

The Future of Autonomous Cars: Driverless cars are emerging but much work remains to achieve commercial success

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Abstracts

The Future of Autonomous Cars: Driverless cars are emerging but much work remains to achieve commercial success

SUMMARY

Heralded as the future of personalized transport, autonomous cars have caused much excitement among car companies, industry journalists and some segments of the public and government. Unquestionably major advances have been made but the future in which drivers are redundant remains some distance away.

Despite the expected wait, a lot is changing. China is maneuvering to become the leading global player, catching up to rivals in the US. New infrastructure is being discussed and the regulatory environment is undergoing significant reform. Yet doubts remain as to how soon any promises made by car companies will materialize in a commercially viable form.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Not only are cultural attitudes in China more conducive to the future of autonomy but the advantages claimed by driverless cars will be more acutely felt in the largest single car market than elsewhere. Progress is being helped by highly supportive government policies towards domestic manufacturers.

General Motors (GM) has emerged as a surprising leader in the race to create the first fully autonomous car that can be sold to the public. Unlike the lumbering

old-fashioned car-maker that some critics remain wedded to, General Motors has taken a Silicon Valley tech start-up approach to the future of automotive manufacturing: making everything in house.

Autonomous cars are frequently advertised as being much safer than any human driver could be over a reasonable time span. Yet for the claims to be met in reality requires the needs of cyclists and pedestrians to be intimately involved with the decision-making computers contained within driverless vehicles.

SCOPE

Looks at the growing importance of China to autonomous transport

Examines the pace of development in autonomous vehicles

Assesses what infrastructure will be required in the future

Looks at the developing regulatory landscape

Assesses critics of advocates who claim autonomous cars are almost here

REASONS TO BUY

What role is China playing in autonomous cars?

How quick is autonomous technology advancing?

What new infrastructure will be required for the mass rollout of autonomous cars?

What is the state of regulations around the world?

Could the arrival of autonomous cars as a mass market product be a long way from happening?

Contents

Overview

Catalyst

Summary

China is coming force in autonomous vehicle technology

Chinese car market is best positioned to adopt autonomous future

Domestic companies are protected by foreign competition, enabling swift development

State will be vital early customer for autonomous vehicles, helping the Chinese market develop

Autonomous vehicle technology is advancing rapidly but is also over-hyped

In race to develop first saleable fully autonomous car, some surprising leaders and stragglers have emerged

Tesla is not impressing in autonomous vehicles, hurting long-term future of car disruptor

Waymo is leading the pack but is not without problems, raising doubts over publicly declared timelines

Established car manufacturing brands are involved but offer notes of caution

New infrastructure needed for potential of autonomous cars to be realized

So far autonomous cars have suggested major changes to roads are required

'Smart roads' offer glimpse of what autonomous car infrastructure will be like

Telecoms companies have vital role to play if autonomous cars to become what leading companies claim

'Smart roads' are essential for autonomous cars but funding redevelopment will be hard to achieve

State of regulatory systems is influencing autonomous car progress

High-profile accidents will engender regulators with caution in allowing fully autonomous vehicles on public roads

China is reforming regulation, allowing autonomous vehicles to be tested in real-world conditions

Competition to develop indigenous autonomous cars is being helped by regulatory reform

More workable US regulation with ambitions of advancing car makers is drawing nearer

Arrival of autonomous cars will take a while yet

Transition period likely to be lengthy due to replacement cycle timeline

Much time is needed to develop true autonomy even for major manufacturers

Early incarnations of truly autonomous cars are far too expensive for public use

Conclusions

An autonomous future looms for automotive industry

[Appendix](#)

[Sources](#)

[Further Reading](#)

[Ask the analyst](#)

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List Of Tables

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Road deaths in Asia 2013 - top ten worst number of deaths

About

Heralded as the future of personalized transport, autonomous cars have caused much excitement among car companies, industry journalists and some segments of the public and government. Unquestionably major advances have been made but the future in which drivers are redundant remains some distance away. Despite the expected wait, a lot is changing. China is maneuvering to become the leading global player, catching up to rivals in the US. New infrastructure is being discussed and the regulatory environment is undergoing significant reform. Yet doubts remain as to how soon any promises made by car companies will materialize in a commercially viable form.

Key Highlights

Helped by the presence of the largest single car market in the world, China is developing rapidly in race to the autonomous future

Autonomous vehicle technology is advancing at speed but claims made on its behalf suggest it is also being over-hyped

To fully realize the potential of driverless vehicles infrastructure must be reformed, but this will take time and money

Regulatory environments are proving vital to the ease with which companies can test and develop the car of the future

Critics are pointing out valid problems with the autonomous future advertised by leading car companies

Driverless cars are emerging but much work remains to achieve commercial success

Autonomous cars are frequently advertised as being much safer than any human driver could be over a reasonable time span. Yet for the claims to be met in reality requires the needs of cyclists and pedestrians to be intimately involved with the decision-making computers contained within driverless vehicles.

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