

Waymo to sell its self-driving tech to outside firms

March 6 2019



The lidar sensors developed for Waymo's autonomous vehicles will be sold to companies in robotics, agriculture and other sectors in a move that could help bring down the cost of the technology

Waymo, the former Google car division developing self-driving

technology, said Wednesday it would sell a key innovation to companies that don't compete with its autonomous cars.

The California-based unit of Google parent Alphabet will offer its lidar [sensors](#), which measure distance with pulses of laser light, to companies in robotics, security, agricultural technology and other sectors.

"Our custom lidars have been instrumental in making Waymo the first company in the world to put fully [self-driving](#) cars on [public roads](#)," Waymo said in a statement.

"Now, we are making these sensors available to companies outside of self-driving ... so they can achieve their own technological breakthroughs."

The move could offer a new revenue stream for Waymo as it invests in bringing "robo taxis" to market, broadening the availability of the 3-D lidar sensors it has been developing since 2011.

"Offering this lidar to partners helps spur the growth of applications outside of self-driving cars and also propels our business forward," the statement said.

"We can scale our autonomous technology faster, making each sensor more affordable through economies of scale."

The company is offering its "Laser Bear Honeycomb" sensor, which is used on the bumpers of self-driving cars and has a wider field of view than many competing sensors, according to Waymo.

"When the Honeycomb sends out a pulse of light, it doesn't just see the first object the laser beam touches," Waymo said.

"Instead, it can see up to four different objects in that [laser beams](#)' line of sight... This gives a rich and more detailed view of the environment, and uncovers objects that might otherwise be missed."

© 2019 AFP

Citation: Waymo to sell its self-driving tech to outside firms (2019, March 6) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2019-03-waymo-self-driving-tech-firms.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--