

Delivery without drivers: Domino's, Ford team up for test

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This photo shows the specially designed delivery car that Ford Motor Co. and Domino's Pizza will use to test self-driving pizza deliveries. The car can drive itself, but it will have a backup driver. It lets customers tap in a code and retrieve their pizza from a warming space in the back seat. Photo from: AP Photo/Dee-Ann Durbin.

Imagine ordering a pizza. When it arrives, you get a text message. Waiting for you outside is the delivery car — with no one in the driver's seat!

The pizza chain Domino's and the automaker Ford are teaming up to deliver pizzas. They are using autonomous cars. These cars are steered by a computer. They don't need a driver. But that could cause some problems, too. The two companies want to see if customers will warm up to the idea.

The experiment will take place in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Starting Wednesday, some pizzas will arrive in a self-driving Ford Fusion. The car will come with radars and a camera used for testing. A Ford engineer will be at the wheel. The front windows will be darkened, though, so customers won't try to talk to the driver.

End Of Door-To-Door Delivery?

Normally, a delivery person would show up on the customer's doorstep with their order. Things will be different with the driverless cars. The car will drive up to the customer's home. To claim their pizza, the customer will have to walk outside to the car. They will also need to type a password into a keypad mounted on the car. That will open the car's rear window. In the back of the car will be a warm pizza-holding compartment. Customers can reach in and grab their order. The compartment can carry four pizzas at a time, Domino's Pizza, Inc. said.

Russell Weiner is the head of Domino's. He said the experiment will help Domino's understand how customers will deal with the change.

Will people want the car to wait in their driveway or by the sidewalk? Will they understand how to use the keypad? Will they come outside if it's raining or snowing? Will they damage the car by accident or break its expensive cameras? There are all kinds of questions. Weiner wants to find the answers.

Domino's delivers 1 billion pizzas worldwide each year. To keep that up, it needs to keep coming up with new ideas, Weiner said. The test will last six weeks. Then Domino's and Ford will decide what to do next. Domino's is also trying out other ways of sending out pizzas. They have delivered a few of them with a kind of flying robot called a drone.

Weiner said Domino's has 100,000 drivers in the United States. That's enough to form a whole city full of pizza deliverers. If driverless cars take over, he said, Domino's might give them something else to do.

Computer-Driven Car By 2021

Ford Motor Co. doesn't have a totally computer-driven car yet. It has said it wants to finish building one by 2021. First, though, it needs to know what companies would want to use the cars for. Other driverless car companies think delivering food might be a good start. Truck company Otto is one example. Last fall, one of its self-driving trucks delivered 50,000 cans of beer.

Domino's test Ford has a special black-and-white paint job. Sadly, not everyone who orders pizza will get to see it. A few Ann Arbor customers will be picked at random for the experiment. As the car rolls up, they will get a text message with instructions. Then it will be time to snag their food.

Quiz

- 1 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-3].
Select the paragraph from the section that explains how the driverless car test will be conducted.
- 2 Which sentence from the section "End Of Door-To-Door Delivery?" MOST CLEARLY shows that Domino's is responding to a specific worry about driverless cars?
- (A) To keep that up, it needs to keep coming up with new ideas, Weiner said.
 - (B) Domino's is also trying out other ways of sending out pizzas.
 - (C) They have delivered a few of them with a kind of flying robot called a drone.
 - (D) If driverless cars take over, he said, Domino's might give them something else to do.
- 3 Select the sentence that BEST summarizes the article.
- (A) Domino's and Ford are teaming up to test out driverless pizza delivery.
 - (B) Domino's and Ford are teaming up to begin replacing pizza delivery drivers.
 - (C) Domino's and Ford are teaming up to create driverless cars.
 - (D) Domino's and Ford are teaming up to start a food delivering company.
- 4 Read the following paragraph from the section "End Of Door-To-Door Delivery?"

Will people want the car to wait in their driveway or by the sidewalk? Will they understand how to use the keypad? Will they come outside if it's raining or snowing? Will they damage the car by accident or break its expensive cameras? There are all kinds of questions. Weiner wants to find the answers.

How does the information in the paragraph support the MAIN idea of the article?

- (A) by illustrating the biggest problems with driverless pizza delivery
- (B) by explaining how Domino's will study each of the concerns about driverless delivery
- (C) by describing the concerns that Domino's hopes to study during the driverless delivery test
- (D) by arguing that a six-week test is the best way to study the concerns about driverless delivery