Harris Interactive Study Shows Significant Differences in Vehicle Technology Tastes Among Men and Wo

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Results indicate while consumer demand for big autos is shrinking, appetite for more technology grows.

ROCHESTER, N.Y., June 19, 2008 â€“ Drivers of both sexes are buying smaller, less expensive and more fuel-efficient cars, and according to the latest Harris Interactive AutoTECHCAST study, they have unique preferences for the latest in automotive technology. There are significant differences by gender, according to the Harris study, regarding which innovations they will most likely consider during the purchase process.

The study reveals that men gravitate more toward performance, convenience and communication/sound options, while women indicate a stronger preference for comfort items. Both sexes show strong interest in new technology options that provide a heightened degree of personal safety.

"The most intriguing results from our study indicate that men and women have significantly different technology tastes and views of what features are the most appealing," said Stephen A. Lovett, director of client development, Harris Interactive. "The fact is women have a great influence on vehicle purchases and they are more tech savvy than ever. The automakers need to take these views into consideration when designing their next-generation vehicles."

"Despite the trend toward smaller vehicles, drivers still have high expectations when it comes to comfort, safety and performance. Having more technology in the car may be one important way that people can compensate for a reduction in auto size," continued Lovett.

The Harris Interactive study shows significant differences in opinion regarding selected automotive innovations introduced in recent years:

Performance and Convenience

Men (41 percent) are more interested in voice-activated controls and features than women (32 percent).
Advanced fuel cell engine technology is a greater consideration among men (38 percent) than women (27 percent).
Adaptive cruise control is a stronger buying consideration among men (41 percent) than women (34 percent).
Automated driving technology grabs the imagination of more males (35 percent) than females (27 percent).

Communication/Sound and Comfort

Bluetooth connectivity is more appealing to male drivers (48 percent) than female drivers (37 percent).
Men also are more likely to consider digital surround audio technology (44 percent) than women (33 percent).
More females, conversely, recognize the benefits of pivoting front seats (32 percent) than men (25 percent).
A parking heater system also is more appealing to women (32 percent) than men (26 percent).
The capless fueling system, a relatively newer innovation, also receives higher interest from women (38 percent) compared to men (32 percent).

Safety

Anti-trap/anti-pinch power windows appeal more to women (37 percent) than men (31 percent), but a much greater share of males (53 percent) than females (42 percent) value a two-way remote keyless entry system.
More women (30 percent) than men (20 percent) are likely to consider a parking assist system in their next vehicle.
Conversely, LED lighting is much more popular among men (66 percent) than women (48 percent).
Heads-up display technology also is a greater consideration among men (38 percent) than women (27 percent).
With gasoline prices exceeding $4 per gallon, Lovett reiterates that itâ€™s more important than ever for the automakers to offer the right features for both men and women within their small and mid-sized offerings.

"With the US market shifting toward smaller vehicles, automakers only have one chance to get it right with their next-generation fleets. While small cars of the past were pretty stripped down, future consumers will be able to select the creature comforts and amenities that theyâ€™ve come to expect in vehicles with greater efficiency. The auto manufactures that offer the right balance for men and women will be the winners."