

AutoTrader.com Study Shows Technology Makes or Breaks Car Purchase Decisions

New data reveals more than half of car shoppers are willing to walk away from a brand they like to get the features they want

ATLANTA, Nov. 17, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- AutoTrader.com today released the findings of the 2014 In-Vehicle Technology Shopper Influence Study - conducted online on its behalf by Harris Poll among 1,033 U.S. vehicle owners between October 15th and 20th, 2014, which provides insight into how vehicle technology impacts consumer vehicle purchase decisions. In its first year, this study sheds light on what vehicle owners are willing to sacrifice to get the features they want, the kinds of technologies they're putting at the top of their shopping lists and what manufacturers can do to ensure that shoppers drive off the lot with their vehicle.

"We live in a world now where nailing the basics - great ride and handling, reliability, compelling design - aren't enough to compensate for a lack of the latest safety and infotainment features," said Michelle Krebs, AutoTrader.com senior analyst. "The brands who can give consumers the technologies they want in a package that's cost effective and easy-to-use will be winners on sales day."

When it comes to technology, manufacturers can't count on brand loyalty to keep a shopper in their showroom, with 56 percent of U.S. vehicle owners saying they would be willing to switch brands to get the features they want. The vast majority of vehicle owners prioritize safety features over infotainment (84 percent), with things like blind spot detection and back-up cameras/sensors rising to the top of the list. And while vehicle owners remain leery of fully autonomous vehicles (65 percent of vehicle owners think self-driving cars are a dangerous idea), six in ten (61 percent) are likely to consider a model with autonomous safety features like park assist and collision avoidance on their next purchase.

However - just having the right combination of features isn't enough to guarantee the sale. The study also revealed that ease-of-use is a key deciding factor for car shoppers, with 48 percent saying they would walk away from a vehicle they liked if the technology was perceived to be too difficult to use. Nearly half of vehicle owners (48 percent) think it should take less than 15 minutes to figure out how to use all of the technology features in a new vehicle. Nearly 4 in 10 (38 percent) vehicle owners would like more time in the vehicle during a test drive to get an education on a vehicle's technology and safety features, and nearly three in ten would like to take the vehicle home overnight to test the features out on their own.

"The fact that consumers are in need of this education combined with how much technology is influencing the purchase decision is a huge opportunity for dealers," Krebs said. "Given 60 percent of consumers say they don't have enough time during the test drive process to fully evaluate car technology features, salespeople who can actively show shoppers how easy these features are to use, and demonstrate the benefits will build a trusted relationship with the shopper to help seal the deal."

Other notable findings from the study include:

- More than three-quarters of owners would prefer to have one in-vehicle tech feature that's easy to use instead of a difficult-to-understand system that has all the features they want.
- 38 percent of vehicle owners would delay their next purchase by 6

- months or more to get all of the in-car tech features they want.
- 69% of vehicle owners would rather a vehicle have the technology features they want as opposed to being the color they want.

AutoTrader.com experts will be available during the media days of the Los Angeles Auto Show and Connected Car Expo Nov. 18-20 to discuss the results of this study – credentialed media attending the show are encouraged to stop by the Media Pit Stop in front of West Hall for more information. Those not attending the show can contact the AutoTrader.com PR team for more information and to arrange for interviews.

About the Research

This study was conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of AutoTrader.com and included 1,033 American vehicle owners aged 18 or older who participated in an online survey between October 15th and October 20th, 2014. Results were weighted as needed for age by gender, education, race/ethnicity, region and household income. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

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Over the last 5 decades, Harris Polls have become media staples. With comprehensive experience and precise technique in public opinion polling, along with a proven track record of uncovering consumers' motivations and behaviors, The Harris Poll has gained strong brand recognition around the world. The Harris Poll offers a diverse portfolio of proprietary client solutions to transform relevant insights into actionable foresight for a wide range of industries including health care, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer packaged goods. [Contact](#) us for more information.

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