

Self-driving vehicles will have limited impact on productivity

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Safety and mobility are cited as the chief advantages of self-driving vehicles, but productivity may be another. Or maybe not, say University of Michigan researchers.

"Currently, in the U.S., the average occupant of a light-duty vehicle spends about an hour a day traveling—time that could potentially be put to more productive use," said Michael Sivak, research professor at the U-M Transportation Research Institute. "Indeed, increased productivity is one of the expected benefits of [self-driving vehicles](#)."

In their new report, "Would Self-Driving Vehicles Increase Occupant Productivity?" Sivak and colleague Brandon Schoettle say that for about 62 percent of Americans, [autonomous vehicles](#) are not likely to result in an improvement in [productivity](#).

According to their data, nearly 36 percent of Americans say they would be so apprehensive that they would only watch the road, another 23 percent say they would not ride in such vehicles and 3 percent would frequently experience some level of motion sickness.

Among those who would take advantage of the extra time, about 11 percent would read, 10 percent would text or talk with family and friends, 7 percent would sleep, 6 percent would watch movies or TV, 5 percent would work and 2 percent would play games.

Sivak and Schoettle say the performance of current restraint systems for

nontraditional positions and postures being considered for occupants of self-driving vehicles (e.g., facing backward or sideways or lying down) and the potential of untethered objects (e.g., laptops) becoming projectiles are cause for additional concern.

They also note that the average [vehicle](#) trip is short (about 19 minutes)—a rather short duration for sustained productive activity or invigoration sleep.

Provided by University of Michigan

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