



AD PUNCTUM

News Review -- 5th May to 11th May

News is arranged by company and topic. Stories that apply to more than one company or topic are duplicated.

Company-by-company rundown

Daimler

- Reported car sales for May. Mercedes and Smart sales of 205,942 units were up 12.3% year-over-year. Sales increased in all regions except NAFTA. ([More...](#))

Ford

- Chairman Bill Ford said that it would be up to governments and regulators to decide on the ethics of how autonomous vehicles would make decisions in crash scenarios. Ford called this the “difficult piece” of autonomy. ([More...](#))
- Ford sent out redundancy offers to 15,000 salaried staff as part of the actions to reach a target of eliminating 1,400 positions. The payouts are expected by Ford to be between 3 and 18 months pay. ([More...](#))
- Will add a week of production in its Louisville, Kentucky SUV plant this summer due to increased demand. ([More...](#))

General Motors (includes Opel / Vauxhall)

- The sale of Opel / Vauxhall to PSA may reportedly be completed sooner than expected (end of July) ([More...](#)). It was also reported that current Opel CEO Karl-Thomas Neumann will resign at the time of sale rather than stay with the company under PSA’s ownership ([More...](#))
- GM’s annual general meeting saw Greenlight Capital’s proposal for two types of stock comprehensively defeated. ([More...](#))
- GM’s dealers in India may reportedly sue in US courts over the way that the company’s withdrawal from the Indian market is impacting their business. ([More...](#))

Geely (includes Volvo)

- A Malaysian government minister said that as part of its purchase of a stake in Proton, Geely would be making Malaysia an export hub for Volvo sales to ASEAN. He said that Geely had agreed to start production on the site of an existing Proton plant within five years. ([More...](#))

Honda

- Said that it was targeting introduction of Level 4 automated driving capability by 2025. ([More...](#))

Nissan

- Nissan is in dispute with the unions at its Avila, Spain plant. It has given a deadline on 14th June for the workforce to accept the same terms as Renault’s plants in the region or face closure. ([More...](#))
- Reportedly planning a 100 MW battery storage facility in partnership with Renault and a business called The Mobility House. The site would contain both new and used batteries. ([More...](#))

- Saw media speculation about succession planning for CEO Carlos Ghosn's replacement. The Renault-Nissan alliance is reportedly considering appointing a joint executive who would pursue synergies between the two. The role would be a platform for potential future leadership of both companies and may well be a current Renault or Nissan executive. ([More...](#))

PSA (excludes Opel/Vauxhall)

- Announced that it had agreed terms with its Chinese JV partner ChangAn for local production and sales of the DS brand. ([More...](#))
- The sale of Opel / Vauxhall to PSA may reportedly be completed sooner than expected (end of July) ([More...](#)).

Renault

- Saw media speculation about succession planning for CEO Carlos Ghosn's replacement. The Renault-Nissan alliance is reportedly considering appointing a shared executive who would pursue synergies between the two. The role would be a platform for potential future leadership of both companies and may well be filled by a current Renault or Nissan executive. ([More...](#))
- Reportedly planning a 100 MW battery storage facility in partnership with Nissan and a business called The Mobility House. The site would contain both new and used batteries. ([More...](#))
- Launched a home energy storage product in partnership with Powervault that uses 2nd life Renault EV batteries. The partners claim that the 2nd life batteries reduce the cost of the home energy storage unit by 30%. The program is still at an early stage, with trial units now being installed. ([More...](#))

Tata (includes JLR)

- JLR reported May sales of 45,487 units, up 1.2% year-over-year. ([More...](#))
- Tata announced that it had concluded negotiations on its long term wage settlement with unions in Sanand, India. The agreement is retroactive and runs from October 2015 to September 2020. The agreement reportedly includes a wage increase spread equally across years and a new performance bonus. ([More...](#))

Tesla

- CEO Elon Musk said that all Tesla supercharger locations were being converted to solar and battery energy with the target of disconnecting "almost all" from the grid. He gave no timeline for achieving this. ([More...](#))
- Said that it was on track to deliver the first production Model 3 next month and the online configurator will be launched at the same time, albeit with limited options. ([More...](#))
- Tesla released Model Y teaser images at its annual shareholder meetings. CEO Elon Musk also reportedly said that a new factory would be required to satisfy demand for the vehicle. The exclusive shots appear to confirm that the vehicle will have a roof, front windshield and fenders. ([More...](#))

Toyota

- Was named most valuable automotive brand in the BrandZ survey (conducted by a subsidiary of WPP). ([More...](#))

VW Group

- The VW brand reported May deliveries of 513,000 vehicles, an increase of 3.5% year-over-year. ([More...](#))
- Said that it was on course to meet its target of 9,300 separations and that there was "considerable interest" from employees aged between 57 - 62. ([More...](#))
- The US-appointed special inspector told reporters that he may not have received all the relevant documentation relating to the entire VW Group yet (he was unsure) and the scale of monitoring the company properly into the future may necessitate employing a total of 60 people (VW will have a liaison team of 50). ([More...](#))
- Škoda's international sales manager appeared to confirm that there will not be a replacement for the current generation of the Citigo city car. This is despite apparent plans for a new VW Up! (with which the Citigo shares much of its componentry). ([More...](#))
- Der Spiegel suggested in an article that Porsche Cayenne models had been installed with defeat devices following tests it had commissioned. Porsche rejected the claims and said that the tests results were incomprehensible. ([More...](#))

- Current Opel CEO Karl-Thomas Neumann will reportedly resign at the time of sale rather than stay with the company under PSA's ownership -- VW are apparently a likely destination. ([More...](#))

Other

- **Fisker** said that the US orderbook for their EMotion electric vehicle will open next month. Fisker say that the car has a 161 mph top speed and range of 400 miles. ([More...](#))

[And now for the other news...](#)

Economic / Political News

- **UK** registrations fell in May. Passenger car registrations totalled 186,265 cars, down 8.5% year-over-year. The impending general election was blamed for buyers "holding back". ([More...](#)). Commercial vehicle registrations of 26,982 units were down 5.3% YoY. ([More...](#))
- **Russia** car sales in May of 124,990 vehicles were up 14.7% year-over-year. ([More...](#))

Suppliers

- **Bosch** and **TomTom** announced a "breakthrough" in the use of radar sensors to generate a road signature that could be used in combination with GPS to determine a vehicle's exact location. Among the benefits claimed by Bosch is that radar signatures use significantly less data than video based location recognition. ([More...](#))
- French President Emmanuel Macron met with representatives of troubled (close to liquidation) supplier **GM&S**. He promised to set up a "crisis cell" within his team to work on a recovery plan for the company. ([More...](#)). Despite this, there have been no bidders for the company ([More...](#))
- **Dana** announced that it had broken ground on a new 7,500 sqm factory in China for advanced driveline products. It is scheduled to open in 2018 and will employ 130 people when at full production. ([More...](#))
- **GKN Driveline** said that it would increase capacity by more than 60% at its eDrive factory in Italy due to rising customer demand. It will scale-down and reallocate some of the traditional axle products made at the plant. ([More...](#))
- **Michelin** said that it would buy the West African SIPH rubber plantation in partnership with Ivorian group Sifca. ([More...](#))
- **TomTom** announced that it will now move to weekly map updates. The previous update cadence was monthly. TomTom claims normal industry practice is to update quarterly. ([More...](#))
- **Delphi** will split into two separate and publicly traded companies, the Powertrain division will become a standalone entity with Delphi becoming focussed on advanced connectivity, autonomy and mobility. The intended separation timing is March 2018. (Should have been reported last week). ([More...](#))

Dealers

- **Amazon** has reportedly made key hires that will allow it to become an online car dealer in Europe. ([More...](#))
- UK dealer **Marshall Motor Group** purchased Leeds Volvo from the Harratts Group. ([More...](#))

Ride-Hailing, Car Sharing & Rental

- Ride-hailing platform provider **Ridecell** will supply the technology infrastructure for **Gig Car Share**. ([More...](#)) and a new car-sharing scheme in Poland for **Škoda** ([More...](#))
- Daimler-owned **Car2Go** is making its registration process easier. New users of the service will no longer have to visit a validation point to register their licence. Many competitors already offer an online only service. ([More...](#))
- **Uber** has reportedly fired over 20 employees following investigations into harassment and bullying and is considering whether the CEO should take a leave of absence. ([More...](#))
- **Uber** is reportedly in talks to acquire the valet service and engineering know-how of **Luxe**. Although Luxe intends to continue operation, it has pivoted away from door-to-door valet services. ([More...](#))

Driverless / Autonomy

- **Bosch** and **TomTom** announced a “breakthrough” in the use of radar sensors to generate a road signature that could be used in combination with GPS to determine a vehicle’s exact location. Among the benefits claimed by Bosch is that radar signatures use significantly less data than video based location recognition. ([More...](#))
- In an article by Mobility Buzz, **insurance experts** indicated that their expectation is that autonomous vehicles would lead to greater, and more severe, accidents due to the increase in technology. This is at odds with much of the automotive industry’s conventional wisdom on the expected level of accident reduction from AVs. ([More...](#))
- UK Simulator trials of **humans taking control of autonomous vehicles** in emergency situations reinforced earlier research, showing that that humans are on average incapable of immediately taking over the vehicle and require an adjustment period of a few seconds. ([More...](#))
- **Continental** gave an overview of the work that it is doing around driver interaction with an autonomous vehicle. Similar to the UK trial above, it uses simulators, but was less forthcoming on its findings. ([More...](#))
- **Ford** Chairman Bill Ford said that it would be up to governments and regulators to decide on the ethics of how autonomous vehicles would makes decisions in crash scenarios. Ford called this the “difficult piece” of autonomy. ([More...](#))
- **US transport secretary Elaine Chao** met with carmakers in Detroit to discuss rules for autonomous driving saying that “the pressure is mounting for the federal government to do something [in providing clear rules to encourage progress]” ([More...](#))
- **Cognata** reported an additional investment of \$5 million. The company makes simulation software to test autonomous vehicles in highly realistic virtual environments. ([More...](#))
- **Continental** unveiled 2025AD.cn, a site that it is hoping will become a leading platform for sharing of autonomous car technologies and data. It is the sister site of 2025AD.com. ([More...](#))
- **Delphi** and **Transdev** announced a partnership intending to develop a “global, fully automated, mobility-on-demand (AMoD) transport system”. ([More...](#))
- **Honda** said that it was targeting introduction of Level 4 automat ed driving capability by 2025. ([More...](#))
- **Lyft** and **Nutonomy** announced a partnership to run a robotaxi pilot in Boston. Nutonomy have already been testing in Boston since the end of 2016. ([More...](#))

Electrification

- **Renault-Nissan** is reportedly planning a 100 MW battery storage facility in partnership with a business called The Mobility House. The site would contain both new and used batteries. ([More...](#))
- **Renault** launched a home energy storage product in partnership with **Powervault** that uses 2nd life Renault EV batteries. The partners claim that the 2nd life batteries reduce the cost of the home energy storage unit by 30%. The program is still at an early stage, with trial units now being installed. ([More...](#))
- US research suggested that electric car sales are being held back by a lack of **consumer knowledge** about charging infrastructure (the actual level was less of a problem than the fact that many consumers simply assumed it was zero). ([More...](#))
- **Fisker** said that the US orderbook for their EMotion electric vehicle will open next month. Fisker say that the car has a 161 mph top speed and range of 400 miles. ([More...](#))

Other

- **Porsche Automobil Holding SE** (the significant shareholder in VAG, not the car brand) said that it was buying 97% of German traffic and logistics planning software provider **PTV Group** for around €300 million. ([More...](#))
- **Carl Icahn** will buy vehicle maintenance and repair company **Precision Auto Care**. ([More...](#))