

SMART DRIVING CARS



<http://smartdrivingcar.com/Xmas'16-122416>

Saturday, December 24, 2016

THE VERGE

[Waymo's 100 autonomous Chrysler minivans are here](#)

J. Golson, Dec 19, "Chrysler has [completed](#) the 100 autonomous Pacifica minivans that will join the Waymo (née Google) fleet in early 2017. The vans, which are plug-in hybrid variants with Waymo's self-driving hardware and software built in, are part of a partnership between Fiat Chrysler (FCA) and Waymo that was announced earlier this year.

Waymo CEO John Krafcik said last week that his company is not interested in "making better cars." Instead, it wants to make "better drivers."..."

[Read more](#) *Hmmm...Nice that these vehicles are targeted to a ride-sharing market (more seating capacity and easier in&out than the Prius/Lexus/Bug.)*

However, the quote by John Krafcik is VERY troubling. To make "better drivers" all one needs is Automated Collision Avoidance systems (or what I've termed 'Safe-driving cars'). That is indeed a laudable goal; however, that goal can be reached with a lot less hardware and software than what is in these modified Pacificas (which have a conventional steering wheel, brake & throttle pedals and driver's seat). But Safe-driving cars aren't helpful to the [Steve Mahan's](#) of this world (or to the young, or the Ubers or enable the Modified Pacifica's to offer inexpensive high-quality shared-ride on-demand mobility to all. Most unfortunately, what all of the extra gizmos on the modified Pacificas enable is for the driver to be better able to consume Google Ads for part of his/her time trapped in this vehicle. So a more honest quote might have been: it wants to make "better drivers who can better consume Google Ads." No wonder Chris bailed! :-/ Alain



WAYMO

[A first look at our Waymo fully self-driving Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid minivans](#)

J. Krafcik, Dec 18, "...Today, we're sharing a first look at the completed vehicles, equipped with our latest Waymo self-driving technology, including our suite of updated sensors, all-new computer and other major system updates..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm...An enormous step towards*

Self-driving and an abandonment of Driverless. So sad. One can see it now...OEMs adopting the Waymo Self-driving bundle. VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled), road congestion, energy consumption, pollution, GHG, urbanization and Google ad revenues all go through the roof.

I realize that Alphabet has a fiduciary responsibility to its share holders to maximize shared holder value and that a global max may exist by serving the needs of solo drivers that have nothing to do for large parts of many of their trips. All one needs are the Pacifica's gizmos in their cars and Bingo!. No need to suffer through the additional expense and regulatory nightmares to achieve Driverless. Don't need fancy AI to see that continuing to push 'Driverless' is a detriment to Alphabet's bottom line. (No doubt Baidu will come to see it the same.)

So poor [Steven Mahan](#) and 'the environment' will need Uber to come to the rescue because its bottom line absolutely needs Driverless and Driverless is sufficient for it to revolutionize the \$10T global mobility market. :- (Alain

Forbes

[Uber Halts San Francisco Driverless Cars As DMV Revokes Test Fleet Registration](#)

A. Ohnsman, Dec 21, "Uber's puzzling defiance of a California requirement that it get a \$150 permit to operate self-driving cars in San Francisco came to an end with the ride-hailing company announcing it was suspending the program. Uber had little choice: California's Department of Motor Vehicles revoked registrations for its 16-vehicle test fleet earlier in the day..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm...That likely took 16 of the safest vehicles off California roads. Congratulations CA DMV. You really need that \$150/vehicle revenue stream. This is why NHTSA and other states should NOT follow California. Wouldn't it be better just to ask Uber to share its findings of its test and thank them for spending their own money to improve safety on California roads and improve mobility. God forbid, something bad should happen, Uber is certainly sufficiently self-insured. (In CA it only [cost \\$125 to receive a restricted license after a DWI](#)).*
Alain

Daily Sun

[Uber to switch driverless car testing from California to Arizona](#)

H. Fischer, Dec 23, "Spurned by California over safety concerns, Uber is moving the testing of its driverless cars to Arizona. But Gov. Doug Ducey said Thursday that will not endanger Arizona motorists and pedestrians. In fact, he contends it actually could make the state's roads safer — eventually.

"There's all kinds of accidents and avoidable deaths due to human error," he said. "Uber hopes to solve much of that."..."We're agreeing to being business friendly and saying that innovation and entrepreneurship and the solving of problem happens in real-world situations," the governor said." [Read more](#) *Hmmm...Now that's more like it! :-) Alain*

CityMetric

[Will self-driving cars Make the Suburbs Great Again?](#)

N. Kobie, Dec 19, "The future of urban life is the commuter belt. Or so says one economist, who believes technology and transport improvements will help us live better lives on the fringes of cities than we do in the middle of them.

"A city is a technical solution to a problem from the Industrial Revolution," said Karen Harris, managing director of Bain & Company's Macro Trends Group, at the Slush startup conference in Helsinki last week. "We needed to have lots of bodies clustered to run our cities... it was a genius solution."... The future of urban life is the commuter belt. Or so says one economist, who believes technology and transport improvements will help us live better lives on the fringes of cities than we do in the middle of them.

"A city is a technical solution to a problem from the Industrial Revolution," said Karen Harris, managing director of Bain & Company's Macro Trends Group, at the Slush startup conference in Helsinki last week. "We needed to have lots of bodies clustered to run our cities... it was a genius solution." [Read more](#) *Hmmm... Implications of 'Self-Driving'. Is this really what Waymo wants as a byproduct of its "Making better drivers"?* Alain

The Washington Post

[The shipping industry is poised for massive upheaval. Can FedEx weather the storm?](#)

S. Halzack, Dec 15, "Between 10 and 11:30 p.m., as most of this city is winding down for the night, the FedEx Express World Hub is revving up for its busiest hours of the day.

Some 10,000 workers pour into the campus, ready to begin a mind-bogglingly complex ritual of steering packages to customers' doorsteps on time. Hundreds of equipment operators zoom around the 880-acre site on warehouse tugs, pulling behind them trains of silver shipping containers shaped like half-igloos. In an earsplitting operation dubbed "the matrix," package sorters corral boxes into a single-file line for a trip down a tangle of conveyor belts.

On this particular night at FedEx's largest global facility, workers will sort some 1.3 million express packages. That number only swelled when holiday shopping kicked into high gear...."

[Read more](#) *Hmmm... A really good article.* Alain

WIRED

[Amazon's Real Future Isn't Drones. It's Self-Driving Trucks](#)

D. Alba, Dec 20, "...Jeff Bezos likes to tout Amazon's efforts to build delivery drones, particularly at this time of year. But that's a ridiculous project compared to the efficiencies the company could gain through autonomous trucks. That's where Amazon's real future lies." [Read more](#)

Hmmm... Pretty light article, but I really like the last paragraph.

*There are **two** issues here. The 'line-haul' between manufacturers and Amazon warehouses and the 'last-mile' from the warehouses to your front door. The first is really efficient and there is little for Amazon to add (irrespective of the next article) given that there are 3 competitors (FedEx, UPS and USPS) that keep each other honest and labor is a relatively small of that cost. The 'last mile' is a whole other issue. Labor is a substantial part and this is where Driverless could most readily be accomplished. (Many deliveries could be done in off-peak hours and even in the middle of the night if they are uncoupled from human drivers. Substantial private and public benefits are derived.) Here it will come down to who is willing to make the investment. Unlikely it will be FedEx, UPS and USPS. Maybe Uber. But Amazon has the most to gain by a seamless integration of home delivery with its warehouse operation. Alain*



[Amazon is secretly building an 'Uber for trucking' app, setting its sights on a massive \\$800 billion market](#)

E. Kim, Dec 15, "Amazon is building an app that matches truck drivers with shippers, a new service that would deepen its presence in the \$800 billion trucking industry, a person with direct knowledge of the matter told Business Insider.

The app, scheduled to launch next summer, is designed to make it easier for truck drivers to find shippers that need goods moved, much in the way Uber connects drivers with riders. It would also eliminate the need for a third-party broker, which typically charges a commission of about 15% for doing the middleman work..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm... Of course. Surprised its taken this long wrt the 'line-haul'. Alain*

Pulse

[Is In-Car Electronic Technology Depreciating Faster than the Car Itself?](#)

Maryann Keller, Dec 21, "Technological obsolescence in a modern vehicle occurs much faster than the useful life of the car. That's becoming a problem for supporting residual values into the near future – and buyers of these vehicles might start thinking about leasing rather than ownership to avoid the future unknown loss of value...

As more vehicles are equipped with expensive technologies that inflate MSRPs, buyers will face the risk of rapid obsolescence of these features as future vehicles incorporate the latest generation...

One obvious consideration - always lease, and never buy, one of these new gadget-filled or novel cars...[Read more](#) *Hmmm... Really good advice, especially for cars that haven't been designed to incorporate software upgrades let alone firmware and hardware upgrades. This is especially true for cars with self-driving capabilities. OEMs are torn between the desire to get you to buy the latest and greatest and having it affordable by maintaining value in your trade-in.*

I contend that there is a market to substantially enhance most cars manufactured since 2012 though retrofit of after-market automated collision avoidance systems. Conventional thought argues that such efforts would void warranties and that NHTSA would disallow it. What a

shame... 'Violate warranties & defy NHTSA' or 'continue causing [~\\$1B annual economic losses & kill 38,000](#)'. Only way to make a dent quickly is via the after-market.

*Insurance **can** help here!! Please send us a nice holiday present by beginning to this as an insurance profitability opportunity. Alain*

PR Newswire

[Allstate Announces Autonomous Vehicle Research Agreement](#)

[Agreement](#)

Press release, Dec 13, "Working toward a future where more autonomous vehicles are on the road, Allstate Insurance Company today announced a multi-year research agreement with the Intelligent Systems Laboratory at Stanford University. Allstate's goal is to help pave a way for safer roads.

"We are proactively embracing and participating in the evolving landscape around personal transportation through our work with world-class institutions at the forefront of this automotive revolution," says Allstate's Senior Vice President of Product Innovation Howard Hayes. "We aim to learn about, and contribute to the algorithm research, software platforms and the datasets, tools and standards related to connected and autonomous vehicles."...Stanford Professor Mykel Kochenderfer will serve as the principal investigator during the three year project." [Read more](#)
Hmmm... Congratulations Mykel for getting Insurance to step up. Alain

Automotive News

[The Big Bang of autonomous driving](#)

L. Chappell, "...You may have wondered: How in the world did all this start?..."

There was a Big Bang on a Saturday in November 2007, and chances are you missed it.

"That was the moment," agrees Red Whittaker, a leading robotics professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh who has spent his career exploring and patenting ways to automate mining, farming and industrial vehicles..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm... Red, you have every reason to be very proud of a great career. You created the Big Bang! :-)* Alain

THE BLADE

[Ohio eyes self-driving trucks, cars tests](#)

T. Linkhorn, Dec 18, "An ambitious plan to build a 500-acre specialty testing site in East Liberty, Ohio, for driverless cars and commercial trucks could go a long way toward cementing Ohio's status as a key location for developing and proving the technology that looks to be a lock for the future of the automotive industry.

The Transportation Research Center, a sprawling independent proving grounds that shares a border with Honda Motor's Ohio operations, hopes to finish the first phase of the \$100-million project by the end of next summer.... [Read more](#) *Hmmm... Go for it Ohio. Nice article. Alain*