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Writing an Essay

The issue of electric cars becoming dominant is completely different from fully autonomous Self Driving Vehicles (“faSDVs”). The future dominance of faSDV versus human-driven vehicles is clear. There are no reputable authorities that claim faSDVs would not come in the market and that they won’t be dominant. The only question that arises here is when? Regarding this, some say 2025, others in the 2030s and many post-2040. But all agree that the faSDV will be dominant.

The faSDV today is typically in an internal combustion engine (“ICE”) platform. And there is no particular reason that faSDVs must or might be ‘electric’. ICE has worked well for the last 100 years. So, it’s entirely possible that we will have faSDVs as the dominant form of transportation and the faSDVs will be ICE based (Helbing). The self-driving car will never drive faster than it’s stopping distance with something in front. And if something jumps out in front, then it’s not going to choose what to hit if there’s an option. It’ll just hit the brakes if there’s no way to swerve without hitting something.

Cars don’t have the processing power to identify whether an obstacle is an old lady or a child and whether it’s more moral to hit the old lady or the child. They will simply be obstacles to avoid hitting. Moreover, due to the much better reaction time, it’s much more likely to not hit anything at all as compared to a human driver.

The point that goes greatly in favor of the self-driven cars is greater control and management of freight, traffic, elimination of human error, poor judgment and improved safety against speeding, sleepy drivers, lapse in judgment and medical emergencies. As a passenger improved personal safety of not being potentially driven around by a maniac, rapist, murderer at the wheel. Although all these points sound great and create an enormous amount of comfort for the passengers riding in the vehicle there are a number of points that goes against these self-driven cars as well. Potential for catastrophic failure of the operating system these vehicles run on with no human driver at the wheel to step in and control the situation. Loss of employment and small businesses that man has created from driving commercially. As a passenger, you don’t really loss or gain that much in the way of safety. You’re putting your life in the hands of someone else every single time. If it is said that there will be fewer accidents with autonomous vehicles is, at this point, theoretical because hackers are already able to control modern cars that are heavily dependent on computers and connected to the internet. It’s a dice roll but one thing we do know it will have a huge impact on the economy in a negative way.

There are a number of questions that have been raised by the experts in the field of driving and automobiles regarding the ethical authenticity of the self-driven cars. These questions sound like:

* Will self-driving cars are allowed to deviate from the strict rules of the road, thus allowing it to make such a decision? Because if the car is obeying the law, the decision was already made: the human that broke the rules and put themselves in a harmful way is the one that will be hit. Realistically, this is what happens most of the time when a human is driving. There just isn’t enough time to make a decision. The human just goes straight, slamming on the brakes to mitigate the inevitable impact. But there is no way at all that the law will allow a car to veer into oncoming traffic and kill an adult in a head-on collision, just to avoid a child that (illegally) jumped in front of the deciding car. That’s murder, where hitting the child isn’t.

It can also be contended that another human cognition flaw is occurring, just in framing this question. The lack of foresight to imagine that accidents can be unavoidable. In this case, the moral choice of the engineers is to anticipate accident scenarios. In addition to this, it is also the responsibility to have the car both recognize them and change driving such that it can avoid an accident if such a situation goes from potential to actual. In the swerve to avoid either hitting an adult or a child—obviously, the car was driving too fast if this is even a choice (Vaughn). Because at 25 mph, the car should have been able to come to a complete stop in just 30 ft. And better, it also has the ability to calculate that it should speed up to get past a child entering the road before they get in front of the car if there isn’t enough stopping distance.

The “What If” scenario where a self-driving car would have debated who to save is overstated. These scenarios are incredibly rare, even with human drivers today. Somewhere between 5 and 6 million auto accidents happen each year in the United States alone. Out of those, how many incidents involved a human driver making an ethical choice to reduce overall harm?

So, given self-driving cars’ superhuman reflexes, awareness of its surroundings and complete control of the car, they’ll encounter these situations even more infrequently than humans and when they do, they’ll more often achieve a favorable outcome to a comparable human driver. And that’s really the point of a self-driving car: it’s not to avoid *all*deaths and fatalities but to do better than a normal, reasonable human driver would overall.

Today, 100% of drivers licensed to operate cars are not trained to deal with ethical issues or tested on how the ‘right’ way to react in these What-If scenarios. Our driver’s handbooks don’t have a table listing the ethical value of people and objects so that we know whether to save us or the box of puppies/group of old ladies/school bus full of kids.

If someone was driving and a sudden unavoidable obstacle appears, they don’t stop and consider the ethics to choose a course of action. People generally just choose action on reflex and intuition. Many times, human drivers will panic and make suboptimal decisions. Sometimes drivers also end up taking such decisions that even result in the loss of their lives. Sometimes less amount of damage is done, they only end up harming themselves and sometimes an unexpected kind of damage is done.

Works Cited

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