

New Honda Accord drives itself

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Japanese car manufacturer Honda has launched a new self-driven car. Dubbed Honda Accord ADAS, the vehicle can change gear and steer itself around bends. While the auto-pilot function will currently only operate on motorways and dual carriageways, officials at Honda believe that future ADAS models will tackle all roads.

Graham Avent, a spokesman for Honda, points out that ADAS is not a substitute for alert human drivers but does allow people to take a rest behind the steering wheel during long journeys. ADAS drivers cannot leave their seats, but need only touch the steering wheel every ten seconds to indicate that they are still alert.

ADAS may also help prevent road accidents as the system can help to correct the effect of some driver errors.

The car's auto-pilot capability is based on two main components: Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) and Lane Keep Assist System (LKAS). ACC is a radar sensor placed behind the Honda badge at the front of the car. It scans ahead to look out for other vehicles, responding to the result by reducing or increasing the car's speed accordingly. LKAS, a camera placed next to the rear-view mirror, monitors the white lines along motorways and dual carriageways, using the received data to control the car's steering.

Honda UK says the car will cost UKP 25,880 (US\$46,500) and will be in showrooms in March. All Honda cars will be equipped with ADAS by 2016.

Although ADAS can facilitate an easier drive, Honda insists that the driver's role remains paramount. Even when activated, the auto-pilot function will be overridden by the driver's input, leaving the driver in full control of the car.

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