

A new survey shows that women who use new media during the car shopping are more excited and confident about the process.

BlogHer, Inc., a cross-platform media network and publisher for women, recently announced the results of "Put Her in the Driver's Seat," at the JD Power & Associates 2011 Automotive Internet Roundtable in Las Vegas. The survey, designed to explore how women feel and where they turn for advice when shopping for cars, revealed a significant positive impact on female buyers who used blogs and social media - and a preference for blogs and official product information sources versus traditional media and social networks.

The survey revealed that, as a gender, women car-buyers were both more excited (74 percent) and more nervous (53 percent) about car-buying than were men buying cars (71 percent and 42 percent respectively). Of this group, women who sought advice from blogs and social networks during the car buying process demonstrated higher excitement levels: Women who consulted blogs about buying a new car were 13 points more excited than women who did not, and women who consulted social networks were up 12 points. Confidence levels also increased through social media use: Confidence among women who used blogs for auto advice was 8 points over women who did not, and 5 among women used social networks.

Blogs and social networks have different impacts on the stress levels of women car-buyers, the survey showed: The stress levels of women who used blogs for advice were -4 points lower than the total sample. However, stress levels remained the same for women who used social networks. Blog users also reported being slightly less nervous at 2 points lower than the total sample, while social network users showed an increase in levels of nervousness at 4 points higher than the total sample.

Women's top five information sources for researching a car purchase were car dealership visits (65 percent), word of mouth (56 percent), car review websites (53 percent), auto manufacturer websites (43 percent), and blogs (31 percent). Other sources, such as auto magazines (21 percent), Facebook (17 percent), and TV advertising (16 percent), lagged significantly behind.

Of the top five information sources named above, the following four were also ranked the most influential on a woman's car-buying decision: Dealership visits, word of mouth, car review sites and blogs. However, one information source that women ranked as a top five information

source -- auto manufacturer websites - ranked dead last in influence on their ultimate decision.

"Women clearly articulated the features they need to see and the voices they want to hear when considering a car purchase," said Elisa Camahort Page, co-founder and COO of BlogHer, Inc. "We see a huge opportunity for auto manufacturers to indeed 'Put her in the driver's seat' and let her buying preferences re-shape how the automotive community reaches the powerful women's market."

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