Munich Airport, Pehr showed off the 750hl sedan. The car has a bivalent 5.4 liter, 12-cylinder V-engine⁸, as well as a 140 liter hydrogen tank. Its maximum speed is 140 miles per hour (226 km/hour).

Crucial for the foreseeable future, the cars can run on either liquefied hydrogen or gasoline.

Fifteen of BMW's 750hl sedans participating in its Clean Energy road show. Combined, the cars have traveled more than 63 000 miles (100 000 kilometers). But with just one place to "fill up," hydrogen cars are now practical only in and around Bavaria⁹, near the Munich filling station.

Right now, the car's range is limited to just 217.5 miles (350 km).

The hydrogen sedans are not on the market yet, but BMW is already considering ways to broaden their sales possibilities. One of the company's goals is a hydrogen filling station in every European capital by 2005.

Mass acceptance?

Years of promoting mass transit, air pollution and fluctuating gas prices have not ended love affairs with the car in any industrialized country. So the mindset now in some transportation circles and smoggy city governments is to at least get drivers into low—or non-polluting vehicles.

"I won't argue about whether this will happen in 30 years, 40 years, or 50 years... but it will happen," says Professor Ulrich Wagner of Munich's Ludwig Maximilian University.

Wagner says car and energy companies, as well as





local and national governments, must work together to make hydrogen-fueled cars a reality.

"We need better storage systems, more efficient storage systems, and we need a certain infrastructure in order to get started," said Wagner, who teaches courses on renewable energy.

Officials hope public buses will soon run on hydrogen.

While hydrogen is the lightest known element, it has some tricky characteristics. It only becomes liquid at dramatically low temperatures—423 degrees Fahrenheit (–253 degrees Celsius). To keep the fuel that cold, fuel tanks in the BMW cars are made of 70 layers of fiberglass and aluminum.

Hydrogen fuel is now created through an electrolysis process, in which electrodes (stimulated by light) split water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen is then separated and kept cool — and liquid — before it is placed in fuel tanks.

What about safety?

Safety issues are a major concern for a fuel that's often perceived as more dangerous than others. While hydrogen itself played no part in either catastrophe, it was the fuel in both the sinking of the Hindenburg dirigible (or blimp) in 1936 and the Challenger space shuttle explosion in 1986.

Wagner says consumers should not fear a hydrogen-powered vehicle.

"Of course there is some risk, but it is comparable to the risk we have with conventional automotive fuels," he said.

BMW conducted numerous crash tests to see what would happen if the hydrogen tank was punctured or





damaged. Their engineers report the liquid hydrogen dissipated harmlessly into the air.

What, if anything, will provide a kick-start¹⁰ for hydrogen or other alternative fuels? It could be economic, especially considering the cost of gasoline now tops \$4 a gallon in much of Europe. Or it could be political, like California's tough emissions standards. Or, in clogged cities that already have serious smog problems, health issues could tip the scale¹¹ toward developing cleaner energy sooner, rather than later.

"You start with fleet and other specialized applications, like airport buses or transporting VIP's," says Jim Ohi, a hydrogen expert at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado. "In the U.S. there are also federal programs, clean city programs, that mandate alternative vehicles for part of government fleets."

Ohi says there's a reason "oil companies" are now referring to themselves as "energy companies": "They're feeling the pressure to study zero-emission fuels, even if it may be decades before they make any money with it."

"We have problems with our CO₂ emissions concerning the climate," says BMW's Pehr. "Especially with big cities. Look at Mexico City (Mexico), Athens (Greece), or Los Angeles (California). We can solve these problems just by a new energy carrier in the future."

A few pilot projects using hydrogen fuel exist in the United States. Several are in California, where residents are more in tune with¹² energy alternatives such as solar and wind power to generate electricity — not to mention¹³ the state's ongoing energy shortage.



Notes



1. BMW: Bayerische Motoren Werke(Bavarian Motor Works) 巴伐利亚发动机厂(原联邦德国)。本文译为宝马汽车公司。
2. stock up on hydrogen: 采办 /购置氢气。
3. OPEC: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries 石油输出国组织,简称欧佩克。
4. have /put all one's eggs in one basket: 把一切希望寄于一件事上;集中财力于一件事;孤注一掷。
5. global road show: 全球巡回演出 /展出。
6. kick off: 开始(某种)活动;进行初步的活动。
7. Dubai: 迪拜,城市名,位于阿拉伯联合酋长国,波斯湾南岸。迪拜酋长国首府。
8. The car has a bivalent 5.4 liter, 12-cylinder v-engine, ... 这辆车有一对 5.4 升的、12 汽缸的 V 型发动机。
9. Bavaria: 巴伐利亚(德国的州)。
10. kick-start: 脚踏起动器。
11. tip /turn the scale(s): 起决定作用,扭转局势,改变形势。
12. be in tune with: 和……一致,与……相处和睦。
13. not to mention: 更不必说,更谈不上。

Exercises

1. Reading Comprehension.

1) What does the word “quandary” mean in the sentence “But hydrogen’s possibilities also pose a sort of ‘chicken and egg’ quandary for the company”?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| A. situation. | B. condition. |
| C. a state of confusion. | D. case. |





2) All of the following are the advantages of hydrogen as an alternative power source for its vehicles except _____ .

- A. There is no smelly fumes at the gas station and no polluting CO_2 emissions.
- B. Gas prices will become steady.
- C. The dependence on uneven supplies of fossil fuels will be far less.
- D. It is the cheapest power source.

3) In the sentence “BMW isn’t putting all its eggs in one basket”, what does the phrase “putting all its eggs in one basket” most probably mean?

- A. centering all its hopes on one thing.
- B. attaching great importance to one thing.
- C. taking it seriously.
- D. ignoring it.

4) At what temperatures does hydrogen become liquid?

- A. 423 degrees Fahrenheit.
- B. 253 degrees celsius.
- C. 253 degrees Fahrenheit.
- D. 243 degrees Celsius.

5) What is the attitude of the residents in California toward energy alternatives such as solar and wind power to generate electricity?

- A. They’re not willing to accept energy alternatives.
- B. They’re in tune with energy alternatives.
- C. They’d rather stick to the conventional fuels.
- D. They’re indifferent to energy alternatives.





2. Choose the word or phrase that is closest in meaning to the underlined word(s) in each sentence.

1) Could hydrogen, the simplest and most abundant element in the universe, address both energy, economic and clear air concerns?

A. deal with

B. speak to

C. locate

D. ease

2) The increase in student numbers poses many problems for the universities.

A. solves

B. gives rise to

C. involves

D. proposes

3) I was in a quandary as to where my road should lie.

A. confusion

B. situation

C. state

D. difficulty

4) The teacher demonstrated the experiment to the class.

A. explained

B. conducted

C. showed clearly

D. assigned

5) When hot weather comes there will be a renewal of interest in swimming.

A. repetition

B. stop

C. resume

D. increase

6) I soon perceived that I could not make him change his mind.

A. knew

B. realized

C. found

D. discovered

7) They were glad that they had survived the catas-
trophe.

A. disaster

B. accident

C. event

D. incident





8) When it started to rain, the crowd quickly dissipated.

A. assembled

B. disappeared

C. scattered

D. left

3. Choose the best answers to complete the following sentences.

1) In referring _____ our houses as caves the author implies that they serve the same purpose.

A. with

B. to

C. back

D. of

2) We must put an end _____ this foolish behavior.

A. of

B. up

C. to

D. in

3) The match is due to kick _____ at 3:00 p.m..

A. off

B. on

C. out

D. up

4) The very sight of the hill conjures _____ memories of my childhood.

A. on

B. up

C. in

D. with

5) No horse has a speed comparable _____ that of his.

A. to

B. with

C. in

D. at

6) Old as he is, he is in _____ with the times.

A. tune

B. tone

C. agreement

D. pace

7) I enjoyed the meal, not to _____ the conversation.

A. discuss

B. mention

C. say

D. refer

8) The crisis should _____ the scale for our candidates.

A. top

B. tip

C. tap

D. incline



Reading for Fun

Three men were disappointed to learn there were no more seats for the Los Angeles Olympic Games. Undaunt-





ed, the first picked up a manhole cover, and went to a stadium guard. "The name is Smith," he said. "Discus thrower." He was admitted.

The second man found a long sewer pipe and carried it to the gate. "The name is Brown," he said. "Pole vaulter." he, too, was admitted.

Not to be outdone, the third fellow found a roll of barbed wire. With great confidence, he walked to an entrance. "The name is Jones," he said. "Fencing!"

Keys

- | | | | | |
|---------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. 1) C | 2) D | 3) A | 4) A | 5) B |
| 2. 1) A | 2) B | 3) A | 4) C | 5) A |
| 6) B | 7) A | 8) C | | |
| 3. 1) B | 2) C | 3) A | 4) B | 5) A |
| 6) A | 7) B | 8) B | | |

参考译文

最简单的化学元素能成为未来的汽车燃料吗？

随着能源和污染问题在世界范围内引起的关注，德国汽车巨头宝马公司正在进行把氢用作汽车燃料的能源替代物的实验。公司现在面临的主要障碍是他们目前生产的汽车行驶里程有限，缺少购置氢气的服务站。虽然氢燃料究竟在何时才能得到广泛的应用还不清楚，但公司以及环保官员们对于氢这种干净、切合实际的能源表现出极大的热情。

慕尼黑，德国 (CNN) ——加油站再也不会会有难闻的气味，再也不会会有污染空气的二氧化碳排放物。对于化石燃料的依赖性将大大降低。汽油价格上下波动的局面将会结束。汽油价格主要由石油输出国组织所控制，去年秋季，汽油价格的不稳定在欧洲以及世界其他地方引起骚动。

氢，这种宇宙中最简单、最丰富的元素能不能解决人们所关注





的能源和经济而洁净的空气的问题呢？

德国宝马豪华汽车公司正投入大量的工程资源和资金，以便找到解决这个问题。但是，利用氢的可能性也给公司造成了一种“鸡与蛋”的窘境。

如果司机找不到一个加氢站，他们又如何才能使顾客去购买燃氢的汽车呢？如果拥有这种车的人寥寥无几，他们又怎能使能源公司投资去建加氢站呢？

宝马公司并没有把一切希望寄予一件事上。德国汽车巨人正在与政府、石油公司和交通运输的研究人员合作来促进利用这种无污染燃料的汽车的长期效益。

“2001 年洁净能源世界巡回展”今年 2 月份在迪拜拉开帷幕。宝马公司在全球性的巡回演出中演示了他的以氢作为动力的汽车，到今年年中，宝马将陆续在比利时的布鲁塞尔、意大利的米兰、日本的东京、加利福尼亚的洛杉矶进行相同的示范表演。

“燃氢汽车与常规汽车没什么两样”

以替代能源作为燃料的汽车常常使人联想到笨重和发出沉闷金属响声的电动汽车，一个不错的主意，只是仍然“无法实现”，——因而无论是在速度还是在性能方面与宝马公司所设计开发的汽车形象大相径庭。因此，对宝马公司来说，使他们的氢汽车看起来跟他们的其他汽车一样是很重要的。

“它与标准的汽车没什么两样。操作方法一样，我们的顾客的感觉也将会是这样，他们将会拥有一辆大功率的排放物无污染的标准汽车。”慕尼黑宝马汽车公司概念车负责人克劳斯·皮尔说。

在位于慕尼黑机场的第一个、也是惟一的一个公开的机械操作加氢站，皮尔展示了 750hI 轿车。除了有一个能装 140 升氢气的氢气箱外，这种车的最大速度达到每小时 140 英里（每小时 226 公里）。

对于可以预见的将来，最为关键的问题是使汽车既可以用液化氢也可以用汽油。

15 辆宝马 750h 轿车参加了洁净能源巡回展。这些车行程超过 63 000（100 000 公里）。但是，因为只有一个地方可以“加油”，燃氢汽车实际上只可在慕尼黑加油站附近的巴伐利亚及其周围地区才有用武之地。

现在，这种车的驾驶里程限制在 217.5 miles（350km）。





燃氢小轿车现在还没有上市,但宝马公司已经在想办法扩大它们的销售可能性。公司的目标之一是:到2005年在欧洲的每一个首都建立一个加氢站。

大众的可接受性

在任何工业化国之中,多年来一直面临着改善公共交通系统、污染和石油价格波动的问题,但这些都没有能够阻止人们对汽车的钟爱。所以,现在,在一些运输密集区域和烟雾污染的城市里,政府的思想倾向至少是让开车的人驾驶低污染或无污染的汽车。

“我不想去争论再过30年、40年或者50年这才能成为现实,但这终将会成为事实。慕尼黑大学的乌尔黎希·华格纳教授说。

华格纳说不仅是地方政府和国家政府,汽车公司和能源公司也必须合作使燃氢汽车成为现实。

华格纳教授有关可更新能源的课程,他说:“我们需要更好的、效率更高的贮存系统,我们需要一种基本设施以便能真正运行起来。”

政府官员们希望氢不久将成为公共汽车的燃料。

在已知的所有元素中,虽然氢是最轻的,但它还有一些复杂的特征。在非常低的温度下—— 423°F (-253°C)它才变成液态。为使燃料保持那么低的温度,宝马汽车的燃料箱由70层玻璃纤维和铝制成。

氢燃料现在是通过一种电解过程制造出来的,在这个过程中,电极(由光刺激)将水分子分离成氢和氧。氢被分解出来,并保持冷却,并保持为液态状,然后才装到燃料箱里。

安全性能如何?

对于被认为是比其他燃料更危险的一种燃料来说,安全问题也就成了人们主要关心的问题。在1936年海登堡飞船沉没和1986年挑战者号航天飞机爆炸这两起灾难中,虽然氢本身没有扮演任何角色(虽然与氢本身无关),但燃料是罪魁祸首。

华格纳说消费者不应以对氢为动力的汽车有恐惧感。

“危险当然是有的,但这种危险与我们传统的汽车燃料的危险是类似的。

宝马公司进行了许多次的撞车试验,以便观察氢气箱被刺穿或被损坏后会发生什么情况。工程师报告说液态氢散发到空气中去,不会造成任何损害。

到底是什么才有可能使氢或其他替代燃料得以开始运用呢?

