

SMART DRIVING CARS

[http://smartdrivingcar.com/NYT Editorial-071116](http://smartdrivingcar.com/NYT_Editorial-071116)

The
New York
Times

[Lessons From the Tesla Crash](#)

Editorial Board, July 11, "A recent fatal crash in Florida involving a Tesla Model S is an example of how a new technology designed to make cars safer could, in some cases, make them more dangerous. These risks, however, could be minimized with better testing (*Hmmm....Yes!*) and regulations (*Still too early, we don't know enough, yet*)...Tesla's electric cars are not self-driving, but when the Autopilot system is engaged it can keep the car in a lane, adjust its speed to keep up with traffic and brake to avoid collisions. Tesla says audio and visual alerts warn drivers to keep their hands on the steering wheel and watch the road. If a driver is unresponsive to the alerts, the car is programmed to slow itself to a stop.

Such warnings aren't sufficient, though; some Tesla drivers, as shown in videos on YouTube, have even gotten into the back seat while the car was moving. Such reckless behavior threatens not just the drivers but everyone else on the road, too. (*Absolutely!*)... If that system ([V2V](#)) had been in place, Mr. Brown might have survived. (*Sure, but Mr Brown would have had to wait more than his normal expected life span before that system would have been adopted by more than 70% of all vehicles for it to have better than a "coin flip" chance of helping him. What would have helped Mr. Brown is if the Automated Emergency Braking system worked on his Tesla, or if the truck driver had seen him coming (not become distracted) and had not "failed to yield".*) Federal officials could take lessons from the history of [airbags](#) and the lack of strong regulations. (*This is a VERY appropriate and relevant lesson!*)... The agency does not yet have regulations for driverless cars or cars that have driver assistance systems. But when officials do put rules in place, they will have to update them regularly as they learn about how the technology works in practice. Automation should save lives. But nobody should expect these vehicles to be risk-free. (*This is very wise. They should also immediately focus on Automated Emergency Braking systems which are the foundation of any Self-driving or Driverless systems.*) [Read more](#) *Hmmm....Comments in-line above. Alain*

The Seattle Times [Sound Transit's expansion will be obsolete before it's built](#)

Opinion, July 9, "...In light of the ACES and the transformation of urban mobility happening today, does it make sense for Puget Sound taxpayers to commit to a \$54-billion, 25-year transit project that largely will be obsolete before it is complete?" [Read more](#) *Hmmm....Maybe obsolete even before it is started. Alain*

NHTSA

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC
SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

[NHTSA data shows traffic deaths up 7.7 percent in 2015](#)

NHTSA 15-16 July 1, "[Preliminary data](#) released today by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show a 7.7 percent increase in motor vehicle traffic deaths in 2015. An estimated 35,200 people died in 2015, up from the 32,675 reported fatalities in 2014....."As the economy has improved and gas prices have fallen, more Americans are driving more miles," said NHTSA Administrator Dr. Mark Rosekind. "But that only explains part of the increase. Ninety-four percent of crashes can be tied back to a human choice or error, so we know we need to focus our efforts on improving human behavior while promoting vehicle technology that not only protects people in crashes, but helps prevent crashes in the first place." ...The U.S. Department of Transportation is also pressing forward with new guidance to promote the development of automated safety technologies which could greatly decrease the number of crashes. NHTSA hosted two public meetings on automated safety technologies, in advance of guidance that will be issued later this summer...In March, the Department of Transportation announced a key safety agreement with automakers requiring more than 99 percent of new vehicles to have automatic emergency braking standard by 2022..."[Read more](#). See [Traffic Safety Facts](#) *Hmmm....Let's hope that the automatic emergency braking that is standard by 2022 works better than the Automated Emergency Braking (AEB) system in today's Tesla which was "out to lunch" in Florida on May 7. What is NHTSA doing to make sure that these AEB systems actually work., aren't "turn-offable" and have negligible false alarms? Alain*

MIT Technology Review

[Tesla's Dubious Claims About Autopilot's Safety Record](#)

T. Simonite, July 6, "...Tesla and Musk's message is clear: the data proves Autopilot is much safer than human drivers. But experts say those comparisons are worthless, because the company is comparing apples and oranges.

"It has no meaning," says Alain Kornhauser, ...of Tesla's comparison of U.S.-wide statistics with data collected from its own cars. Autopilot is designed to be used only for highway driving, and

may well make that safer, but standard traffic safety statistics include a much broader range of driving conditions, he says

Tesla's comparisons are also undermined by the fact that its expensive, relatively large vehicles are much safer in a crash than most vehicles on the road, says Bryant Walker Smith, an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina. He describes comparisons of the rate of accidents by Autopilot with population-wide statistics as "ludicrous on their face." Tesla did not respond to a request asking it to explain why Musk and the company compare figures from very different kinds of driving...Smith suggests that by releasing more of their data trove, companies could accelerate development of self-driving cars, better prove their worth, and inform efforts to develop ways to hold them to account from a safety perspective....

Kornhauser at Princeton hopes that companies such as Google and Tesla will understand that they and society have more to gain if they do work together.

"They may not want to help the competition, but we're dealing with other people's lives," he says. "We should have more public spiritedness in the effort to do this thing." [Read more](#)
Hmmm....Yup! Alain

Forbes [The Truth About Tesla's Autopilot Is We Don't Yet Know How Safe It Is](#)

M. Rogowsky, July 11, "...The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, it turns out, has studied which cars are the safest on the road for a while. It's [findings are illuminating](#). A report last year showed that there are nine vehicles from the 2011 model year with a driver death rate of zero. Three of the nine are luxury vehicles: the Audi A4 AWD, the Lexus RX350 AWD and the Mercedes GL AWD. The Mercedes M AWD comes in 11th on the list with two deaths per million registered vehicle years (count the number of cars sold, multiple each by the number of years it was registered, add it up and you get "registered vehicle years").

Now you may be wondering how one of these vehicles compares to the Autopilot stats from Tesla. I'll leave that work to Andrew Hires, a professor of neurobiology at USC. He [tweeted](#): "It's a tiny sample. Compare Audi A4. 120,394 vehicle years @ 10k mi/yr = 1.2B miles. Deaths = 0." Estimating 10,000 miles per year is likely low given the average is typically estimated around 12,000 or more. But irrespective of whether that estimate was low, it's approximately 10 times the miles Teslas have logged to date in Autopilot mode. Further, Hires added: "Statistically, its too early to say Autopilot is safer than average luxury vehicle. Hard to say for any lux vehicle!" [Read more](#) *Hmmm....Again, the issue in this crash is that one vehicle failed to yield that created a situation for which few car/driver combinations have survived. Alain*



[Another Tesla crashes and Autopilot is blamed again](#)

G. Gardner, Jul, 5, "A Southfield, Mich., art gallery owner told police his [2016 Tesla Model X was in Autopilot mode](#) when it crashed and rolled over on the Pennsylvania Turnpike last week....In his crash report, Vukovich stated that Scaglione's car was traveling east near mile marker 160, about 5 p.m. when it hit a guardrail "off the right side of the roadway. It then crossed over the eastbound lanes and hit the concrete median."..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm... Given that this one involved lane departure, then indeed, if AutoPilot was on, then we really need to understand why lane keeping failed. Alain*



[Silicon Valley-Driven Hype for Self-Driving Cars](#)

L. Gomes, July 9, "BECAUSE of reports that he may have been watching a Harry Potter movie at the time, Joshua Brown, the Tesla owner killed in the self-driving car industry's first known fatal accident, has come to be regarded as a reckless contributor to his own sad fate.

Here's another view: Mr. Brown may be the first casualty of the widespread and potentially dangerous belief that autonomous cars are much closer to being road-ready than they actually are...." *Hmmm....C'mon NYT, it has also been refuted that Joshua Brown was watching Harry Potter and Mr. Brown isn't "the first casualty of the dangerous belief that" Automated Emergency Braking Systems, the very foundation of any autonomous car "are much closer to being road-ready than they actually are".*

"Mr. Brown, ..., does not appear to have been heeding an important rule in the official instruction manual for the Tesla Autopilot feature he was using: Drivers should keep their hands on the wheel and be ready to resume control of the vehicle at any time." [Don't read more](#) *Hmmm...NO! The Tesla did not veer off the road, it didn't stop when it was cut off by a truck! If anything, he should have had his foot on the brake. And by the way, why did the driver of the other vehicle cut in front of him??? C'mon NYT!!! "Mr. Brown, ..., Instead, he seems to have been answering to a higher authority: Elon Musk, a founder and the chief executive of Tesla Motors. Hmmm...There is simply no evidence supporting such a "seems". C'mon NYT!!! And "trains" that don't deliver sufficient desired mobility should be scaled back in preference to other transit mobility solutions that could more effectively, economically and sooner the desired mobility.*

This is such a sophomoric article. ... "truly go-anywhere self-driving car"... After 120 years of development, I can't drive my conventional car to "truly go-anywhere self-driving car"! This article is an embarrassment to NYT.

Some other thoughts that deserve your attention



[The Merging Worlds of Technology and Cars](#)

A. Webb, June 28, "The line between the technology and automotive industries is blurring. The rise of rideshare companies such as Uber and Lyft means that transportation is being tied ever more closely to your cell phone, while autonomous driving technology is turning your car into a computer..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm....Interesting graphic of relationships. Alain*



[The complicated web of companies that will](#)

[determine the future of cars](#)

C. Huston, July 9, *Hmmm....Another interesting graphic of relationships. Alain*



[Disrupting The Auto Industry: The Startups That Are Unbundling The Car](#)

CB Insight, May 26 "While self-driving tech receives the lion's share of media attention, a host of less-heralded startups are targeting specific pieces of automotive infrastructure or components...There were 7,700 fewer driver deaths in 2012 alone than there would have been had vehicles remained the same since 1985. (Does this mean that all of the seat belt, airbag and energy absorption efforts over the past 30 years have only reduced deaths by ~20%" [Read more](#) *Hmmm....And another interesting graphic of relationships. Alain*



[Autonomous Cars: Giant Raymond James Report Sees Big](#)

[Opportunity, Long Wait](#)

T. Ray, July 8, "Self-driving cars may be the future, but it's going to take some time for them to evolve from today's offerings, according to a longish (32 pages) note out late yesterday from Raymond James's Tavis McCourt, who charts the evolution of the auto industry for the next 25 years..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm....Nice listing of deals. Alain*



[Why you haven't seen driverless trains](#)

F. Frailey, Aug 2016, "Events are actually pulling railroads in the opposite direction, to their ultimate peril..." [Article requires subscription.](#)

Recompiled Old News & Smiles:



[SAVING LIVES: Improved vehicle designs bring down death rates](#)

Status report Vol. 50, No.1, "The chances of dying in a crash in a late-model vehicle have fallen by more than a third in three years, the latest IIHS calculations of driver death rates show. Among 2011 models, a record nine vehicles have driver death rates of zero. However, the gap between the safest and riskiest models remains wide, and three cars have death rates exceeding 100 per million registered vehicle years...." [Read more](#) *Hmmm....See especially the Tables . It would be interesting to have an update of these tables through 2015 and broken down separating models with and without Automated Emergency Braking. See also [DEATH RATES BY MODEL: SUV drivers are among least likely to be killed](#). June 2011. Alain*

Calendar of Upcoming Events:



[Sept 15 & 16, 2016](#)

[Arlington, VA](#)



[Sept 19-21, 2016](#)

[Antwerp, Belgium](#)