

## 4 Pros and Cons of Autonomous Cars,

*Women Auto Know, October 03, 2017*

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Will self-driving cars cause more harm or good? It's hard to say for sure. To form an educated opinion, consider these pros and cons of autonomous cars. Ask three of your friends how they feel about self-driving cars. You'll probably get three totally different reactions. One person will express excitement about how stuff they can get done during their long commute. The second might express fear about letting robots do all the driving. The third response will be somewhere in the middle. What's the truth? I don't know. For a fair and balanced perspective, let's consider the good and bad.

I'm a constant optimist, so let's begin by looking at the major benefits of autonomous cars...

### **1. Robots don't get drunk.**

If you walk into a room of a hundred people and say, "Raise your hand if you think it's smart to drink and drive," no one will follow suit (unless there's an unapologetic alcoholic present). If you asked those same people to privately admit whether or not they've ever driven while drunk or "a bit buzzed," some of them will confess that it's happened a time or two. It's easy to rationalize decisions, no matter how risky or short-sighted they are. You might say, "I had to be at work early the next day... there was no other option!" This is silly, but I'm not going to lecture you since drinking and driving isn't the topic at hand. That said, robots can't even drink booze. Boom! It's a non-issue. When self driving cars become commercially available, you'll be able to hop into your car and let it drive your drunk booty home without worrying about it.

### **2. Robots don't get distracted.**

Distracted driving is a common cause of traffic accidents. It's easy to end up in a car wreck when you're looking at your phone instead of the road. You need a fast reaction time! Robots don't have this temptation. The self driving car only has one thing to do: drive the car! When self driving cars hit the market, expect the amount of distracted-driving-related wrecks to take a plunge.

### **3. People don't have good attention spans.**

The average attention span is only eight seconds. That's bad news when you're on the road, where you need a speedy reaction time to prevent serious accidents. How much of a heads-up do you get before a deer or dog runs into the road? None if any! The road is empty in one second. In the next one, there's an obstacle directly in your path. If you happen to be fiddling with your phone or radio when an animal crosses the street, you might not notice until it's too late. Now you have a dead critter and trashed car on your hands. When self driving cars become commercially available, this will be less problematic. You'll be able to text, do your hair, read a book, or whatever you want. There will be no consequences!

### **4. Driver error is the cause of most accidents.**

The greatest threat to American drivers isn't poorly constructed roads, rainy/snowy weather, or anything like that. If you want to meet the true enemy, look in the mirror. It's ourselves! According to a survey by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, human error causes 94% of traffic accidents. If you've read this blog closely enough, that shouldn't be a surprise. Most traffic accidents are caused by a failure to plan ahead (drunk driving) or focus on the task at hand (distracted driving). As I've already expressed, self driving cars won't have those temptations, which should have a positive impact on highway safety. Self driving cars aren't 100% positive.

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Now, let's take an honest look at four of the not-so-good things about them.

### **1. Jobs will vanish.**

If operating a vehicle is a big part of your job, self-driving cars might be a threat. Taxi drivers are already struggling in the age of Uber. Self-driving cars might kill that industry. Bus drivers and truck drivers don't have an Uber to compete with, but they have a right to be afraid, too. Why pay a driver's salary when you can just let the computer do all the work? That said, I don't think auto repair shops should have any fear. Click here to discover why...

### **2. Accidents will happen.**

No technology is perfect. Expect someone to die in a crash involving a self-driving car at some point. There will be immediate outrage followed by reflection about whether the risk of malfunctions that produce casualties is worth the reward of saving more lives in the long-term. What's the answer to that question? It beats me. Ask a philosopher who knows his or her ethics!

### **3. Driving will seem less special.**

Car ownership is losing its appeal to the younger generation. They aren't a precious investment, but rather a means to an end. I treat my car like an equal partner. If I take good care of my car, it will protect me from harm. Self-driving cars seem more like robot slaves that do our bidding. As a lifelong car enthusiast, this makes me sad... but what can I do about it? Not an awful lot! There's no use in resisting the tide of cultural change. We have to adapt.

### **4. Regulation will be a disaster.**

How in the world can you program a self-driving car to follow the rules of the road when those rules vary from state-to-state? That question is beyond my paygrade. But I do know roads are governed by the states and technology is regulated by the federal government. Expect to see some conflicts of interest. Most regulators lack the expertise they need to oversee this technology effectively. Due to this problem, Google might get to write their own rulebook. Should they have so much influence?

Overall, I feel the potential safety benefits of self-driving cars outweigh the potential risks. Time will tell whether my perception is correct or not. If you want to make your friends think, share these pros and cons of autonomous cars on social media.