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# **Starting Up**

Self-driving cars and motorcycles don't have a human driver. What are the benefits of driverless vehicles? What are the dangers or possible problems?

## **Reading Comprehension 1**

Read the article quickly. Which of these statements is true?

- Yamaha has created a start-up in Silicon Valley to develop technology for its self-driving motorcycle.
- Yamaha is planning to use technology developed in Silicon Valley to develop its self-driving motorcycle.
- Yamaha has hired several Silicon Valley engineers to work in Japan developing its self-driving motorcycle.

### Vocabulary 1

Choose the best meanings of the words in **bold**.

b ignoring a using 2 a moving slowly b moving quickly 3 b small compared to a big compared to 4 b standard driver-driven a self-driving

5 b the rider a the computer

a going faster b sideways movements

7 a taken b fired

b grows out of a causes

b possible legal problem a real possibility

# Vocabulary 2 – vehicle synonyms

Match the synonyms. Use your dictionary if necessary.

1 roar ahead a motorcycle

2 b change (of gears) two-wheeler

3 race c accelerate 4

shift d car

four-wheel vehicle e competition INTERMEDIATE

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# Yamaha accelerated push to bring self-driving to motorbikes

Yamaha Motor is aiming to bring self-driving technology to motorcycles by 'tapping into know-how from Silicon Valley, in the midst of its third major attempt to crack the car market.

While the race for automated car driving is 2 roaring ahead, the chief executive of the world's secondlargest motorcycle maker reckons it will take at least a decade to bring the same technology to two-wheelers on a commercial basis.

Yamaha is starting off with modest investments of up to \$20m - a figure <sup>3</sup>dwarfed by the \$1bn planned by Toyota - in Silicon Valley, where it set up a company last summer to hunt for the latest technologies in autonomous vehicles, robotics and drones. In February, it invested \$2m in a US start-up called Veniam for its connected vehicle know-how.

"It's not a sense of crisis, but I want to make sure we stay ahead of the race," chief executive Hiroyuki Yanagi told the Financial Times.

Yamaha's efforts in <sup>4</sup>autonomous vehicles so far have involved a motorcycle-riding humanoid robot called Motobot, which showcased robotics controlling balancing. But Mr Yanagi does not envision a fully driverless motorcycle.

"Our current target is how to assist the rider," he said. "The rider can focus more on safety if the machine handling becomes autonomous and <sup>5</sup>artificial intelligence can be used for course selection."

The closest Yamaha has achieved in terms of rider assistance system is the R1, its latest high-end racing motorcycle, which is installed with sensors and technologies to control 'slides, brakes and other movements.

Yamaha joins hundreds of Japanese companies that have established a presence in Silicon Valley and the surrounding Bay Area. To adapt to a shift towards automation and driverless vehicles, Toyota is spending \$1bn on an institute in Silicon Valley. Japan's largest employment company Recruit Holdings also <sup>7</sup>poached an expert from Google to set up an AI research lab in the area.

But consultants advising Japanese groups say they are often slow in making investment decisions, and many have flooded into Silicon Valley without a clear idea of what kind of technologies they are looking for.

"We're not used to investing in start-ups. That's why we have hired several American professionals in Silicon Valley to find our investment targets," said Mr Yanagi, who spent the early 1990s in Los Angeles exploring early-stage US businesses.

Yamaha's latest push also comes as the company aims to launch a two-seater commuter vehicle in Europe as early as 2019. The entry into four-wheel vehicles \*stems from Mr Yanagi's desire to create new revenueboosting businesses beyond motorcycles and boats.

Previous attempts to enter the car market have failed and analysts have questioned the <sup>9</sup>feasibility of making an expensive bet during a time of slowing demand in emerging markets for motorcycles.

"To be honest, it's taking longer than what we had originally anticipated in terms of technology and the feasibility of the business," Mr Yanagi said when asked about progress on car development. "We're going to take time with this business."

Masahiro Akita, analyst at Credit Suisse, said Yamaha's ability to invest in new businesses will probably be restricted as the business environment darkens with the yen's appreciation. Every \(\frac{1}{2}\)1 rise against the US dollar wipes ¥1.4bn off Yamaha's operating profit.

"Yamaha cannot be a big spender at the moment," he said, questioning the ¥10bn (\$89m) in growth strategy costs the company has set aside for the new fiscal year starting in April.



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Reading Comprehension 2		
Cho 1	ose the correct words to complete the senter Yamaha to break into the car market. a has never tried c has tried twice before	b has no plans
2	Yamaha says that a self-driving motorcy a it will take at least ten years for c it won't take very long for	cle to become widely available. b it doesn't expect
3	Toyota is investing Yamaha in autonom a far less than c a lot more than	ous vehicles. b about the same amount as
4	Motobot is a a tiny on-board computer c a highly skilled professional rider	b a robot rider than looks like a human
5	Yamaha's goal is to create and sell motorcy a have no rider c have a remote control	cles that b help the rider
6	There are Japanese companies doing was a dozen or so c hundreds of	vork in Silicon Valley. b only two
7	At the moment, there is growth in the man a slow c incredibly fast	otorcycle market. b absolutely no
8	The financial side of Yamaha's autonomous a international tax law c investor approval	vehicle development is strongly affected by b currency exchange rates
Gra	ammar – Verb tense revision	
Curi (try) Yam deve at le \$20	to break into the car market – something the naha <sup>4</sup> (have) enginee elop appropriate computer technology for the east ten years for the product is ready for mar	elop) a riderless motorcycle and also <sup>2</sup>
Further discussion		

Consultants advising Japanese groups say Japanese companies are often slow in making investment decisions, and many have flooded into Silicon Valley without a clear idea of what kind of technologies they are looking for. If you were advising Yamaha on how to develop its riderless-motorcycle technology, what would you recommend?

#### **MARKET LEADER Premier Website Lessons**

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## **Group work**

Work together to answer these questions.

- Hiroyuki Yanagi says, "It's not a sense of crisis, but I want to make sure we stay ahead of the race." What do you think would cause Mr Yanagi to have a sense of crisis?
- 2 Mr Yanagi says, "We're not used to investing in start-ups. That's why we have hired several American professionals in Silicon Valley to find our investment targets." What is the difference between the way an established company such as Yamaha does business and the way a start-up does business?
- 3 Mr Yanagi also says, "To be honest, it's taking longer than what we had originally anticipated in terms of technology and the feasibility of the business." What's necessary for a new area of business to be feasible?

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#### **KEY**

## **Reading Comprehension 1**

Yamaha is planning to use technology developed in Silicon Valley to develop its self-driving motorcycle.

# Vocabulary 1

- а
- 2 b
- 3 b
- 4 а
- 5 а
- 6 b
- а
- 8 b
- 9

# Vocabulary 2

- С
- 2 а
- 3 е
- 4 b
- 5

## Reading Comprehension 2

- С
- 2 а
- 3 С
- 4 h
- 5 а
- 6 С 7 а
- 8 h

## Grammar

- is developing
- 2 is trying
- 3 has attempted
- 4 has
- 5 are working
- 6 will be
- 7 has invested
- 8 says

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