

Use Google in the car? Google Assistant, Android Auto get fresh updates and new partner in Honda

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Google is updating critical features for the millions of drivers who depend on its technology to help them get around.

The tech giant announced the upcoming changes Thursday to Google Assistant and Android Auto driving modes and a new automaker, Honda, will have Google technology installed in its vehicles.

Google said that drivers using Google Assistant on Android phones will soon see a new dashboard they say will reduce "the need to fiddle with your phone while also making sure you stay focused on the road."

Instead of scrolling while driving, Google said drivers could tap to see who just called or sent a text and have access to several apps to listen to music with the new dashboard.

The dashboard will also include a new messaging update where drivers can say, "Hey Google, turn on auto-read," to hear their new messages read aloud when they come in and respond by voice.

These new changes for drivers are apparently part of what Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google and parent company Alphabet, said in a blog earlier this year to make its technologies "universally accessible and useful."

For example, users of Android Auto, Google's [smartphone app](#) for vehicles, via their Android phones will now be able to see music, news, and podcast recommendations from Google Assistant and they can set which app launches whenever Android Auto starts.

Those Android Auto users will soon be able to play games appearing on the vehicle's display with a new feature called GameSnacks while they're waiting or parking.

Additionally, Android Auto and Android phone users can make contactless payments for gas using Google Pay. This feature is available at more than 32,000 gas stations across the U.S., including ExxonMobil,

Conoco, 76 stations and Phillips 66.

On Thursday, Google announced that Japanese automaker Honda will be the latest to have Google built-in technology in its vehicles beginning in 2022.

Honda, which announced in April it's aiming to sell only [electric vehicles](#) in North America by 2040, will join the likes of Ford, General Motors, Polestar, Renault and Volvo that will have its future vehicles released with default Android operating systems.

The Polestar 2 and Volvo XC40 Recharge are among the current models with Google's built-in tech.

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