

Google looking to make driverless cars legal in Nevada

May 13 2011, by Bob Yirka



(PhysOrg.com) -- In an unexpected move, Google, the wily search giant with loads of ambition and enough spare cash to enable it to dabble in technologies that appear to have nothing to do with its core business, has hired lobbyist David Goldwater to represent the company in its push to legalize the running of autonomous vehicles on Nevada roads; this comes less than a year after announcing that it had been running live tests of its self-driving vehicles on California roads.

It was just last March that Google announced to the world that it had been [racing autonomous cars around on rooftop parking lots](#) and then just seven months later that it had been [testing those cars on California roads](#); news that both made headlines and bolstered Google's image as one of the more innovative companies operating today. Now comes news that Google is ready to tackle the sticky problem of allowing such cars to drive legally on roads, an issue no doubt that cropped up in the wake of its earlier announcements.

It's not exactly clear why Google chose Nevada for its first push at legalizing what it's been doing already; though there are theories, such as the fact that the giant Consumer Electronics Show (CES) just happens to be held in Las Vegas each year, or maybe it's because Nevada has a history of allowing things that other states don't; prostitution being the most infamous example, of course. Or it might be the fact that Nevada has a lot of roads that have very little traffic in very out-of-the-way places and thus could test its vehicles on public roads without much oversight.

In any case, it's clear that Google is very serious about continuing its research with autonomous vehicles and as a part of that is pushing for legislation to create for themselves a hassle free environment for doing so. As a result, there are now two bills currently being introduced to the [Nevada](#) legislature related to autonomous vehicles; one would be an amendment to another bill regarding electric vehicles that would create a means of licensing and testing autonomous vehicles on public roads; the other would provide an exemption for such "drivers" from the current law that disallows texting while behind the wheel.

Google claims that computer controlled vehicles are and will be much safer than conventional human driven vehicles because they are able to respond to road conditions more quickly and don't fall prey to other human foibles, such as drinking and driving, falling asleep, or simply

forgetting to pay attention. If [Google](#)'s push to legalize such vehicles succeeds, we might just find out over the next few years, if they're right.

© 2010 PhysOrg.com

Citation: Google looking to make driverless cars legal in Nevada (2011, May 13) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-05-google-driverless-cars-legal-nevada.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.