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Autonomous Akin



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Our newsletter reflects the focus of Akin’s cross-practice autonomous systems and advanced mobility team on developments in the regulatory, policy, trade, intellectual property, and cybersecurity and privacy spaces. Autonomous Akin brings you the latest news and developments so that you can keep a pulse on what is happening in government and industry that is impactful for your business. For our new readers, you can subscribe to future issues of this newsletter [here](#). Thank you!

In This Issue

- [Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\)](#)
- [Advanced Air Mobility](#)
- [Technology, Environment and Legislation](#)
- [Autonomy & Electric Vehicles](#)
- [Akin Thought Leadership](#)
- [Events](#)

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

Walmart, Alphabet to Test Six-Mile Drone Deliveries - *Bloomberg*

Walmart Inc. is planning its longest drone deliveries yet by teaming up with Alphabet Inc.’s Wing unit at two Dallas-area stores. The Wing drones will be able to drop off food and household essentials as far as six miles from the stores, Prathibha Rajashekhar, senior vice president of innovation and automation at Walmart’s US unit, said in a statement Thursday.

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FAA Updates Fact Sheet on State and Local Drone Regulations - *Drone Life*

Since before the passage of Part 107 in 2016, regularizing commercial drone use in the United States, state and local laws - sometimes in conflict with FAA regulations - have developed. This issue is sometimes discussed as Drone Federalism, such as the failed “Drone Federalism Act of 2017,” or as FAA Preemption, which is the concept that the FAA rules the airspace from the ground up. Former FAA Administrator Michael Huerta warned against the proliferation of state and local drone laws, saying that a “patchwork quilt” of regulations across the U.S. would only create confusion, limiting the commercial industry and not enhancing safety.

[Read the Article](#)

Studying Climate Change with an Ice Radar Drone - *IEEE Spectrum*

I’m standing on top of 100 meters of ice, watching a drone crisscross the Slakbreen glacier on Norway’s Svalbard archipelago, more than 600 kilometers north of the mainland. I’m part of a team testing Peregrine—a fixed-wing unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) equipped with miniaturized ice-penetrating radar, which can image the glacial ice all the way down to the bedrock below. It’s -27 °C, dipping below -40 °C with wind chill—well below the operating temperature of most of the commercial equipment we brought for this expedition.

[Read the Article](#)

Drugs by Drone: OhioHealth to Deliver Prescriptions to Patients’ Homes Via Drones - *The Columbus Dispatch*

Your prescription from OhioHealth may arrive by drone one day. The operator of hospitals including Grant Medical Center and Riverside Methodist Hospital has struck a partnership with drone company Zipline that will allow OhioHealth to deliver prescriptions directly to patients' homes and move lab samples and supplies between OhioHealth facilities.

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VERSES Completes EU Funded Autonomous Drone Governance Program - *Insider*

VERSES AI Inc., a cognitive computing company specializing in the next generation of artificial intelligence, today announced the successful completion of Flying Forward 2020 (FF2020). The three-year project that began in November 2020 was funded by the European Union to test the viability of autonomous drones across five European cities. The final two trial cities, Oulu, Finland and Tartu, Estonia, join the three other sites - Eindhoven, Netherlands, Milan, Italy, and Zaragoza, Spain - in demonstrating essential digital infrastructure for governing autonomous drones.

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More Powerful, Durable Fuel Cells Pave Way for Future Drones, Urban Aerial Vehicles: KIST - *The Korea Times*

Researchers at the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) have developed a new way to make fuel cells that can generate 40 percent more power than conventional cells of the same size, making them ideal for drones and urban aerial vehicles, they said Thursday. Fuel cells are a clean source of electricity. They generate electricity through an electrochemical reaction of hydrogen with oxygen, creating heat and water as by-products.

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Boom Wants Supersonic Plane Travel for Everyone—But Can It Deliver? - *CNN*

There's no shortage of ambition in commercial aviation — we wouldn't have heavier-than-air flight without dreamers, after all — but Boom Supersonic is in its own category when it comes to setting the bar high. The Colorado-based company aims to reintroduce commercial supersonic flight, which has been on hiatus since Concorde was retired in 2003. But unlike Concorde, an elitist engineering marvel that only a handful of airlines ever operated, Boom hopes its supersonic aircraft — called Overture — will democratize this type of travel, making it accessible to the masses.

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How the U.S. and EU are Tackling Airline Emissions Differently - *Forbes*

Air travel is seeing an upswing, with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecasting 4.35 billion global passengers carried this year alone. This resurgence, however, presents an ironic twist. As air travel soars, so does the urgency to reduce emissions—not just in airlines but also airports. Two global powerhouses, the U.S. and European Union (EU), are navigating this challenge, but their compasses point in very different directions.

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See inside a revolutionary flying car that will cost \$789,000 and just started test flights - *Business Insider*

Flying cars may be closer to reality than you think. Northern California-based startup Aska is trying to finally deliver what humans have been dreaming about for decades: A car that can drive on the road and then, with the flip of a switch, take off into the sky, "Back to the Future" style. It's the second flying car startup to get FAA certification this year, after Alef Aeronautics.

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Technology, Environment and Legislation

California Privacy Regulator's First Case: Probing Internet-Connected Cars -

Washington Post

California's newly empowered privacy regulators announced their first case Monday, a probe of the data practices of newer-generation cars that are often or always connected to the internet. The California Privacy Protection Agency said its enforcement division would review manufacturer's treatment of data collected from vehicles, including locations, smartphone connections and images from cameras.

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Carmakers are Playing Catch-Up with Tesla on Air Filtration - *Bloomberg*

The checklist for a safe car trip in the era of climate change goes a little something like this: four-wheel drive to handle more intense rainfall, two-way charging to withstand a blackout, and seatbelts all around because EVs are dangerously heavy. Drivers dealing with wildfire smoke might add one more accessory to the lineup: five small air filters taped to a box fan.

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AI defeats human drone-racing champions in historic world first - *Independent*

An artificial intelligence system has achieved a key milestone by winning multiple races against three world-class drone-racing champions, marking the first time AI has beat humans at a physical sport.

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Automakers Try to Dodge Their EV Commitments - *NRDC*

Automakers are trying to have it both ways. If you have seen any car commercials or paid attention to automakers' public pronouncements in recent years, it sure sounds like they are all in on electric vehicles (EVs). However, contrary to their public commitments and snazzy commercials, automakers are trying to head off new federal standards that could bring about the transition to EVs that they are claiming to support.

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Elevating Aerospace: Sustainability, Automation, and Simulation - *Aviation Today*

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has published multiple roadmaps outlining how the industry can achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. One roadmap details the development of more efficient aircraft that operate using sustainable aviation fuel, hydrogen, or batteries. IATA also recommends strategies for reducing the emissions of existing aircraft. Aviation companies now have to balance expensive and time-intensive development of new flight technologies in addition to maintaining operations with record air travel demand.

Autonomy and Electric Vehicles



California Regulators Vote to Expand Robotaxis in San Francisco - *Time*

California regulators voted in favor of robotaxi operators expanding their paid driverless services in the city of San Francisco, a major milestone toward commercializing the technology. The state's Public Utilities Commission voted 3 to 1 to allow General Motors Co.'s Cruise LLC and Alphabet Inc.'s Waymo to increase the areas of the city where they can operate a car without a safety driver, and charge riders a fare for it.

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Waymo is Scaling Back its Self-Driving Truck Ambitions - *The Verge*

Waymo is pausing its efforts to develop autonomous truck technology to refocus on ridehailing services instead. The Alphabet-owned company announced today that it will "push back" the timeline on its commercial and operational efforts for trucking and will also be scaling back development in the unit. A small number of employees were laid off as a result of the decision.

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GM Will Add Backup Power Function to Its Electric Vehicles - *The Seattle Times*

General Motors said Tuesday that it planned to equip all of its electric cars and trucks with the ability to act as backup power supplies during blackouts. The decision to install two-way charging technology in Chevrolet, Cadillac and GMC electric cars and trucks, enabling them to power homes in an emergency, shows how carmakers are marketing the vehicles as being not just cleaner than their gasoline counterparts, but also more practical.

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Chinese Maker of 1,000 Kilometer EV Battery Plans IPO by 2025 - *Bloomberg*

A Chinese maker of long-range electric vehicle batteries — including one capable of going 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) on a charge — plans to go public as soon as 2025 as it banks on automakers embracing next-generation cells in the race to overcome range anxiety. Beijing WeLion New Energy Technology Co., which supplies the long-range semi-solid state cell to Chinese EV upstart Nio Inc., is targeting a 20-fold surge in revenue to 10 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion) by 2025 to fuel its aspirations, founder Li Hong said in a recent interview.

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Tesla faces more questions from feds on Autopilot safety - Reuters

The U.S. auto safety regulator investigating Tesla's Autopilot driver assistance system is demanding an explanation for a software change that allows drivers to keep their hands off the wheel for longer, risking collisions, documents released on Tuesday showed. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) ordered Tesla to answer questions about the Autopilot change and produce documents in a so-called special order dated July 26. The NHTSA order did not compel Tesla to recall vehicles.

[Read the Article](#)

Autonomous cars may have a person detection bias problem with complexions - Biometric Update

Makers of self-driving cars have for years been fending off criticism about safety. Now, they may have to defend themselves against charges of AI bias. A team of researchers from King's College London and Peking University examined eight deep-learning pedestrian detectors used for research on driverless cars using four widely studied testing datasets. Their results show significant fairness issues related to skin tone and age.

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Akin Thought Leadership



[CPPA Takes Aim at Connected Cars in First-Ever Review](#) (August 23, 2023)

[Autonomous Akin Update - August 2023](#) (August 11, 2023)

[Congress Takes a Step Forward on Outbound Investment](#) (July 27, 2023)

[Autonomous Akin Update - July 2023](#) (July 6, 2023)

[Akin's Mid-Year TMT Report Provides Important Updates on Regulatory and Policy Developments for TMT Leaders](#) (May 25, 2023)

[Autonomous Akin Update - May 2023](#) (May 11, 2023)

[Autonomous Systems & Advanced Mobility: 2023 Trends & Predictions](#) (May 5, 2023)

[Kayo Sustainable Infrastructure Webinar Recording](#) - Passcode: Fm%X07T (April 19, 2023)

Events



[Women and Drones: 7th Annual Global Awards](#)

October 25, 2023

Washington, D.C.

The UAS/AAM community will come together to celebrate the preeminent women in business, government and education.

Questions?

If you have any questions please contact your regular Akin lawyer or advisors or:



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