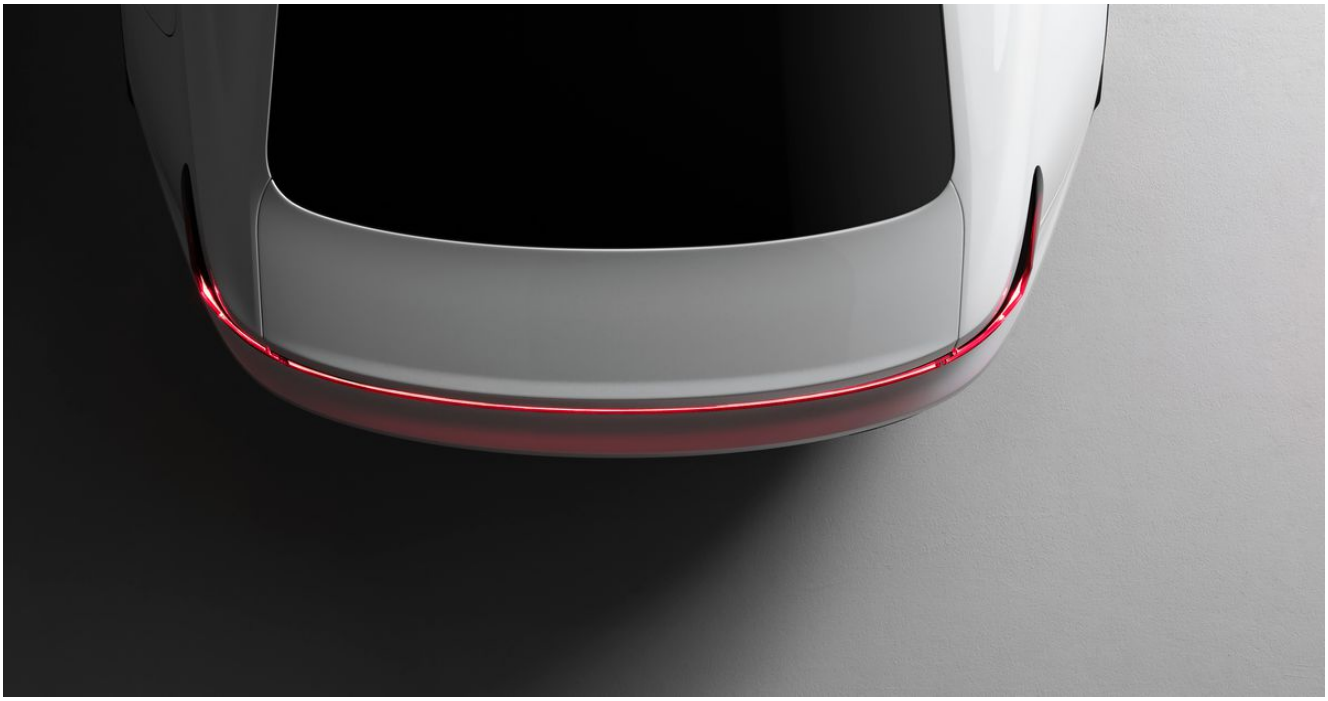
The all-electric Polestar 2 will be the first car with Google’s native Android Auto



Volvo’s futuristic performance brand Polestar released the first teaser image of its second car this week (seen above). The aptly named Polestar 2 will be Volvo’s first all-electric car, and has specs (on paper, at least) that match up with some of the best EVs that are about to hit the road. It will also be the first car to run Google’s native version of Android Auto — something the tech conglomerate has spent the last few years working on.

We first heard about the idea of native Android Auto back in 2014, when *Reuters* reported that Google wanted to develop a version of the in-car operating system that wouldn’t require the use of a smartphone. Google eventually announced at its 2017 I/O developer conference that it was working with both Volvo and Audi to make this happen.

It will come with Google Assistant, too
At the next I/O, in 2018, Google showed off a working version

of this on a Volvo XC40. While it looked a lot like Volvo's own Sensus infotainment system, the SUV's screen was really powered by Android P. It also had a dedicated Google Assistant button on the steering wheel, which could be used to play music, get directions, or even change the cabin temperature. Here's what *The Verge's* tech editor Natt Garun said at the time:

> *It features an updated UI with four menu bars that you can slide to reveal more control modules. […] The tiles on the updated UI are big and colorful — app icons stand out more clearly, and overall it feels like there's an Android tablet strapped to the center of the car, down to the center home button. (I mean that in the best way!) You can also drag down from the top like you would on a smartphone to see notifications. In the new system, there's now a Google Play button that lets you browse and install Android Auto-approved apps, such as Deezer, Pocketcasts, or Telegram. The goal is not to be distracted on the road, so video apps like YouTube will specifically be left out.*

Google has lent help to automakers in developing infotainment systems before — like combining Fiat Chrysler's Uconnect with Android Nougat — but the partnership with Volvo is the most fully baked attempt at using Android to power the screens inside a car. (Audi showed off its own version in the Audi Q8 Sport concept, but has not announced plans for rolling out its Android system.)

In a post-Tesla world, automakers have increasingly adopted infotainment systems that are centered around big, bright touchscreens. The results have been a mixed bag. And even with the advent of Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, which are now compatible with almost every new car, some of the biggest automakers have still turned to the tech industry for help in improving the core experience in the cockpit. Toyota and Lexus now have infotainment systems built on Linux, for example.

Panasonic has developed one built on Android. LG is even trying to get WebOS in the mix.

Big tech companies still want control of the screens in your car

Beyond the screens, the Polestar 2 will offer a range of about 300 miles on a full charge, and its electric motors will generate around 400 horsepower, according to the company. It will be a four-door “fastback” style vehicle, which – as *Car and Driver* points out – means it might wind up looking like a more refined version of the “40.2” concept car that Volvo unveiled in 2016. (That also matches up with some previous reports.)

Polestar says its second car will go into production later this year and will be sold “in the Tesla Model 3 price range” – which means it could cost as low as $35,000 or as high as something in the mid-$50,000 range. The company says it will share more information about its second car soon. Polestar’s first car, a $150,000 hybrid sports car called the Polestar 1, is set to enter production in a few months. Only 500 will be built.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/4/18168964/volvo-polestar-2-ev-android-auto-google-assistant