



a new generation of cars

google's self-driving car: how does it work and when can we drive one?

Google unveiled a brand new self-driving car prototype; the first company to build a car with no a steering wheel, accelerator or brake pedal.

What is it?

5 It is the first truly driverless electric car prototype built by Google to test the next stage of its five-year-old self-driving car project. It looks like a cross between a Smart car and a Nissan Micra, with two seats and room enough for a small amount of luggage.

What does it do?

10 It ferries two people from one place to another without any user interaction. The car is summoned by a smartphone for pick up at the user's location with the destination set. There is no steering wheel or manual control, simply a start button and a big red emergency stop button. In front of the passengers there is a small screen showing the weather, the current speed and a small countdown animation to launch.

15 Once the journey is done, the small screen displays a message to remind you to take your personal belongings – reinforcing that this is not aiming to be a substitute for your personal car at the moment, but more as a replacement for the taxi without the human driver.

How safe is it?

The new car is the next evolution of Google's self-driving car. While the new frame is untested, the company's previous versions have clocked up over 700,000 miles of testing on public roads, mainly around California, including over 1,000 miles of driving in the most complex situations and cities like 25 San Francisco's hills and busy streets.

The car itself is limited to 25 mph, which restricts it to certain roads, but also minimises the kinetic energy it could carry into a crash if one should happen. The front of the car is also made to be as kind to pedestrians as possible with a foam bumper and a flexible windscreen that is designed to absorb energy 30 from an impact with a person's body.

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1. Introduce the document
2. What is this car?
 - Who built it?
 - Is it their first model?
3. Explain what this car can do.
4. Is it safe?
5. Would you like to test it or even to have one as your principal car?

