

Hacking and loss of driving skills are major consumer concerns for self-driving cars

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A new study from the University of Kent, Toulouse Business School, ESSCA School of Management (Paris) and ESADE Business School (Spain) has revealed the three primary risks and benefits perceived by consumers towards autonomous vehicles (self-driving cars).

The increased development of autonomous vehicles worldwide inspired the researchers to uncover how consumers feel towards the growing market, particularly in areas that dissuade them from purchasing, to understand the challenges of marketing the product. The following perceptions, gained through qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, are key to consumer decision making around autonomous vehicles.

The three key perceived risks for autonomous vehicles, according to surveyed consumers, can be classified as:

1. Performance (safety) risks of the vehicles' Artificial Intelligence and sensor systems
2. Loss of competencies by the driving public (primarily the ability to drive and use roads)
3. Privacy security breaches, similar to a personal computer or online account being hacked.

These concerns, particularly regarding road and passenger safety, have long been present in how automotive companies have marketed their products. Marketers' have advertised the continued improvements to the product's technology, in a bid to ease safety concerns. However, the concerns for loss of driving skills and privacy breaches are still of major concern and will need addressing as these products become more

widespread.

The three perceived benefits to consumers were:

- Freeing of time (spent instead of driving)
- Removing the issue of human error (accidents caused by human drivers)
- Outperforming human capacity, such as improved route and traffic prediction, handling speed.

Ben Lowe, Professor of Marketing at the University of Kent and co-author of the study said: 'The results of this study illustrate the perceived benefits of [autonomous vehicles](#) for consumers and how marketers can appeal to consumers in this growing market. However, we will now see how the manufacturers respond to concerns of these key perceived risks as they are major factors in the decision making of [consumers](#), with the [safety](#) of the vehicles' performance the greatest priority. Our methods used in this study will help clarify for manufacturers and marketers that, second to the issue of online account security, they will now have to address concerns that their product is reducing the autonomy of the consumer.'

More information: Laurent BERTRANDIAS et al, Delegating decision-making to autonomous products: A value model emphasizing the role of well-being, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120846](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120846)

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