



## IN THE NEWS

Data from  
**Powergram®**

### Tech Choice Study Findings

**Generation gap for vehicle-controlled functions:** When looking at technologies with the largest purchase intent gaps between the Gen Y/Gen Z and Boomer generations, younger consumers are far more comfortable with technologies that assume control of vehicle operating functions. Examples include allowing mobile devices to take control of infotainment systems; an in-vehicle artificial intelligence based assistant; and autonomous driving and parking technologies.

**Not a matter of price:** For all five of the technologies with the largest purchase intent gap, Gen Y/Gen Z purchase intent is greater than Boomers, who say they definitely/probably are interested in a feature even before they know the price.

**I'm going mobile:** Gen Z has the highest interest in all alternative mobility types, including 50% indicating they are definitely/probably interested in mobility sharing/co-ownership.

**Consumer interest in emergency braking and steering system technology:** Upcoming agreements between automakers and the government will require vehicles to have emergency braking—a foundation technology for autonomous driving—as a standard feature within five years.

**Lukewarm on convenience:** Consumers aren't as enthusiastic about niche convenience technologies. Collision protection and driving assistance-related technologies comprise most of the technologies with the highest pre-price interest, while features in the entertainment and connectivity, and comfort and convenience categories show the lowest pre-price interest.

**Notable convenience exception:** Gen Z consumers have a fairly high interest in digital key technology, which eliminates the need for a physical key or key fob and is replaced by a smartphone or smartwatch.

For more information about the 2017 U.S. Tech Choice Study, visit <http://www.jdpower.com/resource/us-tech-choice-study>

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## Trust Grows One Ride at a Time

by **Kathy Rizk**

**I**n 2015, I took my first ride in a prototype autonomous vehicle. I kept saying to myself, “What in the world am I doing?” The word “trepidation” doesn’t begin to convey the angst I felt or my perceived lack of judgment. Once inside the vehicle, my uneasiness was magnified when I was asked to sign a stack of legal waivers allowing me to take this one-mile ride. I signed away my rights, and buckled myself in.

The ride was both exhilarating and frightening. I watched anxiously from the back seat while the vehicle proceeded down the road, without the driver continuously having his hands on the wheel, nor feet working the pedals.

Several times during the ride, however, the driver was forced to suddenly take control of the vehicle, as the autonomous system failed. Naturally, this caused my heart to pound, and pulse to quicken.

After lasting for what seemed an eternity, the expedition had come to an end. As I exited the vehicle, a sense of relief washed over me, and also a feeling of accomplishment. I survived!

Since that initial ride, I’ve expanded my familiarity with autonomous technology. I recently “drove” some Level II (auto steering and adaptive cruise control) autonomous vehicles, including the Tesla Model S, Tesla Model X, BMW 7 Series, Mercedes E Class, and Genesis G90.

Similar to my first ride, my first “driving” experience was terrifying. I mean, I hate scary movies, so why am I scaring myself? My hands were never more than a finger nail away from the steering wheel, and my feet never more than toe-tap away from the brake pedal.

Sure enough, systems disengaged many times in each vehicle I tested. The vehicles struggled to stay centered in the lane, overcorrected when moving too far to the right or left, unexpectedly merged into other lanes and abruptly slowed the vehicle.

It was emotionally taxing, for sure!

While one of the goals of autonomous vehicles is to allow the “driver” to relax and enjoy the ride, my initial experience was the opposite. Thankfully, however, I found that each time I headed onto the route, the more comfortable and relaxed I became — even though the autonomous feature continued to disengage several times. I found myself taking in the scenery, paying attention to the conversation in the vehicle and just enjoying the ride. My hands no longer hovered above the wheel.

More recently, I rode in an Uber autonomous rideshare vehicle in Pittsburgh. Unlike my previous autonomous experience, I didn’t hesitate to sign the long legal waiver.

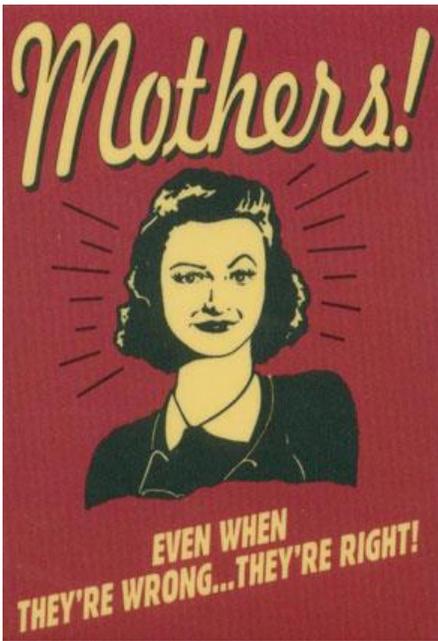
As I expected, the technology failed during the ride, but my heart did not pound when the Uber driver grabbed the wheel, nor did I have the urge to fight him for control of the vehicle. Instead, I stayed calm and took in the scenery. In fact, I almost forgot that I was in an autonomous vehicle.

I no longer perceived riding in an autonomous vehicle as a once-in-a-lifetime experience; rather, I saw it as an inevitable part of my future. Speaking with other autonomous Uber customers, I learned they felt the same way.

Funny how quickly things change.

The challenge for vehicle manufacturers now is two-fold: fix the technology hiccups and get consumers to experience the technology for themselves. The answer lies in the ability of manufacturers to build the trust between human emotion and technological reliability. While emotions of skepticism and distrust for automation have increased among consumers, with much of it caused by uncertainty and the fear of technology failure, according to J.D. Power’s 2017 U.S. Tech Choice Study, the auto industry is counting on these fears to subside once customers experience the technology for themselves—and in my case, experiencing it a couple of times.

*Kathy Rizk is director of global automotive consulting at J.D. Power. She looks forward to more autonomous vehicle experiences, especially during rush hour.* ☎



## Phone Home?

Lionel phones his mother living in Springfield, Massachusetts to wish her a happy Mother's Day.

"Mum, how are you?" he asks.

"Not too good" answers Lionel's mother, "I've been very weak."

Lionel, concerned asks, "Why are you so weak, mother?"

She says, "Because I haven't eaten in 23 days."

Lionel stammers, "That's terrible. Why haven't you eaten in 23 days?"

His mother replies, "Because I didn't want my mouth to be filled with food if you should phone." 🌴

## Things a Mother Knows

- ❖ A king size waterbed holds enough water to fill a 2000 sq. ft. house, 4 inches deep.
- ❖ A 3-year old boy's voice is louder than 200 adults in a crowded restaurant.
- ❖ When you hear the toilet flush and the words 'uh oh', it's already too late.
- ❖ Brake fluid mixed with Clorox makes smoke . . . and lots of it.
- ❖ A six-year old boy can start a fire with a flint rock even though a 36-year old man says they can only do it in the movies.
- ❖ Certain Legos will pass through the digestive tract of a 4-year old boy.

- ❖ No matter how much Jell-O you put in a swimming pool you still can't walk on water.
- ❖ Pool filters do not like Jell-O.
- ❖ Garbage bags do not make good parachutes.
- ❖ Marbles in gas tanks make lots of noise when driving.
- ❖ The spin cycle on the washing machine does not make earthworms dizzy.
- ❖ It will, however, make cats dizzy.
- ❖ Cats throw up twice their body weight when dizzy.
- ❖ 80% of men who read this will try mixing the Clorox and brake fluid. 🌴

## Government in Action?

Illinois has problems: a \$130 billion unfunded pension crisis, 19 months without a budget, the lowest credit rating and highest property taxes in the country, and a high murder rate in Chicago. However, at least the state house of representatives is not standing by idly. In February, it moved to designate October 2017 as Zombie Preparedness Month (basically, adding "zombie invasion" to the list of mobilizations for any natural disaster and urging residents to stockpile food and supplies for up to 72 hours). 🌴



We remember,  
and we are thankful.



## Oh, Please

❖ "I tried the \$5,000 hamburger, and it was absolutely worth it," wrote the apparently straight-faced CNBC reviewer Robert Frank in February, describing his meal at the Las Vegas Mandalay Bay restaurant Fleur. (The burger included Waygu beef, foie gras and truffles, and was served with a similarly inexplicably priced wine.) Other recent consumer challenges: an \$18 cup of coffee at Brooklyn's Extraction Lab; a \$100 bottle of Norwegian iceberg water (Svalbardi.com); a \$2,000 pizza at New York City's Industry Kitchen (caviar, truffles, gold flakes); and a \$25,000 taco at the Grand Velas Los Cabos resort in Mexico (caviar, brie, Kobe beef, langoustine lobster, rare tequila and gold flakes).

❖ The Columbia Room bar in Washington, D.C., recently introduced the "In Search of Time Past" cocktail – splashed with a tincture of old, musty books. Management vacuum-sealed pages with grapeseed oil, then "fat-washed" them with a "neutral high-proof" spirit, and added a vintage sherry, mushroom cordial and eucalyptus.

❖ The California reggae rock band Slightly Stoopid recently produced a vinyl record that was "smokeable," according to Billboard magazine – using a "super resinous variety of hashish" mastered at the Los Angeles studio Capsule Labs. The first two versions' sound quality disappointed and were apparently quickly smoked, but a third is in production. 🌴