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THE END OF OBSOLESCENCE: WHY YOUR 2030 CAR WILL BE BETTER THREE YEARS AFTER YOU BUY IT

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The End of Obsolescence: Why Your 2030 Car Will Be Better Three Years After You Buy It

You've probably heard the phrase before that modern cars are just big smartphones on wheels. There's definitely some truth in that, especially given the number of touchscreens sprouting up in modern vehicles and the increasing reliance on swiping and tapping for everything from windshield wipers to air-conditioning.

However, that smartphone sentiment is actually selling the situation short. Developing a modern car in this [software-defined vehicle \(SDV\)](#) era is orders of magnitude more complex than creating any smart device you can fit in your pocket. Cars need to operate reliably at all times, in all conditions, for a decade or more, protecting the safety of their occupants all the while. Layer on a tangled web of global security regulations, and that challenge is only getting greater.

That said, next-generation SDVs will need to act a lot more like today's smart devices. They'll be less about the hardware and more about the software, creating cars that gain features and learn your needs over time. Evolution will come standard, but getting there won't be easy.

For OEMs, this creates new revenue models and competitive advantages, while for customers the value proposition is simple: the longer you own an SDV, the better it gets.

Always Evolving

The days of the car you drive home from the dealer being the same as the car you trade in years later are gone. An increasing number of cars on the road today offer easy over-the-air (OTA) updates, ensuring a steady stream of bug fixes and security tweaks, but also unlocking new capabilities along the way. By 2030, this will be table stakes: Every new car on the road will be built on a dynamic, updatable software system powered by a high-performance computing platform.

Security and reliability are key, but this opens the door to some far more interesting possibilities. Cars will evolve dramatically over their lifespans, ending the age-old concept of needing to upgrade to a new car every few years to get the latest features and functions.

Imagine a sports car that learns new performance track modes as it ages, enabling it to get faster and faster around more and more tracks while taking advantage of the grip provided by the latest-generation sticky tires. Imagine a luxury car that gains support for new audio formats, ensuring every speaker of its high-fidelity sound system is always optimized.

And perhaps most importantly, imagine a car staying current through generational shifts in advanced safety features, enabling it to go from hands-off driving on the highway to hands-off driving on secondary roads to, ultimately, eyes-off driving in all situations.

Evolving features and functionality like this will not only make cars more engaging for longer, but also help them retain their resale value, even in the face of newer competition.

A Digital Companion

You may be sick of hearing about the AI boom right now, and with the flood of news on the subject, you'd be forgiven for being so, but the tech's potential is genuinely huge. Already, the majority of the younger generations are turning to AI tools like ChatGPT and Claude every day, and that number is only going up.

AI will become fundamental to vehicle ownership, starting with the in-cabin experience. Your AI assistant will live in the car and help you make better use of its ever-evolving features and functions. Many infotainment systems are a confusing mess of hidden menus and abstract commands. In your car of 2030, you'll simply say what you want to do, and it will either tell you how or do it for you.

Your in-car AI agent or agents will also enable you to stay more connected and engaged with the world around you. Whether that is getting detailed restaurant recommendations as you drive through town or the latest snow reports as you leave it, drive time will no longer be frustratingly disconnected.

That level of connectivity will also include the agents and services that you use when you're out of your car, creating deep experiences that follow you.

As your 2030 car learns more about you and your preferences, it will continue to evolve, becoming a truly personalized companion that knows your favorite playlist to get amped in the morning and your favorite twisty road to blow off steam on the way back home.

AI will also play a growing role behind the scenes. In development processes, it will support tasks such as automated test generation, advanced simulation, data-driven calibration, intelligent debugging, and the management of complex software configurations. These capabilities shorten development cycles and improve the reliability of the very AI agents that drivers will interact with. Beyond that, digital vehicle twins will become standard, while AI-powered bug analysis and automated software updates make development processes clearer, more robust, and more efficient. Repetitive tasks can be offloaded, giving teams more space for complex and creative work, with AI acting as a reliable assistant rather than a replacement. This enables new features to move more quickly from concept to reality, shortens time-to-market, and ensures continuous, sustainable vehicle evolution.

OEM Incentives

The addition of these services, plus the expandable and updatable nature of your 2030 car, will create new opportunities for manufacturers. As comprehensive digital platforms, cars become ideally suited to receive more premium features as they evolve.

No longer will options need to be locked in at the dealership. Owners can find and add compelling upgrades years later, buying and applying them directly to their cars right through a dashboard interface or smartphone apps.

Those cars will also act as invaluable sources of data, edge nodes in a massive network of information. This data will play a major role in training next-generation safety algorithms, refining existing systems, or merely identifying usage trends and patterns, potentially opening the door to future premium services. Cloud-based engineering platforms such as [Vector's emerging SDx Cloud](#) support this by giving OEMs a structured cloud environment for managing software updates, analyzing fleet data securely, and orchestrating feature rollouts across diverse vehicle lines. In short, it gives developers the infrastructure and support to bring innovative, reliable, and personalized vehicle experiences to life faster than ever.

Finally, this data can be used for quality improvement, identifying and flagging issues early, whether they be hardware or software. The use of [digital twins](#) means easy simulation and identification of other affected vehicles. Directed fixes can be pushed out and applied early and often, boosting overall user satisfaction.

For your car of 2030, predictive maintenance will come standard.

Complexity Challenges Ahead

After generations of integrated development across numerous platforms, implementing the car of 2030 will require far more than introducing a new tool or updating a single component. For many manufacturers, it represents a complete systems reboot and a fundamental rethinking of established development processes, by creating one evolving software platform across all car series. The next challenge lies in the speed at which new features can be developed or integrated — delivering continuous innovation requires an agile ecosystem that considers the entire vehicle, powered by AI to enable rapid, short development cycles. Managing such a system also demands clear orchestration of interfaces and responsibilities, with distinct building blocks forming the foundation to address these complex challenges. While such practices are standard in modern software development, the real challenge is maintaining the system over years of vehicle operation, ensuring consistent quality, security, and safety throughout its lifecycle. Writing an entire software stack from the silicon up is no longer a viable solution, especially given how frequently that silicon may need to change in a world full of supply chain disruptions and trade restrictions.

Partnerships are therefore becoming essential to enabling safe, secure development that meets today's more aggressive timeframes. Relying on the expertise of systems integrators with proven track records will drastically reduce complexity while also providing standards-compliant frameworks, ultimately easing the launch of products into the global marketplace.

Platforms like [Alloy Kore](#), a new foundational software development platform co-developed by [QNX](#) and [Vector](#), will not only provide the necessary abstraction layers for true semiconductor independence, but also enable a robust yet flexible digital sandbox to keep all these disparate systems playing together nicely.

Yet a modern SDV cannot be built on a single platform alone. Alloy Kore forms the foundation, but it must be supported by a broader ecosystem of complementary interoperable components — from embedded software and validation tooling to cloud-enabled development workflows and lifecycle-management capabilities. This shift underscores a broader evolution among suppliers: companies like [Vector](#), once known primarily for embedded software and tools, are now emerging as end-to-end ecosystem partners capable of supporting the full SDV lifecycle. This end-to-end ecosystem provides a complete, modular software platform covering everything from small sensors and actuators up to cloud services, making it easier for OEMs to manage the entire vehicle software stack in a coherent and scalable way.

With Alloy Kore as the architectural backbone, OEMs can skip the most challenging development headaches and focus entirely on creating compelling user experiences. Combined with the broad [SDV portfolio](#) that [Vector](#) provides, it gives manufacturers a coherent ecosystem for managing the increasing complexity of modern vehicle software without rebuilding every layer themselves. This SDV portfolio is designed to make working with complex software as straightforward as possible, covering Vector's Software Platform, Software Factory, and SDV Services. It supports a wide range of applications across all types of control units, from in-vehicle systems to cloud backend services, helping OEMs streamline development and integration across the entire vehicle ecosystem.

At the end of the day, that's what the car of 2030 will be all about. Much more than a disposable smartphone on wheels, your next car will be a truly rich, ever-improving experience, one that just gets better with age.

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[Vector](#) has been a leading partner in the development and networking of embedded electronics for over 35 years. With more than 4,500 employees at 32 locations worldwide, the company supports manufacturers and suppliers in industries such as automotive, MedTech, IoT, and aerospace. A comprehensive ecosystem of tools, cloud services, a professional software factory, and engineering services forms the foundation for building safe and high-performance embedded systems. Driven by a passion for technology, Vector develops solutions that ease engineers' demanding tasks and is actively engaged in education, research, and social responsibility.

About QNX

[QNX](#), a division of [BlackBerry](#), enhances the human experience and amplifies technology-driven industries, providing a trusted foundation for software-defined businesses to thrive. The business leads the way in delivering safe and secure operating systems, hypervisors, middleware, solutions, and development tools, along with support and services delivered by trusted embedded software experts. QNX technology has been deployed in the world's most critical embedded systems, including more than 275 million vehicles on the road today. QNX software is trusted across industries, including automotive, medical devices, industrial controls, robotics, commercial vehicles, rail, and aerospace and defense. Founded in 1980, QNX is headquartered in Ottawa, Canada.

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