

Autonomous cars—"new oil" or "big brother"?

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A digital battle is being waged over the huge amount of technical data that will be stored in autonomous vehicles

Just like credit cards, smartphones or search engines, autonomous cars will carry a trove of information about their owners as they make driving more comfortable, raising new concerns about privacy.

Automakers are engaged in a fierce race to develop the first [driverless](#)

[car](#), which experts say should hit the road by 2020.

Apart from legal obstacles facing the industry as the technology evolves—such as who is responsible in the event of an accident—a digital battle is being waged over the huge amount of technical data that will be stored in such vehicles.

"Data is the new oil," Intel chief executive Brian Krzanich said this week during a speech at the Los Angeles auto show, AutoMobility LA.

"If you have rich data, your car will be able to deal with complex route situations," Krzanich said. "If not, the car will stop."

Sensors, radars and cameras on autonomous vehicles will be able to exchange data with other cars but also, perhaps, with "intelligent" roadways that can help set speed limits depending on weather and traffic conditions.

The passenger behind the wheel, meanwhile, can send emails and text messages, listen to music, stream movies, hold a conference call or make a restaurant reservation.

Even homes will be connected to vehicles.



A 2017 Kia Niro Triathlete Inspired autonomous concept car with a shower head in the passenger door is on display at the Los Angeles Auto Show

South Korean automaker Hyundai revealed at the auto show a partnership with Amazon's Alexa voice service to allow customers to start their car, charge their battery or turn on the air conditioner via a quick voice request.

Experts say the data stored in these vehicles represents a gold mine for companies.

"Where are you, where you stop, how often, what's in there can be used to provide you a rich user experience," Krzanich said. "What music you like, craft choices... that's an opportunity as well."

He said Intel was investing \$250 million into self-driving technology

over the next two years.

Karl Brauer, senior director of industry insights at Kelley Blue Book, said all the data collected will be used by car makers and other companies to maximize profit.

"If they know you like to go to Starbucks (they will say) 'Oh, he always stops at Starbucks,'" Brauer said.

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