

Abstract

Since the creation of what would become the semi-truck in 1898 by Alexander Winton, the transportation industry has evolved in many ways. The concept of the semi-truck has changed over the years from being a simple hauling machine that could only haul a single car at a time, to a powerhouse of a vehicle that can haul upwards of 80,000 pounds. Ever-changing infrastructure and roadways in addition to the ever-growing need for the transportation of consumer and commercial goods helped give way to the semi-trucks that travel the highways of the world today. The innovations of the future do not come without a price though. Every year in the United States roughly 4,000 people are killed as the result of a crash involving a large truck, roughly 115,000 people are injured in similar crashes, and billions of dollars are paid out in legal settlement. The artificial automation of transportation vehicles seeks to lessen and even eliminate the injury and death that occur every year while also saving logistics companies money on legal fees, wages, and fuel. The research collected in this thesis explores the history of the semi-truck from its inception to today and discusses the impact that artificial intelligence in the realm of self-driving vehicles imposes on the transportation industry.

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