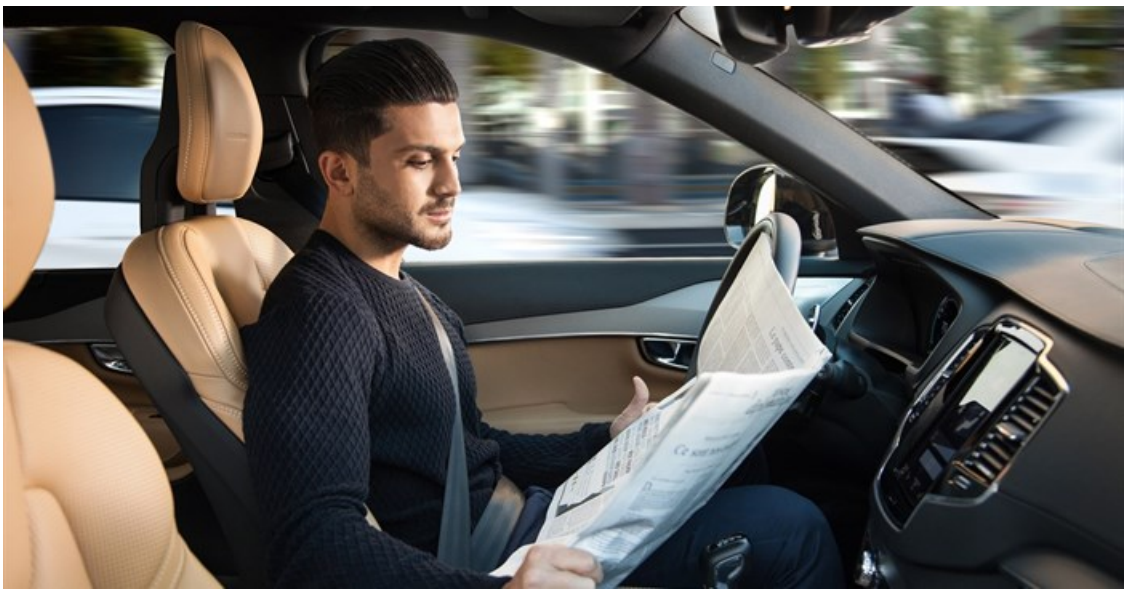
Volvo Cars to launch autonomous driving experiment in China

Volvo Cars plans to launch China's most advanced autonomous driving experiment in which local drivers will test autonomous driving cars on public roads in everyday driving conditions.



Volvo Cars expects the experiment to involve up to 100 cars and will, in the coming months, begin negotiations with interested cities in China to see which are able to provide the necessary permissions, regulations and infrastructure to allow the experiment to go ahead. Volvo believes the introduction of autonomous driving (AD) technology promises to reduce car accidents as well as free-up congested roads, reduce pollution and allow drivers to use time spent in their cars more valuably.

The Swedish company is pioneering the development of autonomous driving systems as part of its commitment that no one will be seriously injured or killed in a new Volvo by the year 2020.

"Autonomous driving can make a significant contribution to road safety," Håkan Samuelsson, president and chief executive of Volvo Cars told a seminar in Beijing on 7 April, entitled 'Autonomous Driving - could China take the lead?'. "The sooner AD cars are on the roads, the sooner lives will be saved." Samuelsson welcomed the positive steps that China has taken to develop autonomous driving technologies, but also encouraged the nation to do more to try and speed up the implementation of the regulations that will oversee autonomous driving cars in future.

"There are multiple benefits to AD cars," said Samuelsson. "That is why governments need to put the necessary legislation in place to allow AD cars onto the streets as soon as possible. The car industry cannot do it all by itself. We need governmental assistance."

Revolutionising road safety

The introduction of AD cars promises to revolutionise China's roads in four main areas - safety, congestion, pollution and time-saving. Independent research has revealed that AD cars have the potential to reduce the number of accidents significantly. Up to 90% of all accidents are caused by human error, something which is eliminated by AD cars.

In terms of congestion, AD cars allow traffic to flow more smoothly, reducing traffic jams and, by extension, decreasing dangerous emissions and associated pollution. Reduced congestion also saves drivers valuable time.

Samuelsson welcomes moves by regulators and car makers in the US and Europe to develop AD cars and infrastructure, but he also encourages all parties involved to work more constructively together to avoid patchwork global regulations, technological duplication and needless expense.

"AD is not just about car technology. We need the right rules and the right laws. It is natural for us to work together," Samuelsson concluded. "Our starting point is that both the public and private sectors stand to benefit from new technologies and industries, so it is better to build bridges and work together than to all go in different directions."