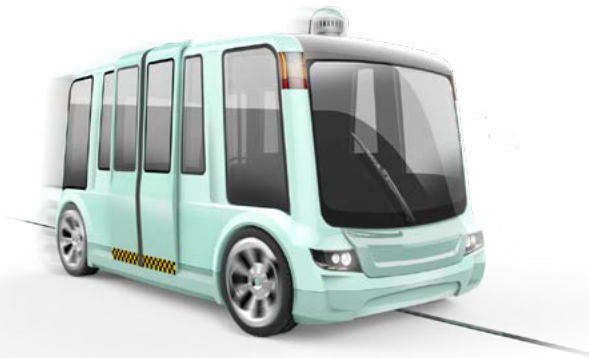


Managing the Assumptions and Expectations of the Public

By Karla Jakeman



Is Karla Jakeman's mum willing to go shopping on a self-driving bus?



When a passenger gets onto the bus and uses their contactless card to pay, certain assumptions are made in that process, the passenger assumes that the bus is roadworthy, that their payment method is secure and the amount they pay is correct. Nobody gets onto a bus and asks to see the relevant tax and insurance documentation. The same goes for a taxi journey; nobody gets into a taxi and before travelling asks the driver to produce their MOT certificate or fare calibration evidence. It's a given that the vehicle is tested and roadworthy.

When it comes to transport, we make these assumptions every day. They are ingrained; we would never think to consider that the bus we are on is at best not fit for purpose, at worse, dangerous or that the taxi company is trying to scam us on the fare.

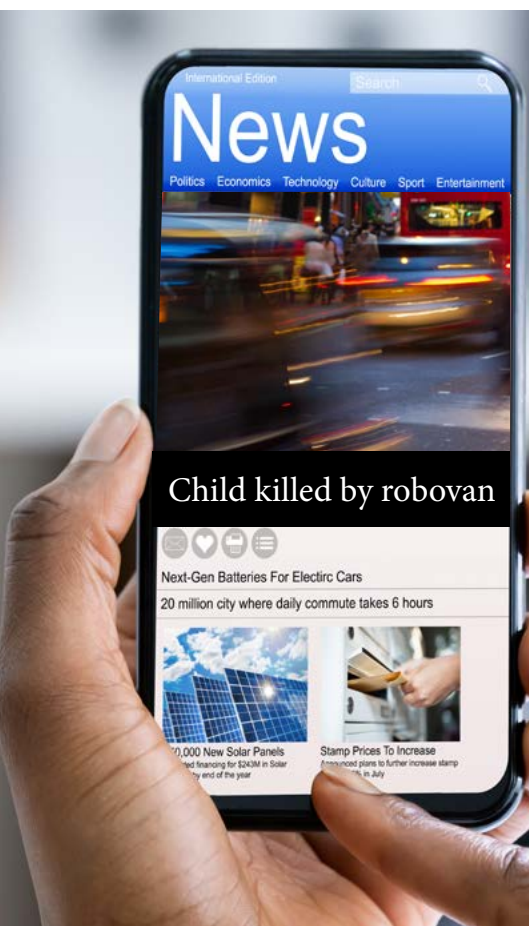
How does that now convert into autonomous vehicles? How does that assumption play out for self-driving vehicles? The public's opinion of self-driving mobility varies depending on demographics and geography but here I will not discuss those aspects and how

certain demographics are more or less likely to choose to take a "robotaxi". I will discuss what the public want and what they assume is already happening as basic considerations especially with regards to the fact that many CAM projects have been funded from the public purse.

Currently for many, driverless cars are still, "a bit Star-Trek" or futuristic. They are currently too ethereal and out of reach from most people who don't have the pleasure of working in the transport world. They don't yet pass what I call "the Grandma Test". Would your

typical Grandma see herself being driven around in a vehicle without a driver? Many people feel it is science fiction. However, as more trials and tests happen in the public domain, and more people see these vehicles about, that future gets ever closer. People start to realise that this might work for them in their personal lifestyle. However, as the prevalence of automated vehicles increases, so do public views (good or bad) and challenges from advocacy groups.

The public have the right and agency to ask questions and the right to know that the technology that they are using in that vehicle has been tested. However, many will also make assumptions such as those mentioned earlier. They will assume the vehicle is safe, fully compliant to “whatever regulations”, roadworthy and legal. They will assume that private information collected, such as where they are travelling to and from, is protected. They will assume that their data such as payment method is secure from hackers. These are basic expectations.



What the public don't want is to have to tick a box on the app to say they have read PAS1881 on safety cases, PAS1882 on data collection or ISO26262 the international functional safety standard for the development of electrical and electronic systems in road vehicles. It is not going too far to say most won't care. They just want to know someone else in authority has done all that for them in a co-ordinated manner. As these vehicles have largely been funded by Government funds, they will also

assume that there has been joined up thinking between Government bodies and manufacturers with regards to the safety cases, privacy and security considerations and that a safety case framework for CAM projects to follow exists which is robust to all future regulatory requirements. When the first person is killed or seriously injured in a collision on UK roads involving a self-driving vehicle – and there WILL be a collision that makes the headlines – how will the Government defend its policy?

We can assume and expect that there will be challenges from the public. Let's be ready.

Karla Jakeman

Head of Automated Transport at TRL

Karla is Head of Automated Transport at TRL. She has over 25 years' experience in the transport industry including connected and automated transport, active travel, ITS, highways, geospatial tech in transport and was formerly a Design Quality Engineer. In line with TRL's mission to create clean and efficient transport that is safe, reliable and accessible for everyone, Karla's focus is a connected and automated transport system which enhances everyone's quality of life, the environment, and the economy.

