

AutoTrader.com Record Site Traffic of More Than 16 Million Visitors In March Represents Revolution in How Consumers Shop for Vehicles

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Economy Accelerating Trends Driving Car Shoppers On-Line to See Inventory, Check Prices and Specials

ATLANTA, April 6 /PRNewswire/ -- AutoTrader.com, the ultimate automotive marketplace, hit a record 16.07 million unique monthly visitors in March. "The 16.07 million unique monthly visitors represents a [new](#) threshold in demand by online car shoppers," said AutoTrader.com President and CEO Chip Perry.

"In just the past two months, AutoTrader.com has gone from 14 million unique monthly visitors to more than 16 million, which tells us that even in this very challenging economy, there is an ever burgeoning audience of shoppers who are thinking about buying a car and are responding to our marketing messages," said Perry. "The current state of the economy is accelerating the trend we've seen developing for some time. Now more than ever people want to make every dollar count and they want to know they're getting the right car at the right price from a dealer they can count on. And the Internet is the best way for buyers to find the information they are looking for."

Meanwhile, auto dealers and manufacturers looking to maximize every dollar of their marketing budgets are increasingly scaling back mainstream media advertising buys and investing more money in on-line marketing.

"This cycle has picked up steam in the past year," says Perry. "More car buyers gravitate to the web to find the information they want. Dealers and manufacturers, seeking to reach the most buyers as efficiently as possible, invest more in on-line marketing and cut back on traditional media. Car buyers who have not migrated to the Internet find less useful auto advertising in their local media, turn to the web to find what they're looking for and become hooked on on-line car shopping. This leaves even a smaller number of car shoppers using traditional media as their primary source for car shopping information, making traditional media even less efficient for marketing autos."

Various industry figures illustrate this cycle. Between 2007 and 2008, auto industry spending on on-line media increased about 23% according to industry estimates. At the same time, advertising spending on traditional media (newspapers, television, etc.) dropped between 2% and 5%, with newspapers suffering the largest drop in advertising. Perry believes the current economy is accelerating those marketing spending trends.

Among [on-line car shopping sites](#), AutoTrader.com offers the most comprehensive tools, search functionality, vehicle inventory and information on pricing and specials, giving shoppers the tools and information to find the right car at the right price. In addition to record site traffic, contacts from shoppers on AutoTrader.com to dealers and private sellers listing vehicles for sale on the site were up more than 18% in March compared to March 2008, indicating that shoppers are responding to the information and inventory they are seeing on the site.

AutoTrader.com's marketing mix for 2009 includes television advertising buys on high-engagement, national events like the upcoming NBA playoffs; exposure at top consumer auto shows across the country, including the upcoming New York International Auto Show; sponsorships of various professional sports teams; partnerships with other large automotive sites like MSN Autos and Edmunds.com; and other on-line and SEM efforts. The goal of this mass media, consumer-event and partner exposure is to continue to reinforce AutoTrader.com's leadership among consumers as a top on-line auto marketplace and drive consumers to AutoTrader.com's dealer and manufacturer advertisers.

"Mass-reach media and high-impact marketing on major event broadcasts continues to be a great tool for building and maintaining overall brand awareness," said Perry. "We've made sure that for the in-market car shopper, AutoTrader.com's name is inescapable in traditional and on-line media. When consumers get ready to buy a car in 2009, they will remember the AutoTrader.com name and make us a part of their car shopping experience."

About AutoTrader.com

AutoTrader.com, created in 1997 and headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., is the Internet's leading auto classifieds marketplace and consumer information website. AutoTrader.com aggregates in a single location about 3.5 million [new cars](#), [used cars](#) and [certified pre-owned cars](#) from 40,000 dealers and 250,000 private owners and the site attracts about 14 million unique monthly visitors. Through innovative merchandising functionality such as multiple photos, videos, detailed descriptions and comprehensive research and compare tools, AutoTrader.com unites new and used car buyers and sellers online to improving the way people research, locate and advertise vehicles. AutoTrader.com is a majority-owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises. The venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers is also an investor. For more information, please visit www.autotrader.com.

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