SAFETY NEWS REGULATIONS

Academics want driverless taxis redesigned to put you off having sex in them

One taxi firm has said passengers could be banned for having sex in its driverless cars, while academics want vehicle design to discourage it without sacrificing passenger dignity.

BY
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The rise of driverless taxis and buses has some researchers worried about sex on board. Now an academic group has said that design challenges posed by sex in these vehicles are “insufficiently addressed” by safety and policy frameworks.

On September 20 a workshop titled Love In Traffic: Physical and Digital Design Against Consensual Sexual Activity Inside Public and Shared Automated Vehicles took place at Gothenburg University. Academics organizing the event looked at why some people think it’s OK to bang in

driverless taxis. Meanwhile, one taxi firm has said that customers doing so could be banned.

The academics included those from the UK's University of Warwick and Loughborough University. In a paper previewing the workshop they suggested that safety and policy frameworks hadn't moved quickly enough.

In the US driverless taxis are available in at least 14 major cities. Companies such as Tesla, Zoox and Waymo provide them. The academics said sex on public transport was "particularly concerning" when it came to driverless vehicles.

They wrote: "As public and shared AVs [automated vehicles] combine enclosure, simultaneous use, and autonomy, they raise design challenges that remain insufficiently addressed by existing safety and policy frameworks, particularly regarding how the physical and digital design of these environments ... shapes affordances, norm interpretation, and bystander experience when sexual activity occurs."

Indeed, there is ambiguity around the legality and morals of sex in driverless taxis. It could be argued that when they are being hired they are enclosed, private spaces. It could also be argued that they operate in public spaces and their interiors are not completely concealed from public view.

Most driverless taxi companies have rules and guidelines about user behavior, and some have interior cameras, raising privacy issues. There's also the serious issue of hygiene in a vehicle being used by many customers, over time.

Waymo told The Times of its driverless taxis: "The in-vehicle cameras are not

being actively monitored but they are available to remote operation support as needed... it's part of the role of remote operations, the depot personnel, to make sure that our terms of service are followed and the vehicles themselves are ready and acceptable for passengers as they expect."

The academics behind the workshop checked out Pornhub to see how popular public transport porn content was. They found that a search in January 2026 for "public transport" in the amateur porn content section threw up 297 results.

"Evidence from adult content platforms suggests that consensual sexual activity inside public transport is trending," they wrote. "The circulation of such content may contribute to the normalization of sexual activity in public transport settings and encourage imitation."

They added that the lack of a human driver could give driverless taxi users a feeling of privacy, even if there may be cameras trained on them.

The academics wrote: "Enclosure, shared use, and the absence of an authority figure can warp perceptions of accountability and intervention potential, with important consequences for passenger comfort and perceived safety and for public acceptance of the technology."

With driverless taxi companies looking to expand in other major cities around the world, don't be too surprised if this issue becomes even more prominent.

The academics said that their workshop would "explore design concepts that discourage sexual activity while enabling effective but proportionate interventions that preserve passenger comfort and dignity".

Sadly, we're yet to hear if they come up with any radical solutions.

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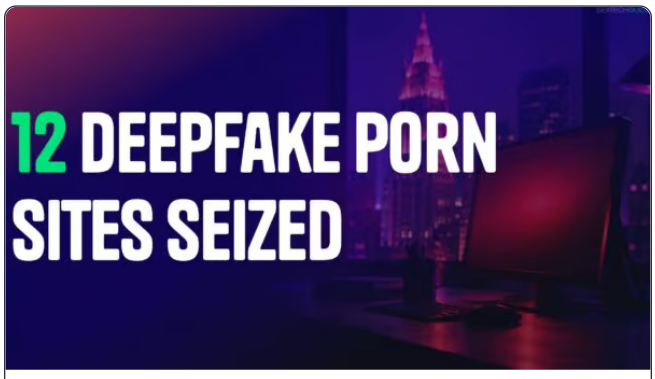
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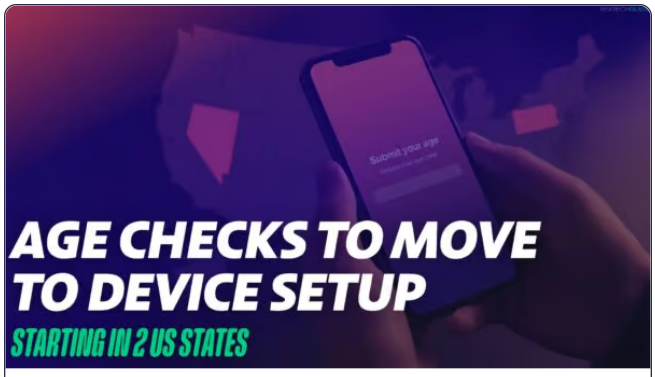
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