

Google puts brakes on Uber rival speculation

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US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx (R) and Google Chairman Eric Schmidt (L) get out of a Google self-driving car at the company's headquarters in Mountain View, California on February 2, 2015

Google late Monday fired off a terse tweet that appeared aimed at putting brakes on a report that it is readying a ride-sharing service that would rival Uber.

"We think you'll find Uber and Lyft work quite well," said a message

fired off at the Internet titan's official [@google](#) Twitter account. "We use them all the time."

Google referred AFP to the tweet in response to a request for comment regarding a Bloomberg report citing an unnamed source as saying that the California company is developing its own car-hailing service, most likely in connection with its work on self-driving cars.

The report came the same day that Uber and Carnegie Mellon University announced a partnership to collaborate on a center devoted to research and development of mapping, car safety, and autonomous vehicle technology.

"As a global leader in urban transportation, we have the unique opportunity to invest in leading edge technologies to enable the safe and efficient movement of people and things at giant scale," Uber chief product officer Jeff Holden said in a release.

"This collaboration and the creation of the Uber Advanced Technologies Center represent an important investment in building for the long term of Uber."

Google was an early backer of Uber, investing in the controversial ride-sharing service through its venture capital arm.



Uber, which allows consumers to use a smartphone app to locate a driver, has grown into one of the world's largest startups

Google Maps software integrated into Uber's smartphone application lets users check progress of drivers on their way to pick them up.

San Francisco-based Uber has grown into one of the world's largest startups, valued at some \$40 billion, with operations in more than 200 cities in 54 countries around the world.

But Uber's growth has also generated frictions with existing taxi operations, and posed challenges for regulators.

Uber does not employ drivers or own its vehicles, but instead uses independent contractors with their own cars.

Uber allows consumers to use a smartphone app to locate a driver—in

some cities with several classes of service—and instantly book a ride.

Since launching in 2010, Uber has also been the prime example of a "disruptive" economic force. Taxi drivers in dozens of cities have staged protests against Uber, and regulators in many cities have sought to shut it down.

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