

Google have been tinkering with engines other than the search variety, and have come up with some futuristic results: a car that drives itself. In a post on their official blog, the internet heavyweight say they have developed the technology and been busy testing a fully-automated car that would take the controls out of the hands of distracted drivers, leaving them free to text, eat or apply makeup to their heart's content.



The automated cars use video cameras, radar sensors and a laser range finder to "see" other traffic, as well as detailed maps to navigate the road ahead. The futuristic autos have already been tested on the heavily trafficked California roadways, including highways, bridges and busy city streets. They have even navigated San Francisco's famed Lombard Street, a hilly, winding tourist favorite.

Google's self-driving cars have logged over 140,000 miles (over 225,000 km); all of the test runs have had a driver behind the wheel just in case. The driver can take over as easily as one disengages cruise control. Test drives have also included a trained software operator in the passenger seat to monitor the software. Google believe their self-driving cars might one day cut by half the more than 1 million traffic fatalities suffered each year.