

French company demos driverless shuttle at CES

January 7 2014, by Ryan Nakashima



Induct demonstrates their new Navia driverless shuttle at the International Consumer Electronics Show, Monday, Jan. 6, 2014, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Jack Dempsey)

French company Induct on Monday showed off the first driverless vehicle to be commercially available in the U.S.

The Navia shuttle isn't ready for U.S. street traffic yet, but this standing-room-only shuttle can transport up to 10 people from point to point on university campuses or in airport parking lots at speeds topping out at 12.5 mph.

It even charges itself wirelessly.

At \$250,000 per vehicle, it's not likely to make car aficionados' hearts skip a beat. But it advances the idea of the [driverless car](#) with turtle-like practicality.

The shuttle is already being tested on college campuses in Switzerland, Britain and Singapore, according to Induct founder Pierre Lefevre.

Lefevre said he expects to see some of the vehicles on public roads in the U.S. this year, but that could require changes to existing laws.

The idea of the Navia is to provide "last-mile mobility" at airports, universities, theme parks, shopping malls, historical monuments and other densely packed places, Lefevre said.

"It's more complementary to public transportation systems than replacing them," he said. "This can remove private cars from campuses and the very center of cities."

In a demo for The Associated Press on Monday, the Navia carried four people standing in a small padded area as it moved around a circular course in a Las Vegas Convention Center parking lot. The shuttle had to be pre-programmed with the route. It uses lasers to precisely measure the distance to nearby obstacles like buildings or curbs.

The route had several stops that were akin to shuttle stops. One staffer pressed a touch screen to go to the next stop.

"It works like a horizontal elevator. You come in and choose your stop," said Max Lefevre, the company's marketing director.

The Navia automatically came to a stop when a staffer stood in front of

it, but it didn't stop when he crossed in front of the path fast enough to avoid a collision. When he walked slowly in front of the Navia's path, it trundled along behind him at a slower speed.

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