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AUTOS

Revolutionary road

As technological change sweeps the industry, cars will soon understand voice commands, choose preferred routes and monitor the health of drivers

The auto industry is acutely aware of climate change and the environment, world economies and the price of oil, drivers' safety and the war on speed. Gas-guzzling V12 supercars will soon be considered relics from the past, relegated to the history books.

Current trends see luxury auto brands going down the SUV route. Sports cars are embracing hybrid and electric technology, and supercars are downsizing their mammoth V12s to clean V8 engines—even Ford is joining the party with a V6 twin-turbo GT supercar.

Revolutionary onboard technology has become mainstream for high-end brands. Rolls-Royce's satellite-aided transmission reads the road ahead and selects the appropriate gear, while Aston Martin's 3D-printed center console features integrated functional switches. Range Rover's Evoque has ClearSight Ground View technology that effectively makes the hood invisible, Ferrari's S-duct aerodynamics increases downforce at the front of the car, and Bentley's active control system eliminates body roll.

But how will the motoring landscape look in ten years? Here's a preview of the next generation in auto tech.

VOICE COMMANDS FOR YOUR CAR

High on the list of innovations is the introduction of an Alexa-like personal assistant. "You will be able to speak naturally to your car," says Mark Halliday, chief product officer of the car-tech company Tantalum. "For example, when looking for a parking space, say, 'Find somewhere to park,' and your car will locate the nearest or cheapest garage based on your preferences, then pay for it with your stored card details and navigate you there."

MAP OPTIONS

As navigational maps become blanketed with more data, you'll be able to choose your route based on several options, such as "least polluted," which will guide you along roads with better air quality. For older drivers or those with chronic asthma, this becomes a huge benefit.

The Good Life



BRAIN-TO-VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY

Nissan has developed programs that enable cars to interpret signals from a driver's brain, speeding up reaction time.

ONBOARD MECHANICS

"Cars will detect their own mechanical or software problems and search for a diagnosis," says Tantalum's Halliday. "If a mechanic is needed, the car will find a time that works for you and book an appointment. It will also be able to keep looking for better insurance deals and ensure it is covered."

SHARED AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

Self-driving cars are already here, and soon they'll be fully autonomous. To enhance this still further, people will be able to share their vehicles. "Cars today sit unused 80 percent of the time," says Alan Brown, executive vice president of NuVinAir, an automotive-industry pioneer. (Brown previously spent 27 years with Volkswagen.) "If the car is self-driving, we have a wonderful opportunity for people to co-own it and pay only for the portion of the car they use."

SOLAR POWER AND MORE

Manufacturers are already using regenerative braking systems to capture energy to power vehicles, and Toyota is exploring the possibility of placing solar panels on a car's surface.

CARS THAT TALK TO ONE ANOTHER

Cadillac is working on vehicle-to-vehicle communications, enabling cars to know the actions of other autos before they occur.

Top: Ferrari F8 Tributo.
Right: Bentley Continental GT convertible

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NOW, WE'LL STILL BE
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BUT THIS MAY BE
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FROM OUR SENSES.

AIRBAGS THAT PREVENT ACCIDENTS

Mercedes-Benz is developing airbag technology that goes under a car. Sensors anticipate an accident and deploy the bags to slow the vehicle down to a complete stop, instead of responding after impact.

ACTIVE HEALTH MONITORS

Ford is leading the way in technology that monitors health through the driver's seat. The company has developed an electro-cardio reader that can detect heart attacks. The sensors can tell if someone is ill and then auto-respond by pulling over and calling paramedics. This

technology rolls out in 2020. Also in the works is a cloud-based health-management system that monitors blood glucose and provides location-based allergy and pollen alerts.

The way people and goods move is changing at an unprecedented pace. By harnessing the

power of technology, we're discovering new ways to explore the world around us. Ten years from now, we'll still be turning the steering wheel, pressing pedals and shifting gears—but this may be done via feedback from our senses.

"Autonomous vehicles, data-based services, the electrification of the power train, and app-based mobility services are transforming the way we travel," says Sebastian Peck, managing director of InMotion Ventures, which develops the urban mobility sector for Jaguar Land Rover. "Cities are taking active measures to harness these new technologies

to combat congestion and air pollution, while car manufacturers and their suppliers are investing billions to transform their businesses. The size of the prize is enormous—the global market is worth trillions. It's a massive opportunity, and no one wants to miss out."

—CINDY-LOU DALE

