

11/16 Essay (last one): Read the ~8 minute article "The Data Science Behind Self-Driving Cars" (hat tip to Connor). In 1-2 paragraphs, write what you think (or know) are the broad implications for society from the development and adoption of self-driving vehicle technology. What are the positive aspects, the not so positive, and the important considerations (e.g., ethical)? You have until 10:05.

As an intended Economics major, I can definitely think of some economical implications of self-driving cars and how they will impact the car market as we know it. If self-driving cars become commonplace in society and are proven to be safe and more practical, the majority of people will switch to using these types of cars. You will always have a small minority of people who don't trust them and will stay with regular driving cars, but this will not be enough to keep certain brands in business. Unless companies can find a way to lower the marginal and fixed costs of these vehicles, prices on them will remain high, and people will be forced to spend a high amount on vehicles. If other supplier brands don't keep up with the brands that are making these vehicles, they could go out of business and be forced to shut down. Self-driving cars, if they become more available and less costly, could change the entire car market as we know it.

In relation to other implications for society, I believe that adapting self-driving cars as a whole could make humans less motivated and more lazy. Driving is something that truly holds us accountable - logically speaking, we are carrying the lives of ourselves and others in our hands. As we continue to advance as a society and more and more things become robotic without the need for human control in our day to day lives, we aren't held accountable for these things. In my opinion, this will indirectly make us less responsible and more apt to not carry through with daily tasks when necessary. While I see one side, that self-driving cars could make us more efficient (for example, you can now do your homework for 2 hours while your car drives you to Vermont), I also see the other side of it: this can have the opposite effect. As human beings, we may get so set on these assisting techniques that we fail to be able to do the easiest of tasks.