

New Report: OOH in a Self-Driving America

April 17, 2017

Fully automated vehicles (AVs) are the future of transportation and mobility in America and will be a disruptive force across the economy. A new report explores the trend toward automated driving. How long will it take? What challenges face automated driving? Are there possible opportunities for out of home advertising? The report, commissioned by the Foundation for Outdoor Advertising Research & Education, explains this important trend from the perspective of the OOH medium.

The Future of OOH in a Self-Driving America highlights four key points:

- Safety is a main policy goal pushing development of autonomous driving to reduce fatalities, injuries, and property loss.
- Full automation of the driving function is a long way off; meanwhile, advances in technology will continue to assist human driving behavior.
- Multiple factors complicate the path to full automation, such as liability and legal issues, data exchange capacity, and consumer acceptance.
- The OOH industry will discover new opportunities derived through technological advances.

Safety

There is significant support across the auto industry and government to advance AV technology to realize the potential safety benefits. As 94 percent of crashes can be tied to human factors, removing humans from controlling driving tasks is expected to result in a considerable decrease in roadway fatalities.

Levels of Automation

There are multiple levels of automation when it comes to AVs. The lowest level of automation provides limited driver assistance for a single driving task, such as cruise control. Vehicles equipped with advance driver assist systems, such as lane keep assist and adaptive cruise control are already on the road. A number of companies already have begun testing AVs (“self-driving cars” or “fully automated vehicles”) on public roads, and several major automobile manufacturers have announced their intention to deploy these vehicles within five years.

However, while we may see AVs soon, large-scale market adoption is several decades away, giving

LEVEL	NAME	STEERING, ACCELERATION & DECELERATION	MONITORING OF DRIVING ENVIRONMENT	FALLBACK PERFORMANCE OF DYNAMIC DRIVING TASK
0	NO AUTOMATION	HUMAN	HUMAN	HUMAN
1	DRIVER ASSISTANCE	HUMAN AND SYSTEM	HUMAN	HUMAN
2	PARTIAL AUTOMATION	SYSTEM	HUMAN	HUMAN
3	CONDITIONAL AUTOMATION	SYSTEM	SYSTEM	HUMAN
4	HIGH AUTOMATION	SYSTEM	SYSTEM	SYSTEM
5	FULL AUTOMATION	SYSTEM	SYSTEM	SYSTEM

Society of Automotive Engineers International Automation Scale

affected industries time to plan and adapt as necessary. Even after AVs become commercially available, there will be a decades-long transition as older vehicles pass through their life cycles and the AV industry works to overcome barriers to adoption by educating consumers about the benefits of AV technology.

Liability, Legal Issues

The AV industry faces hurdles at both the federal and state level as regulators seek to adapt legal frameworks to this dynamic new technology.

- Priorities for the new Administration in the AV area are as yet unclear; however, President Trump has announced a trillion-dollar infrastructure plan with a focus on attracting private investment.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has released voluntary guidance regarding testing and deployment of “highly automated vehicles” (HAVs).
- Congress has held several hearings to discuss the potential safety and mobility benefits. Minority committee leadership has expressed concern over the effect on commercial driving jobs.
- Several states have enacted laws, which could slow the deployment of AVs. Where there are conflicting requirements, testing and deployment could be delayed as manufacturers attempt to meet different requirements.
- NHTSA’s guidance encourages states to “consider how to allocate liability among HAV owners, operators, passengers, manufacturers and others when a crash occurs.”

OOH Relevance

In the immediate future, the use of AVs by car sharing, technology, and manufacturers are likely to be small in scale; drivers will continue to focus on the road and be exposed to OOH in the way they are today. However, the OOH industry need not wait to plan how it will continue to succeed as the various phases of AV development proceed.

New “smart” OOH placements, such as smart benches, bus stops, and kiosks offer touch points with consumers. These networks offer opportunities to deliver an improved advertising experience, wireless connectivity, and public service messaging.

As AVs are deployed further, digital signage can become more interactive, engaging consumers whose attention will be diverted from driving. When drivers are no longer focused on the road, local jurisdictions may be more willing to allow dynamic billboard content.

Along with research on new technologies, new consumer behaviors, and new spaces for OOH ads, the industry should begin to foster relationships with AV manufacturers and data-driven marketing companies to ensure OOH has a “seat at the table” as policy is discussed and shaped.

[Download a copy of the full report here.](#)