

## New Year, New Tech TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR

2026 is off and running, with new technologies transforming the automotive industry and the driver experience. Below, we've listed a few of the exciting and concerning advancements—along with some existing tech—that continue to shape the role our vehicles' play in our lives.

### Game-Changing New Developments

1.

#### In-Car Payment Systems

**Convenience is king**, and in-car payment systems that integrate payment features into a vehicle's infotainment system make it ultra-easy to make contact-less payments for goods and services. Enabled with internet connectivity and digital wallets, these systems use secure authentication and data encryption to allow you to pay for all sorts of things on the go:

- Parking
- Fuel
- EV charging
- Tolls
- Food at drive-thru eateries

**No more shuffling** through your car's central console for cash, digging out your credit or debit card, or even logging into a phone app to get what you want.

**Realize, however, some potential drawbacks exist.**

At the expense of convenience come increased data security risks and the potential for

making budget-busting impulse purchases.

2.

#### Tighter Cybersecurity

**More peace of mind?** Yes, please! With cybercrime striking in pandemic proportions, automotive cybersecurity standards and regulations have gotten stricter to help prevent attacks on software and digitally connected mobile systems. Companies in the United States and abroad have strengthened their internal protocols; third-party audits have become more intensive; and suppliers have prioritized security checks to mitigate the risks of data breaches, ransomware, and remote system hijacking.

**The heightened scrutiny may not be all good, though.**

Some experts warn that it could lead to higher costs for consumers and repair challenges if manufacturers' operating systems lock out independent repair shops from accessing diagnostics and other functions.

3.

#### Services on a Subscription Basis

**Enter the reimagining of car ownership** and access to value-added features! A mindset shift from "owning" to "using" is emerging, primarily among younger generations and urban drivers who want access to a car without the headaches of ownership.

**Subscription models** that bundle vehicle use with maintenance and insurance offer convenience, no-surprise billing, and the flexibility to switch cars more often. Car manufacturers also offer subscriptions that grant access to specific features, such as self-driving software, remote start, climate control, acceleration boost, and enhanced navigation.

**While paying for new, value-added features via a subscription might seem a sweet deal,** car buyers might feel taken

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## Things you never knew about SNOW!

- **Snow Isn't Actually White -**  
Individual snow crystals are translucent, but when billions of them pile up, light scatters off the tiny surfaces and edges, creating the white appearance we're used to.
- **Snow Can Also Be Pink, Orange, Yellow, or Green -**  
While technically colorless, snow may contain dust or algae that give it different colors. Orange snow(Siberia in 2007) and pink snow/watermelon snow (Krasnodar, Russia in 2010).
- **Fear of Snow Is Real**  
It's called "chionophobia," which comes from chion, the Greek word for snow. What's so scary? Imagine being caught in an avalanche or buried under snow!
- **Snow Helps the Garden-**  
Snow provides needed moisture as well as nutrients. Nitrogen attaches to snowflakes as the snow falls through the atmosphere.
- **A Snowstorm Can Hold Tremendous Energy**  
One major snowstorm can drop 39 million tons of snow—roughly the energy equivalent of 120 atomic bombs

SOURCE:  
<https://www.almanac.com/cool-facts-about-snow-surprising-things-you-never-knew>

## 6 Tips for Preventing a Stalker from Tracking Your Vehicle

It's a terrifying ordeal no one should have to encounter, but sadly, stalking cases happen. Here are a few simple tips to help you prevent stalkers from using your vehicle to track you and your family.

1. If you think someone suspicious was around your car, check it inside and out for tracking devices or other unknown hardware.
2. Keep your vehicle software up to date to ensure it has the latest security patches and protocols.
3. Use your smartphone's navigation app—such as Google Maps, Apple Maps, or Waze—rather than your car's built-in GPS.
4. Regularly check which devices have remote access to your vehicle and remove any you do not recognize or have control over.
5. Avoid parking in poorly lit or desolate areas.
6. Whenever possible, don't drive alone.



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advantage of if car makers charge them on a recurring basis to unlock standard amenities (like heated seats) already built into their vehicles.

### 4. Software-Defined Vehicles

As manufacturers integrate cloud-based software to control nearly every aspect of a car's operation and features, vehicles are evolving into devices akin to smartphones on wheels.

#### Some positive implications for drivers:

- Reduces the need to bring vehicles to the shop, as some upgrades and recalls can be addressed remotely.
- Allows for faster turnaround on installing performance enhancements and cybersecurity updates.
- Enables earlier detection of potential issues and maintenance needs through 24/7 real-time diagnostics.

On the flip side, not all automotive shops have mechanics trained in a variety of software systems, nor the diagnostic tools necessary to troubleshoot

when vehicles with advanced technology encounter issues that can't be resolved by pushing an update or patch.

### 5. Unprecedented Personalization

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning will continue to impact all facets of our lives—including our vehicles. New cars and trucks equipped with AI-assisted driving support can "learn" a driver's habits and recognize and assess surroundings to recommend and adjust settings to better ensure safety and comfort.

#### For example:

- Seat height, music selection, inside temperature, and other settings tailored to your preferences.
- Route suggestions based on traffic or weather conditions.
- Superior speech recognition and contextual response abilities, so you can ask questions and give commands as you would if talking to a real person.

Rather than replace human drivers, AI-assisted driving systems interact with them, empowering them by predicting

their actions, providing real-time guidance, and responding to their requests.

Be aware of the potential disadvantages as well. AI can boost efficiency and safety, but it increases data privacy and cybersecurity risks, distracted driving, complicated system malfunctions, and complex liability concerns. Responsible implementation and stricter regulations are needed to lessen the incidence and impact of those challenges.

### Old-School Automotive Technologies Still in Style

It's easy to get caught up in the "shiny new object" excitement of new tech, but let's also pay respect to some time-tested features and functions that continue to make our time on the road safe and enjoyable:

- Hydraulic braking systems
- Mechanical all-wheel drive systems
- Physical controls and buttons
- Manual transmissions

If you have questions about or issues with the new or old tech in your vehicle, we're here to help!

#### Sources:

<https://customer.motonovofinance.com/news/article/driving-in-2026-what-tech-is-coming-to-your-car-sooner-than-you-think>  
<https://www.startus-insights.com/innovators-guide/emerging-connected-vehicle-trends/#Cybersecurity>  
<https://www.market-xcel.com/us/blogs/top-automotive-trends-usa>



## Recipe from Kurt Roberts

This is a good use for any small pieces of salmon you have as leftovers or the end of a bag of frozen salmon fillets. If you're using leftover cooked salmon, you can just combine steps 2 and 3.

Sometimes I'll throw in a cup of frozen peas for variety.

### Ingredients:

- 8-10 Ounces of Salmon - trimmings work well here
- 1 Container of Cherry Tomatoes (16oz)
- 1 Onion, chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced
- 1/2 c Dry White Wine
- A large handful of fresh basil leaves, julienned (or torn if you're not feeling fancy) and divided in half
- 1 tsp Crushed Red Pepper Flakes
- 1 tbsp Dried Oregano or a handful of fresh leaves
- 1/4 c Cream
- 1 Box Angel Hair Pasta
- Salt and Pepper

### Directions:

1. In a large pan with a lid, cook the onion over medium heat in olive oil.
2. As the onion starts to soften, add the garlic, pepper flakes, oregano and the salmon. Break the salmon up as it cooks so that it will spread through the sauce.
3. After the salmon is cooked, add the cherry tomatoes and deglaze with the wine. Cover the pan with the lid and let the tomatoes burst, stirring occasionally. You can help them along by pressing on them with your spoon. Somewhere in this process you'll want to cook the pasta according to the box directions.
4. As the tomatoes burst and release their juices, reduce to low heat and add half the basil. Stir the cream in, and heat until warm. Salt and pepper to taste.
5. Serve over the pasta and garnish with the other half the basil.

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