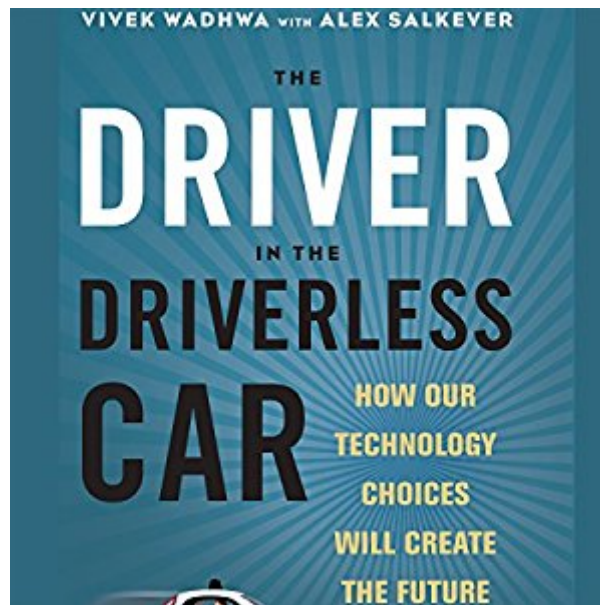




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# The Driver In The Driverless Car: How Our Technology Choices Will Create The Future



## Synopsis

Technology is advancing faster than ever - but for better or for worse? On the one hand, astonishing technological developments from personalized genomics to self-driving cars to drones to artificial intelligence could make our lives healthier, safer, and easier. On the other hand, these very same technologies could raise the specter of a frightening and alienating future - eugenics, a jobless economy, complete loss of privacy, and an ever-worsening spiral of economic inequality. How can we make appropriate decisions about whether and how to adopt new technologies? Vivek Wadhwa and Alex Salkever propose that we ask three questions: Does the technology have the potential to benefit everyone equally? What are the risks and the rewards? Does the technology more strongly promote autonomy or independence? They subject a host of new and potential technologies to these questions, but ultimately it is up to the listener to make the final decision.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A well researched and well written book that will open your mind and expose you to breathtaking technological changes that are rapidly changing our world. Vivek Wadhwa delves into a number of extremely rapid technological advances currently taking place across a wide spectrum - inevitably leading to critically important changes in how we will live our lives and how we will function as a society. Wadhwa balances enthusiasm for a number of thrilling technologies rapidly evolving on our doorstep with thoughtful concerns and cautionary advice. As a serial Bay Area CEO in the tech sector I'm always looking for mind-expanding reading by well-informed and thoughtful authors.

Vivek Wadhwa's 'The Driver in the Driverless Car' is a must-read for anyone who wants to fully understand the rapidly evolving world in which we live.

This is an excellent look at our technologically disrupted future. AI, robotics, autonomous vehicles, smart devices and the like are going to change all our lives - and not always for the better. The future could be a utopian Star Trek or a dystopian Mad Max, says Vivek Wadhwa, a renowned researcher and futurist. It's our choice to make. The book has thought-provoking insights regarding the profound changes coming our way and the future of work. I loved the title itself - it makes you think, and answers the question of what we need to become. For business leaders and policy makers, or even just for parents and people concerned about health issues, this is an excellent introduction to what to expect over the next few years. I gleaned many insights - and some surprises.

A provocative and inspiring look into the future as technology continues to change not only the workplace but the very nature of work itself. Read and take note.

The author does a good job at presenting the beautiful and the ugly of progress and technology advancements. On balance, I am afraid he is still a bit too optimistic, but the book helps to think more carefully about the changes we all are about to experience.

Covers a lot of ground and is interesting and insightful but a tad over zealous. Read at your own risk.

“Not long ago, I was very pessimistic about the future. . . Today, I talk about this being the greatest period in history, when we will solve the grand challenges of humanity and enter an era of enlightenment and exploration such as we saw in my favorite TV series, Star Trek.” Thus begins *The Driver in the Driverless Car: How Our Technology Choices Will Create the Future*, by Vivek Wadhwa and Alex Salkever. An authoritative look at technology’s potential. In this fascinating and authoritative look at the potential of technology, both positive and negative, Wadhwa demonstrates intimate knowledge of the latest developments in such diverse fields as biomedicine, robotics, education, the Internet of Things, and prosthetics. Unlike the unreservedly optimistic scenarios presented by Ray Kurzweil and Peter Diamandis, Wadhwa paints an almost symmetrical portrait of technology’s future,

extolling its promise but vividly describing its potential to harm us. (I previously reviewed *Abundance: The Future Is Better Than You Think* by Diamandis.) Ray Kurzweil famously speaks about the exponential rate at which technology advances. Wadhwa bases his argument on the same formula but reaches different conclusions. “You will see that there is no black and white,” he writes; “the same technologies that can be used for good can be used for evil in a continuum limited only by the choices we make jointly. It’s a cliché to remark on the speed of technological change, but the reality is nonetheless staggering. As Wadhwa notes, “the amount of information buzzing over the Internet is doubling roughly every 1.25 years. . . We are now creating more information content in a single day that we created in decades or even centuries in the pre-digital era.” He adds, “the iPhone 11 or 12 will have greater computing power than our brains do.” Three questions to ask about any new technology

The Driver in the Driverless Car is organized around three broad questions, which Wadhwa poses in connection with each of the technologies he discusses:

1. Does the technology have the potential to benefit everyone equally?
2. What are the risks and the rewards?
3. Does the technology more strongly promote autonomy or dependence?

He is merciless in responding to these questions. Only two of the many technologies treated in this book emerge with unreservedly positive reviews: driverless cars and trucks, and solar power. Everything else comes up short, from the biomedical miracles emerging from laboratories on a daily basis to the Internet of Things. In a great many cases, the new technologies render us susceptible to identity theft or worse. For example, Wadhwa fears the loss of privacy that will come from having all our appliances connected to the Internet and to each other: “I am not looking forward to having my bathroom scale tell my refrigerator not to order any more cheesecake.” A sometimes fantastic vision of the future

Disputing Wadhwa’s sometimes fantastic vision of technology’s future may be a fool’s errand. However, it’s difficult not to remain skeptical about some of his predictions. For example, he envisions 200-mile-per-hour driverless cars guided by a web of sensors on the roadways. Despite the miniscule cost of individual sensors, it’s hard to see where the money might come from to implement such a system. Can you imagine how much it might cost to embed sensors along a 200-mile stretch of highway, much less the full 381 miles from San Francisco to Los Angeles? Similarly, the author envisions a sea change in our transportation system within the foreseeable future, with driverless electric cars available on command everywhere, private vehicles and stop lights eliminated, and parking lots a

thing of the past. Perhaps, eventually, all this might come to pass. But is it realistic to expect that politicians will resist the screaming complaints from auto manufacturers, oil companies, service station and parking lot owners, and individual citizens by the millions? Wadhwa emphasizes throughout *The Driver in the Driverless Car* that only grassroots citizen pressure can force politicians to enact the legislation necessary to permit the widespread use of some of these technologies. For instance, FDA approval may be necessary for the acceptance of many of the biomedical innovations Wadhwa describes. And state governments everywhere will be required to allow driverless vehicles to travel on their roads, a prospect that does not seem imminent. The future Wadhwa envisions may eventually come to pass. But we would be naive to expect no bumps, twists, and turns along the way.

About the author: Vivek Wadhwa has an extraordinary resume. An Indian-born American futurist, he lives in Silicon Valley and researches technology developments there. Wadhwa holds distinguished positions at Carnegie Mellon and Duke and is a globally syndicated columnist for the Washington Post. In 2012, *Foreign Policy* magazine named him one of the world's Top 100 Global Thinkers. Wadhwa calls his co-author, Alex Salkever, V.P. of Marketing Communications at Mozilla, his "writing guru." The two also co-authored *The Immigrant Exodus: Why America Is Losing the Global Race to Capture Entrepreneurial Talent*, which the *Economist* named a Book of the Year in 2012.

Vivek Wadhwa's latest book, *Driver in the Driverless Car: How our Technology Choices will Create the Future*, is an eye-opening commentary on the changes we are confronting today and will continue to face in the decades ahead. This book includes well-researched analysis and conclusions based on a thorough assessment of numerous technology advancements including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Big Data, Internet of Things (IOT), robotics, self-driving vehicles, 3D printers, and drones. Wadhwa is a highly respected and insightful global thought-leader across multiple disciplines. The concepts in this book are not extreme futuristic topics and include many where Wadhwa has personal experience. Wadhwa includes a very pertinent quote from William Gibson who observed back in 1999, "The future is already here; it's just not very evenly distributed." The book highlights both the tremendous opportunities and advantages from emerging technology impacting our healthcare, energy, media, education, retail, commercial, and industrial sectors. The risks and dangers from innovations like AI and genomic research are also addressed throughout the book. Wadhwa reminds us that "the amount of time it

takes for a new technology to achieve mass adoption is shrinking (i.e. Moore's Law). This book helps prepare the reader to deal with the accelerating changes and critical decisions that we are challenged to make during the rest of our lifetime. Bottom line, "Driver in the Driverless Car" is a great book and must read for anyone interested in preparing to make prudent personal and professional decisions that will ultimately have a positive and substantial impact.

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