AutoTrader.com Editors Name Must-Have Automotive Technology for 2014

Experts reveal the coolest technology features that offer the most convenience and value for car shoppers

ATLANTA, Nov. 19, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Advanced technology options are becoming increasingly important to today's new car shoppers. According to AutoTrader.com®'s recent Millennial Study, 73% of young Millennials (age 16-24) say a car must have infotainment technology in order for them to consider it. And the phenomenon isn't limited to younger shoppers – a high percentage of Baby Boomers – 61% - feel the same way.

(Logo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20110425/CL88097LOGO)

In tandem with the Connected Car Expo at the LA Auto Show, AutoTrader.com's editorial team is announcing their picks of the "Must-Have Automotive Technology" for 2014. The features and options selected represent a blend of innovation, ease-of-use and value that AutoTrader.com experts say consumers should consider when shopping for their next new car.

"Today's cars are packed with a wide variety of high-tech features, so it can be tough for car shoppers to discern which options are worth having versus which ones may just look cool," AutoTrader.com Site Editor, Brian Moody said. "We created this list to inform car shoppers about which features will actually be useful on a regular basis and are worth paying a little extra for."

Some of the features AutoTrader.com experts recommend include:

Bluetooth Audio
Leveraging the same Bluetooth technology that lets a mobile phone operate wirelessly through the car's audio system, Bluetooth Audio takes it one step further to project all of the audio from a smartphone through the speakers. This means in addition to hands-free calling, consumers can play music stored on their device or streamed from their favorite music app, or even hear turn-by-turn directions from their smartphone's mapping apps.

"Bluetooth audio is an important distinction from phone-only Bluetooth," Moody said. "It might not always be obvious which function a vehicle has, so shoppers should be sure to ask. It's fairly widely available on 2014 models, and is one of those features many people will use nearly every time they're in the car."

Smartphone App Integration
While Bluetooth Audio allows consumers to wirelessly hear music and voice from their smartphone though the car's speakers, full app integration allows the ability to control an app's functions through an interface on the vehicle. For example, with Bluetooth Audio, drivers would still have to use the app on their smartphone to do things like skip a song or search for an artist. But with integration, all functions in the app can be controlled directly on vehicle's infotainment or navigation screen.

"This functionality used to be only offered on premium vehicles, but now it's becoming more prevalent in mainstream cars, for example, the new 2014 Toyota Corolla and Honda Accord both offer it." Moody said. "It's also not just limited to music – some cars offer apps that allow you to check movie times or make dinner reservations, all from the car's central display."

Active Driving Aids
Consumers may be familiar with audible alerts that warn drivers of things like an object behind the car when backing up or when another car is in a driver's blind spot. But for 2014, AutoTrader.com editors are seeing more cars with "active" driving aids that can

automatically apply steering, throttle and/or brake inputs to prevent drivers from hitting an object behind them or to keep the car in its proper lane.

"This is the kind of technology that goes beyond cool and interesting - these advancements are what will have the greatest positive impact for everyone on the road. Now these features are most common on luxury vehicles or as part of a premium safety package, but we anticipate, like most other new technology, it will eventually start to come down in price and become more common. For shoppers who have room in their budgets, this technology is definitely worth the investment."

Other features AutoTrader.com experts recommend include text-to-speech reading, the ability to "favorite" certain functions in GM's CUE, MyLink and IntelliLink systems, mobile Wi-Fi and seat comfort technology. To read more about these features and why they're worth the extra money, read the full story here: http://www.autotrader.com/research/article/car-tips/216735/must-have-automotive-technology-for-2014.jsp

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For further information: Nicole Carriere, 404-568-7822 (o), 770-547-7950 (m), Nicole.carriere@autotrader.com

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