

Spécialité NRC

*The Guardian, Tuesday November 7th 2017*



## Google sibling Waymo launches fully autonomous ride-hailing service

Alphabet's self-driving car firm beats Uber to be first to offer robot taxis without humans behind the wheel to take over in an emergency.

Waymo, formerly known as Google's self-driving car, is launching a fully autonomous Uber-like ride-hailing service\* with no human driver behind the wheel, after testing the 5 vehicles on public roads in Arizona.

Waymo, which is owned by Google parent Alphabet, said members of the public will begin riding in its fleet of modified Fiat Chrysler Pacifica minivans outfitted with self-driving technology in the next few months. Passengers will initially be accompanied in the back seat by a Waymo employee, but will eventually travel alone in the robotic car.

10 "Because we see so much potential in shared mobility, the first way people will get to experience Waymo's fully self-driving technology will be as a driverless service," said Waymo's chief executive John Krafcik as he announced the new service at the Web Summit technology conference in Lisbon.

15 "To have a vehicle on public roads without a person at the wheel, we've built some unique safety features into this minivan. Our system runs thousands of checks on itself every second. With these checks, our systems can instantly diagnose any problems and pull over or come to a safe stop if needed," said Krafcik.

The service marks a major step forward in the development and roll-out of fully autonomous vehicles. While self-driving car companies have routinely tested their vehicles 20 on public roads, they usually have a human sitting behind the wheel ready to take over\* should the autonomous technology fail. (...)

Self-driving vehicle firms say the robot cars have the potential to be safer than human-driven vehicles because there is no risk of drowsiness\*, distraction or drunkenness. 25 Autonomous vehicles also have the potential to restore life to those areas and industries that have suffered from stricter drink-drive laws, such as country pubs and sports clubs, and may help reduce congestion and pollution in urban areas by taking private cars off the road.

*Samuel Gibbs (331 words)*

30

*ride-hailing service (n) = transportation from an unlicensed taxi service like Uber or Lyft*

*take over (v) = take control    drowsiness (n) = sleepiness*