

AUTOMOTIVE

## US to lead way in adoption of autonomous cars

January 5, 2018



Startup Aurora tests autonomous services. Image credit: Aurora

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

While consumers are still hesitant to embrace driverless vehicles, the industry's success will lie with autonomous services rather than individual ownership.

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The United States is expected to lead the race in production of autonomous technology deployment and production likely by next year, with Europe and China joining in 2021. Ride-sharing economy and mobility services will be the forces that help driverless vehicles takeoff instead of consumers owning these cars themselves.

"Diversity of choice in personal mobility and autonomous driving technologies are both evolving more quickly than ever, but their convergence will have the greatest impact," said Jeremy Carlson, principal automotive analyst at **IHS Markit**, Los Angeles. "Autonomous mobility services can deliver newfound personal freedom to the young, old, disabled and others without reliable transportation for everyday needs.

"But the benefits don't have to stop there," he said. "Fleet operators in big cities who better understand the lower operational costs of battery electric vehicles are more likely to employ them to drive higher amounts of vehicle and passenger miles traveled."

Driverless adoption

**IHS Markit's autonomous vehicle sales forecast** shows that by the year 2040, driverless car sales will rise from the predicted 51,000 in sales in 2021 to more than 30 million sold.

U.S. companies such as General Motors, who is working on an autonomous service fleet, will be the first on the scene with truly driverless capabilities and consumer adoption. General Motors is among other companies such as Uber and Google's Waymo who are building ride sharing fleets with driverless cars.



Google's driverless car project, Waymo. Image credit: Google

These fleets will get consumers comfortable as passengers in autonomous vehicles through hands-on experiences, which could lead to purchasing individual driverless cars. 2019 could possibly be the year in which these fleets see production, while personal vehicles become available in 2021.

Aurora, a startup built from executives of autonomous divisions at Uber, Tesla and Google, is also looking to build driverless technology for similar reasons such as taxi services and in-car advertising.

China's aggressiveness in technology will help push the autonomous vehicle industry forward, with testing and deployments from the country expected soon.

For instance, Chinese Internet tech giant Baidu recently teamed up with software manufacturer BlackBerry to create self-driving technology and mobility services. While BlackBerry was once known for its smartphone production, it is now focusing on its software, which will be the basis for Baidu's autonomous technology.

Europe's ride-sharing regulations will hinder adoption through fleets and services. But the popularity of technology-focused automobiles will likely foster growth with individual ownership, more so than other regions around the world.

IHS Markit predicts Europe will account for 5.5 million of the autonomous vehicles sold by 2040, while the U.S. will make up 7.4 million units per year and China 14.5 million.

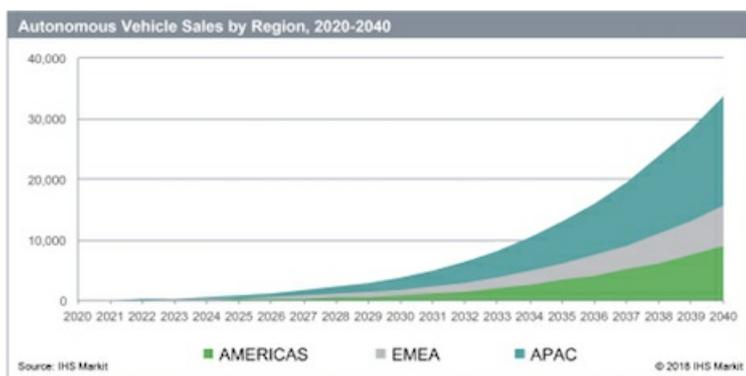


Chart by IHS Markit

Other markets such as Japan, Canada, South Korea and Australia will also join the race by 2022. But other regions across the world will severely lag behind in driverless technology due to regulations and local driving culture and conditions.

#### Brand advancements

Ride-sharing and mobility services might be where driverless vehicles will see their jump forward, but that will not stop automakers from striving to innovate new autonomous services.

For instance, German automaker Mercedes-Benz is anticipating the future shift to autonomous driving with a trip around the world while gaining insights on intelligence technology along the way.

In what the brand called the first-ever automated test drive around the world, Mercedes' "Intelligent World Drive"

visited five continents to learn new technology and innovate driverless tech. A series of video installments documented the travels online, hoping to help with consumer excitement ([see more](#)).

Audi also recently made significant steps forward in keeping up with the race for autonomy with the release of its A8 model.

Revealed at the Audi Summit in Barcelona, Spain on July 11, the Audi A8 has been created as a luxury automobile with significant advancements in driverless piloting. Alongside a new, more natural voice control operating system, drivers will be able to make use of driverless features such as its AI Traffic Jam pilot ([see more](#)).

"The first autonomous vehicle volumes – beyond retrofit test vehicles – will arrive in 2019 through driverless mobility services," said Egil Juliussen, Ph.D. and director of automotive technology research at IHS Markit. "Volumes will surpass 51,000 units in 2021 when personally owned autonomous cars reach individual buyers for the first time, and IHS Markit forecasts estimate nearly 1 million units will be sold in 2025 across shared fleets and individually owned cars."

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