

**Analyze the benefits and potential drawbacks that technologies, such as driver-assistance systems, hands-free capabilities and smartphone apps, can have on safe driving habits. (max 500 words)**

“All rise,” a booming voice declares as a black-robed individual walks into the courtroom. After everyone takes a seat, the judge takes a long look around the courtroom, wincing as he thinks of what is to come. The defendant, a mere 17 year old girl, sits shivering in her seat, still replaying the events of the week before in her head. Over and over she relives that gut-wrenching fear as she looks up from her phone to see her self-driving car barreling towards the minivan, red light pleading with the autopilot to stop, but it never did. In a perfect world, these kinds of accidents never happen due to technological malfunctions, but we do not live in a perfect world. While driving aid technologies such as hands-free capabilities may assist others who were not previously able to drive and make driving easier for those who have been able to drive, they ultimately increase our already-problematic dependency on technology, causing people to lose focus on the road and become utterly useless when things go wrong.

Learning to drive is one of the most exciting things a teenager can do as driving goes from being something only adults are allowed to do to a real action they get to take part in. However, driving has become more and more complicated over the years, and with new innovations, engineering, and technologies, driving a vehicle has the potential to be the most dangerous thing a human can do in their everyday life. Luckily, the same technologies that make a car faster can also make a car safer. Safety features like lane-departure warnings, automatic braking, and adaptive cruise control make the road an overall safer place to be by alerting drivers when something is wrong. Technologies found in the form of GPS also makes navigation easier, ensuring drivers no longer have to handle navigation when driving to an unknown location.

However, the more readily available technologies become, the more dependent we can become to them. If one is learning to drive a car with all kinds of technological features, it is very easy to become utterly lost when driving a car without these features, and driving abilities can fall. For example, I specifically remember having to focus way more when driving after I turned off the lane departure warning on my car, as I had grown used to the warning, and that is a very small change. What happens if warning systems fail, cameras glitch out, and self-driving computers cannot handle the weather? Once these self-driving technologies are perfected, they will be of much help on the road, but as of right now, there are simply too many variables to completely rely on car technologies to aid us in the future.