Should Self-Driving Cars Be Legal?

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**Topic: Should Self-Driving Cars Be Legal?**

**Introduction**

## The news about the first driverless car by Google was announced, the idea is no longer a myth! They even talked about making the driverless car project a subsidiary of the parent company, Alphabet. Tesla has been successful in its pioneer driverless car project in the Phoenix metro area, Arizona.

## This reality is not going to come to light that easily. You all remember the first self-driving car accident in Florida, where the Tesla-manufactured driverless car had to accelerate to full speed to avoid a collision but ended up hitting a post and killing the driver (well, passenger)? What followed was a denial of liability by the manufacturer who blamed the accident on the car-owner for failing to “take the wheel” on realizing the events that would eventually lead to the accident (Sparrow & Howard, 2017).

## The industry is visionary and holds so much water as far as the future of cars is concerned. However, the current situation comprises of numerous legal and ethical issues surrounding driverless cars. Consider the following:

## In the event that an accident occurs, who claims liability?

## Is the single insurer model going to work like in the UK? Will this be possible with the current data sharing and protection battles?

## Social acceptance of the AV technology and whether the public will accept the idea of sitting in a car and letting it drive them.

## The issue of liability is a legal battle between manufacturers and car-owners (or victims in the event an accident occurs. The following legal question arises:

1. When an accident occurs, who is responsible? The owner, or the manufacturer?
   1. Manufacturers argue that the liability falls in the hands of the owner who ought to take control of the car whenever they speculate events that may likely lead to an accident (Rapaczynski, 2016).
   2. Government policy is designed in such a way that the liability is shifted to the manufacturer when an accident occurs.
2. Legal issues surrounding the single insurer model
   1. Data protection and sharing legal battles, in which the manufacturers want to, protect their technology by withholding any data.
   2. Data sharing shall be required to determine the person whose care the car was in during the pre-accident events. Is it the owner, or the manufacturer?
3. Social acceptance of the technology:
   1. To successfully implement the technology of driverless cars, the public will have to accept it first.
   2. Are people going to let a car *“take the wheel”* as they sit and watch it drive them? (Sparrow & Howard, 2017).
   3. The ethical paradox:
      1. Is the car designed to hit a passerby on the road to avoid an accident that could potentially harm or kill those onboard?
      2. How are manufacturers going to incorporate moral compasses that inform rational human decisions while driving, on the driverless cars?

## The dream of having driverless cars on the road is almost coming into fruition albeit all the legal and ethical issues surrounding it. Nonetheless, people have not really bought into the idea of driverless vehicles given the challenges that the Phoenix pilot project is facing with expanding map data to cover other regions and climate zones (Kyriakidis et.al, 2015).

Sources

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