



FACT SHEET

VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY SURVEY – PHASE IIIB

Automotive Engineering



Background

In 2016, AAA began conducting an annual study to better understand consumer attitudes toward self-driving vehicles. This latest phase of the research was conducted to see how recent high-profile incidents involving autonomous vehicle technologies affect consumers.

Additionally, AAA's annual survey also seeks to understand U.S. driver attitudes toward sharing the road with fully self-driving vehicles and their desire for advanced driver assistance systems in their next vehicle.

To educate consumers on the effectiveness of emerging vehicle technologies, AAA is committed to the ongoing, unbiased testing of these systems. Previous testing has shown both great promise and great variation. Future AAA testing will look at how well systems work together to achieve higher levels of automation.

To understand consumer attitudes toward autonomous vehicles and similar technology, AAA pursued three lines of inquiry:

1. Are U.S. drivers comfortable with the idea of riding in a fully self-driving car?
2. Are U.S. drivers comfortable with the idea of sharing the road with a self-driving car while walking or riding a bike?
3. Do U.S. drivers want semi-autonomous technologies in their next vehicle?

Key Findings

Following a series of high-profile crashes involving automated vehicle systems:

Seven-in-ten (73%) U.S. drivers would be afraid to ride in a fully self-driving vehicle, up from 63 percent at the end of 2017.

- One-in-five (20%) U.S. drivers would trust a self-driving vehicle and 7 percent are unsure.
- Women (83%) are more likely to be *afraid* than men (63%).
- Two-thirds (64%) of Millennial drivers would be too afraid to ride in a fully self-driving vehicle, up from 49 percent at the end of 2017. This represents the largest increase of any generation surveyed.



Sixty-three percent of U.S. drivers would feel less safe sharing the road with fully self-driving cars while walking or riding a bike.

- One-quarter (26%) feel it makes no difference, while 9 percent would feel safer and 2 percent are unsure.
- Women (70%) are more likely to *feel less safe* than men (55%).
- Baby Boomer (71%) and Generation X (68%) drivers are more likely to *feel less safe* than Millennial drivers (48%).
- Slightly more than half (55%) of U.S. drivers want semi-autonomous vehicle technology in the next vehicle they buy or lease.

Methodology

The consumer survey was conducted Apr. 5-8, 2018, using two probability samples: randomly selected landline telephone numbers and randomly selected mobile (cell) phone numbers. The combined sample consists of 1,014 adults (18 years old and older) living in the continental United States. The margin of error for the sample of 1,014 is +/- 4% at the 95% confidence level.

Semi-autonomous technology is defined in the survey as advanced safety technology to help avoid crashes, including automatic emergency breaking, lane keeping assistance, self-parking technology and adaptive cruise control.

Generation groups defined as: Millennials (20–37 years old), Generation X (38–52 years old), and Baby Boomers (54–72 years old).

Ask the Expert

Why are Americans more afraid of self-driving vehicles than they were at the end of 2017?



Greg Brannon
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This technology is relatively new and everyone is watching it closely. When an incident occurs, it gets a lot of media attention, and people become concerned about their safety.

Will this set-back in consumer attitude affect the advancement of autonomous vehicle technology?

Any incident is an opportunity to learn and make improvements in safety. Autonomous technology holds the promise to make our roadways safer, but the industry will need to execute testing in the safest manner possible and ensure the motoring public is comfortable with the approach.

How is the industry responding to incidents involving fatalities or injuries?

The NTSB and police agencies are investigating these incidents. The industry will need to continue to cooperate fully in this process, and share the findings openly so everyone developing systems can learn from the outcomes.

Will autonomous technologies be safer than humans behind the wheel?

It's too soon to tell, but the industry believes that eventually, self-driving vehicles will be safer than human-driven driven vehicles. Humans, after all, contribute to more than 90 percent of crashes.