Neal Sidhwaney - Comments

First off, I'd like to thank everyone at the NHTSA for spearheading efforts like this one, for taking on the gargantuan effort of implementing data collection through real-world usage, and for being open to comments and perspective from the general public, all in the name of making our highway infrastructure safer. We are truly better off because of it.

I'd like to suggest that, in addition to instrumented vehicles for data collection, the latest in virtual reality technology be leveraged for such efforts. The hardware is invisible and small enough to be embedded in traditional eyewear such as contact lenses and eyeglasses. The cost effectiveness of such a solution compared to instrumenting cars is much higher, provides a much greater level of detail & insight into drivers' attention, and also broadens and generalizes to many different models/types of vehicles.

As an technology entrepreneur with 15 years' experience I am eager to explore the various uses such technology could have in autonomous vehicle development with an eye towards commercialization. There are two primary avenues I think are worth exploring. One is that with such technology opted in for use by a driver, many tests could be performed while the driver is on the road to increase the scenarios for which we have training data available. One argument against this is that we are turning the nation's highways (and unsuspecting traffic) into a testbed for a company's own self driving efforts. However, the data ultimately serves to improve self driving car safety. It is extremely important, to encourage private innovation in developing autonomous technology, that no public renumeration be expected for running tests in the midst of normal day-to-day driving of the general population, even with increased traffic and safety risks, since the benefit of an entrepreneur's self-driving vision being delivered on will be felt by all.

The second avenue (of many; I am sure more will become apparent as the technology matures) also involves how to spur private investment and innovation into advancing the technology. One such opportunity is the extra time of users attention now available, combined with the virtual reality technology. In advertising world, even a small period of focussing on a brand name (such as on another car on the road), picture identifiable with a brand, or product can count as an monetizable "impression". For a company entrenched in both advertising and autonomous vehicle technologies, the possibilities are limitless.

Thank you for listening and being open the public viewpoint on this matter, as well as encouraging private investment by being open to alternative means of monetization.