European Update: Workshop: Automation in Road Transport (contains links to participants & presentations)

As background if you haven’t read it: from June 29, 2011: Definition of necessary vehicle and infrastructure systems for Automated Driving Final report SMART 2010/0064

...this report clearly lays out the State-of-the-Art with excellent recommendations. It is a must read! It attempts to place things in perspective on p7 by stating...“The progress in the human history has systematically taken the path of the shortest resistance and has often bypassed governmental rules, business models, and the obvious thinking. At the end of the 1990s nobody was anticipating the prominent role the smart phone would have in 10 years, but scientists were busy planning journeys to Mars within the same timeframe. The latter has not happened and will probably not happen soon...”. However, this highlights its main flaw! The report’s focus is “Mars Journey-ish” rather than “smartPhone-ish”. It really doesn’t take a consumer-oriented view. It tends to want to mandate solutions rather than investigating how the marketplace would evolve a solution. It correctly points out the societal benefits of the technology yet doesn’t explore its personal individual benefits. Long ago, at the beginnings of turn-by-turn navigation systems, I would claim that their biggest value was as an “anxiety reliever”. When we finally made them good enough, cheap enough and easy enough, consumers bought and used them primarily as anxiety relievers. The automobile is a consumer product focused on the individual. Long ago, manufacturers found that the individual defined the path of least resistance. The success of this next evolution will also necessarily be focused on individuals. The individuals have the money and if the product satisfies their need, they’ll buy it. While automakers would never say it, Google has... cars deliver fantastic mobility, but often, individuals would prefer to do something else, anything else, rather than drive them. The automobile industry, I believe, has known this for some time, but hasn’t had where-with-all to deliver that level of comfort and convenience. In the past, they’ve perfumed it over with “Corinthian leather”, “automatic transmission”, “power steering”, “surround sound” and a heavy dose of “Madison Avenue” trying to convince us that driving is somehow fun, macho. The biggest benefit of this technology is that it may in fact let the individual choose when to drive or do something else. This would be an enormous liberator and anxiety reliever for the poor sole who is just trying to get someplace. This is ‘smartPhone-ish”. This doesn’t require (nor merit), government promotion. It does deserve us to pay attention to the individual consumer.

...Presentations most worth looking at
“Automated Driving from the European Perspective” Juhani Jaaskelainen ... excellent summary of the coordinated European research program that has brought he European auto industry to the current state.
“AuinteractIVe- Challenges” Aria Etemad... overview of the interactIVe project that is focused on developing inexpensive safety systems to support the driver. The four videos featured in the March 11 issue of SamartDrivingCars were Aria’s.
“Automated Driving – State of the art and future challenges” Arne Bartels... a clear summary
“SARTRE- Safe Road Trains for the Environment” Stephan Solyom ... a summary of an important demonstration of platooning. To me, this is a very interesting near-term opportunity that combines SmartDriving technology with V2V communications. The ideal application of this technology is the fleet of 3,000 buses that provide “Bus Rapid Transit” service to mid-town Manhattan from New Jersey via the “495 XclusiveBusLane” (XBL) and the Lincoln Tunnel. Every weekday morning that facility delivers a capacity constrained 700 buses carrying 35,000 commuters during the peak hour to the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT). SATRE could increase that peak-hour capacity by to 50%. Now that would be a valuable demonstration and implementation of SmartDriving and V2V technology!
Implementation Update: Are robots the future of the WA mining industry?


Rio Tinto's labour-intensive iron ore business is already trialing automated trucks, drill rigs, sorting machines and trains at mines across the Pilbara. These systems can be operated from more than 1000 kilometers away in the comfort and safety of the Perth city office...

Videos: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0RCSX95QmE

The App Developers: Automatic: The Smart Driving App that Plugs Into Your Car, Tracks Fuel ...

The Automatic is a Bluetooth dongle that plugs into your car's Onboard Diagnostics Port, generally located near to or near the fuse box. According to automatic it works with cars since 1996, and connects to your smartphone (iPhone for now) using ...

From the Public Sector: Request for Information (RfI) from US DoT on Surface Transportation System Automation is a request for “curb-side” responses to many very deep research questions.

From the PRT Sector: Heathrow announces plans for an additional Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system ...

...plans for an additional Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system at Heathrow have been included in Heathrow Airport Limited’s business plan for the next five years (April 2014-2019, also known as Q6) which was announced this week. The proposed system which will run from Terminals 2 & 3 out to the terminal’s own particular business car parks will aid Heathrow Airport Limited in its vision to create a far simpler Central Terminal Area for passengers...

Best videos from Workshop: Automation in Road Transport (contains links to participants & presentations)

Automated Steering Avoidance of imminent collision on Frozen Lake done Feb 23, 2013. Views outside the vehicle of automated collision avoidance maneuvers involving only steering (no differential wheel braking. Views from outside the vehicles:
Continental and BMW Group Working Together to Develop Freeway-Grade Highly Automated Driving

This is BIG, not only because they have “an agreement to jointly develop an electronic co-pilot for this purpose”, but because...

- It aligns a component supplier with a manufacturer. Where does this leave Daimler and VW/Audi? To join up with Bosch? What about Delphi? Join back with GM on this one? Where does this leave the other manufacturers; will they align? The competitive race to attract consumers to the showrooms has really heated up.

- They've realized that safety is now clothed in comfort & convenience. Together, they make a powerful message to the car buying public.

This technology will draw people into the showrooms. The wake-up call was delivered by the emergent competitor, rather than government edicts or rule-makings. “...[I]n capitalist reality..., it is not [price] competition which counts but the competition from the new commodity, the new technology...- competition which commands a decisive cost or quality advantage and which strikes not at the margins of the profits and the outputs of the existing firms but at their foundations and their very lives.” 

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