

Safety Technology Tops the List of Most Desired Features Should they Be More Affordable when Purchasing a Used Car – Particularly Collision Avoidance

Self-Cleaning Car Tops Wish List for Futuristic Features

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New York, NY – If purchasing a used car made certain upgrades or features more affordable, safety technology upgrades would be most preferred, according to a survey of over 1,000 US adults conducted on behalf of CarMax. Nearly half (49%) would opt for safety technology upgrades, ahead of entertainment/luxury (24%) or convenience upgrades (18%) should they be suddenly more affordable. One in ten (9%) say that they wouldn't be interested in any of these upgrades.

Baby Boomers express a stronger preference for safety upgrades (58%) compare to Millennials (38%) and Generation X (42%), while the younger generations are much more likely to find entertainment/luxury upgrades to be appealing (31% of Millennials and 29% of Gen X vs. just 17% of Boomers).

Collision Avoidance Technology Clear Favorite, Other Categories

Among the various safety technology features available today, collision avoidance technology, like built-in dashboard monitors and mirrors, is in greatest demand across generations. Over half of respondents (51%) would choose this option for their used car if it were to be suddenly more affordable, over other safety upgrades such as hands-free command calling (15%), a theft recovery system (11%), adaptive cruise control (6%), or adaptive headlights or automatic high beams (6%).

Americans are more divided when it comes to which convenience feature they would prefer if the feature was offered on a used car at a reasonable price. Just under a third (30%) would be most interested in an affordable navigation system if they were to buy a used car, while one in five would opt for a remote starter (21%) – more so in the Northeast (28%) and Midwest (32%) where temperatures tend to be colder. Nearly as many would choose keyless entry (18%), while fewer would choose park assist (10%) or a foot-activated lift gate (6%) as their top convince upgrade. Both park assist and a foot-activated lift gate are more popular among Millennials than older generations (14% and 8%, respectively).

Similarly, Americans do not have a clear favorite when it comes to their preferred entertainment or luxury upgrades. Top choices include satellite radio and stereo systems, each selected by one in five (19% and 18%, respectively). A sunroof (15%) or leather interior (15%) fall into a second tier, with Millennials being more likely than older generations to opt for a sunroof (19%). Window tinting (11%), backseat / headrest video systems (11%) are slightly less popular, selected by one in ten.

- Men are more likely to go for a stereo system (23% vs. 14% of women) or leather interior (18% vs. 13%), while women are more inclined to select window tinting (14% vs. 9% of men) or video systems (13% vs. 8%) as their luxury upgrade of choice. Parents (24%) and Gen X'ers (19%) are also among those most likely to choose a backseat / headrest video system for their used car.

Top Futuristic Upgrades

Looking beyond the upgrades and features that are available now when purchasing a used car, nearly a quarter say that a self-cleaning car (23%) or a car that keeps them calm and focused (21%) would top their “greatest wish” list. One in six (17%) say that if purchasing a used car were to make upgrade features and accessories suddenly affordable, they would most prefer a self-driving car, while one in ten would choose a car that compliments their driving (11%) or a car that flies (11%). Very few would upgrade to a car that reminds them of special occasions, while 16% wouldn't want any of these upgrades or features.

- Women are more likely to select a car that cleans itself (27% of women vs. 17% of men) as their most preferred upgrade, while men are more likely to choose a car that compliments their driving (13% of men vs. 8% of women) or one that flies (13% vs. 8%).
- Few differences emerge across generations, though Millennials are more likely than Boomers to opt to upgrade to a car that compliments their driving (14% vs. 8%). Boomers, in their turn, are more likely to say that they aren't interested in any of these futuristic upgrades (20%).



These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted May 7-8, 2015. For the survey, a sample of 1,004 U.S. adults age 18 and over was interviewed online. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents. The data were weighted to the U.S. current population data by gender, age, region and household income based on Census data. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

Rebecca Sizelove Strong
Vice President
Ipsos Public Affairs
212-584-9253
rebecca.sizelove@ipsos.com

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