



Artificial Intelligence In the Trucking Industry: Is It Worth Your Time?

So what do the movies *The Terminator* and *The Matrix* have in common with the world of trucking? Well, not a lot, but yet, quite a bit. While no rogue robot truck drivers are combing the planet searching for world dominance, there are some subtle similarities that are revolutionizing the trucking world. The common thread is the increasing usage of artificial intelligence (AI).

Each quarter, Professional Driver Agency (PDA) produces a comprehensive overview of the top retention issues facing the trucking industry today. The results from the first quarter of 2021 showed that the number one concern for drivers is equipment issues for the fifth consecutive quarter. Overwhelmed drivers are worried that unreliable equipment will keep them from doing what is most important to them, providing for their families. As long as we have used trucks and trailers for transportation, the industry has had to deal with unexpected, unplanned, and annoying equipment failures and breakdowns. But what if you could identify a breakdown BEFORE it happens? Now you can.

AI is now being used with increasing regularity to interpret the mounds of data coming from the trucks quickly and more thoroughly. The tools being introduced to the industry are coming from inside and outside of the transportation world:

- Industry stalwart PACCAR, the parent company of Peterbilt, has provided a tool known as SmartLINQ.
 - “Peterbilt's SmartLINQ™ Remote Diagnostics provides real-time service alerts and recommendations, as well as Peterbilt dealership connectivity to the three nearest dealer locations. By connecting your fleet with SmartLINQ's advanced technology, you can maximize fleet uptime and keep your work on schedule. SmartLINQ also helps streamline service and maintenance, and ensures every truck is operating at peak performance.”¹
- Uptake, a company based out of Chicago, is taking AI and data analytics to another level. Using tools and algorithms forged in various industrial segments, they are now working with trucking companies to leverage data to create predictive analysis and proactive solutions.
 - Uptake Fleet enables the maintenance personnel of carriers to better utilize the data coming from the trucks by eliminating some of the noise in the data, deciphering the most imminent mechanical dangers, and developing insights from multiple data points.



Recently United Road, the largest provider in finished vehicle logistics, shared how AI is helping to shape its maintenance strategy and results. A year ago, United Road began using the Uptake AI system on 10% of its company truck fleet. During that pilot, they realized a return on investment (ROI) of over 400%. They extended the pilot to include an additional 10% of the fleet and continued to see benefits. The predictive tool and insights provided led to a 20% reduction on-road breakdowns by those trucks on the Uptake system. The insights enabled fleet managers and technicians to identify potential issues and thus provide proactive maintenance. Not only does a reduction in breakdowns help control costs to the bottom line but it also serves to increase driver satisfaction.

Resources

- <https://www.peterbilt.com/innovation/technology/smartLINQ>
- <https://www.uptake.com/>
- <https://www.arcweb.com/industry-best-practices/delivering-digital-transformation-fleet-maintenance-united-road-services>

¹<https://www.peterbilt.com/innovation/technology/smartLINQ>