

WOULD YOU LET A SELF-DRIVING CAR TAKE YOU TO WORK?

BY BRANDON AYRES, MD; KATHRYN M. HATCH, MD; AND ELIZABETH YEU, MD



BRANDON AYRES, MD

I love technology and cars. When a new technology is released, I want to know about it, and chances are, I probably preordered it. I intentionally moved farther away from my office so that I could enjoy the drive to work for just a little bit longer. I love the feel of accelerating and the raw tone of the exhaust

system as the revolutions per minute climb.

A self-driving car has many advantages. Foremost is safety (as long as the car is controlled by a Mac [Apple], in my opinion) with self-avoidance algorithms keeping people inside and outside the car safe. Traffic patterns would be carefully monitored, reducing commute times and making traffic jams a thing of the past. The stress of driving would decrease, and texting in the car would no longer be hazardous. People with physical handicaps would have easier access to transportation, giving them more freedom and independence. The legal age for driving could be lowered significantly, which would benefit soccer moms and dads. Cars would be almost like loyal dogs, following humans wherever we go, and when it is time to go, we would jump inside the car and say, "Take me home."

That said, where is the fun? I love the feeling of accelerating through a corner and being smashed into the back of my seat when the light turns green. I have a reflexive reaction that makes me smile bigger the more my foot presses on the accelerator. I am quite sure a self-driving car would not have launch control, and I love launch control. To be clear, I am not a reckless driver; I just enjoy feeling connected to the road. If you are like me and practice heel-toe on-and-off ramps, you know what I am talking about.

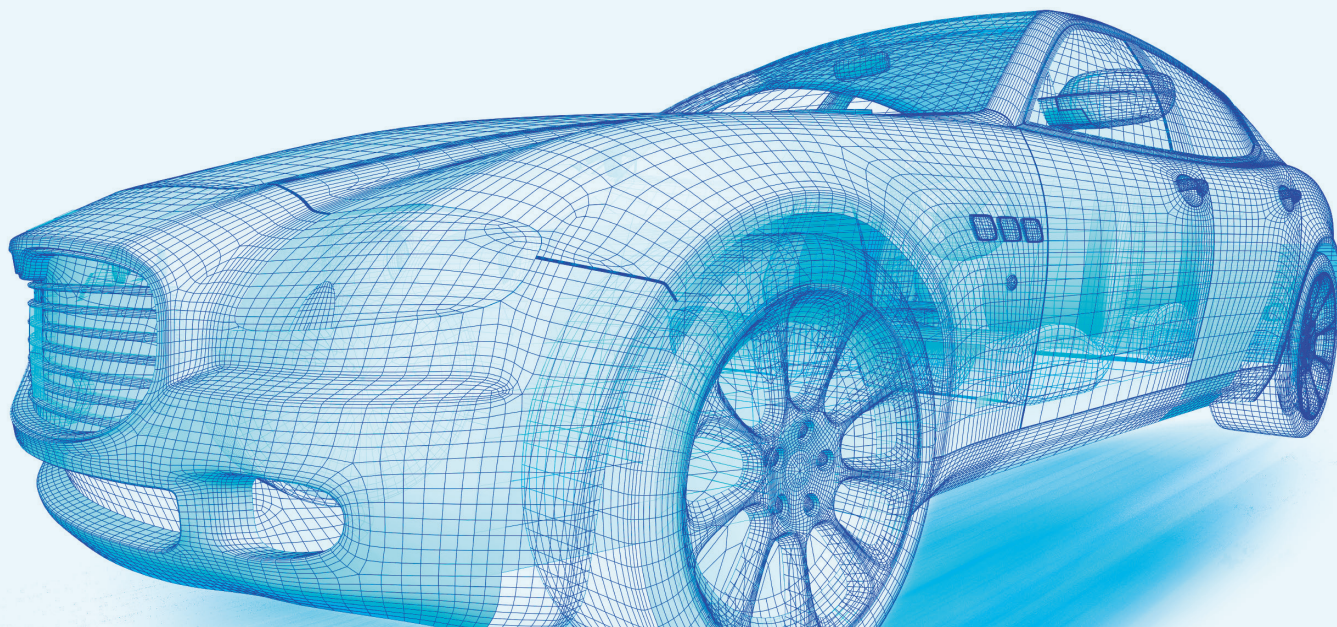
In the end, I would feel safe putting my family in a self-driving car, and I might convince my mother to get one. When it comes to getting me to work, however, I will stick with my big-engined, wide-tired, smile-making human-controlled driving machine.

KATHRYN M. HATCH, MD



Imagine having an extra 40 minutes to 2 hours every day. What would you do with your "extra" time? I know what I would do: arrange play dates for my kids, sign them up for swimming lessons, sign charts, call patients back, check email, or simply listen to music, read the news, relax, or take a nap.

On average, I spend up to 2 hours driving



a motor vehicle every day. That a self-driving car would take away the burden of driving while simultaneously “giving” me more time in my day is an amazing idea. I would excitedly consider the technology, as long as it was found to be safe, although this would be difficult to measure.

Assuming all the quirks are ironed out, I pose this question: what would be better, dealing with Boston drivers who will not allow you to merge into their lane or taking a short nap while driving to the surgical center? It is an obvious choice for me! Time will tell, but my interest is certainly piqued. Self-driving cars may be the future for all of us.

ELIZABETH YEU, MD



The potential of self-driving cars is tremendous, both in safety and efficiency. Accidents due to driver distractions would diminish, and traffic delays would lessen. I do not enjoy driving. I get lost more frequently than I would like to admit. I

would love to be able to use the 30-minute drive to the office to get some work done or surf the Internet. The sky is the limit on what we can accomplish with this technology. It will be even better when the car can fill itself up with gas! ■

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