

Toyota shows video of driverless car

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Toyota has released a video* of its new driverless car. The real car will be on show at an electronics show in Las Vegas, USA. The car is full of special "intelligent" safety

features to make sure it does not crash. It uses radars and video cameras to understand where other cars are. It can also "see" people and slow down to avoid hitting them. The car can also communicate with other cars that have the same technology. A Toyota spokesperson said: "We're looking at a car that would eliminate crashes. Zero-collisions is our ultimate aim." He added that the car should be used with a driver, but that it can also drive itself. This would be useful if the driver wants to use his or her laptop, or falls asleep.

Toyota is not the first car maker to showcase self-driving cars. In May 2012, the Swedish company Volvo tested a self-drive convoy of cars on a Spanish highway. The search engine Google has also invested a lot of money in the technology for these cars. The German auto manufacturers Audi and Mercedes are also developing similar cars. The chairman of the Ford Motor Company, Bill Ford Jr., said these cars will reduce traffic jams in the future. He said the cars will receive information from computers that monitor traffic and then the cars will take a different route around any gridlock. Toyota's video says: "Lexus advanced active safety research vehicle is leading the industry into a new automated era."

Sources: BBC / PC Magazine

* http://pressroom.lexus.com/video_display.cfm?video_id=22811

Writing

All cars should always drive themselves if it is safer. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

driverless car / electronics show / safety features / radars / video cameras / crashes / showcase / highway / manufacturers / traffic jams / research / automated era

True / False

- Toyota has shown a video of a car that needs no driver. T / F
- No one will be able to see the car until 2015. T / F
- The car has technology that means it can "talk" to any other car. T / F
- Toyota's aim is to cut the number of car crashes by 50 per cent. T / F
- Toyota isn't the first car maker to make cars that do not need a driver. T / F
- The boss of the car company Ford said the cars could cut traffic jams. T / F
- The new driverless cars will add to gridlock problems on the roads. T / F
- Toyota believes its new car is the leader in safety vehicles. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. released | a. make contact |
| 2. special | b. highlight |
| 3. communicate | c. keep an eye on |
| 4. eliminate | d. launched |
| 5. ultimate | e. group |
| 6. showcase | f. put an end to |
| 7. convoy | g. purpose-built |
| 8. manufacturer | h. automobile |
| 9. monitor | i. basic |
| 10. vehicle | j. producer |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think of the idea of driverless cars?
- Do you like driving?
- What is the best and worst thing about driving?
- Would you feel safe in a self-driving car?
- Do you think these cars will one day lead to "zero collisions"?
- How would you feel if the driver of a self-driving car fell asleep?
- What new technology would you like to see in cars of the future?
- Will we still need cars in the future?

Phrase Match

1. The real car will be on show at
2. safety
3. make sure it
4. slow down to
5. Zero-collisions is our ultimate
6. invested
7. these cars will reduce traffic
8. computers that monitor
9. the cars will take
10. leading the industry into a new

- a. aim
- b. avoid hitting them
- c. traffic
- d. features
- e. automated era
- f. a different route
- g. an electronics show
- h. a lot of money
- i. does not crash
- j. jams

Discussion – Student B

- a) What would you do in a self-driving car if you didn't have to drive?
- b) What's your dream car, and why?
- c) What's the best way to reduce traffic accidents?
- d) What's the best way to reduce traffic jams?
- e) How bad is the traffic where you live?
- f) What will cars be like in 100 years from now?
- g) What do you think of Toyota?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the boss of Toyota?

Spelling

1. an lrsienteocc show in Las Vegas
2. safety usfeaert
3. vioda hitting them
4. ilitemean crashes
5. our iuetaimt aim
6. use his or her atpplo
7. cyovno of cars
8. The amrcnaih of the Ford Motor Company
9. computers that oritnom traffic
10. take a different route around any lirocgdk
11. safety ecsarrhe
12. leading the yrundits

Answers – Synonym Match

1. d	2. g	3. a	4. f	5. i
6. b	7. e	8. j	9. c	10. h

Role Play

Toyota boss - You are very excited about the driverless cars. Tell the others three reasons why. You think the others do not know what they are talking about. The safety expert has no background in cars. The driver needs to accept new technology. The environmentalist needs to be realistic – we need cars.

Safety expert - You are very worried about driverless cars. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell Toyota's boss (s)he is more interested in selling more cars and making money than car safety. You think driverless cars will increase the number of accidents. Tell the others three reasons why.

Driver - You think the idea of driverless cars is stupid. Tell the others three reasons why. You love driving and think self-driving cars will take all the fun away. There will be more accidents many drivers will be driving normal cars. You think everything the safety expert says is wrong.

Environmentalist - You think there should be no cars. Tell the others three reasons why. You don't care if cars are driverless or not, all cars make pollution; all cars crash and kill or injure people. You want everyone to stop driving cars and ride bicycles instead to help save the planet.

Speaking – Driverless Cars

What would be the best thing about driverless cars? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top.

- no car crashes
- no traffic jams
- the driver can sleep
- you never get lost
- more space in the car
- get from A to B faster
- four seats facing each other
- fewer deaths on the road

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.