



From Clicks to Keys

FEBRUARY 02, 2006

The Internet is a big part of first-time car buyer's research for buying a vehicle, eclipsing all other mass media, according to a new report from [The Polk Center for Automotive Studies](#).

First time car buyers tend to be young, so it's not surprising that newer technology is more important to their car search than other media. But the percentage of respondents who feel the Net to be their top informational tool for a car search — 35% — is much higher than for any other media, including TV (8.2%).

Most Important Mass Media Informational Tool according to First-Time Vehicle Buyers in the US, November 2005 (% of respondents)

Internet	35.0%
Television	8.2%
Magazines	4.4%
Newspapers	3.6%
Radio	1.1%

Source: R. L. Polk & Co., January 2006

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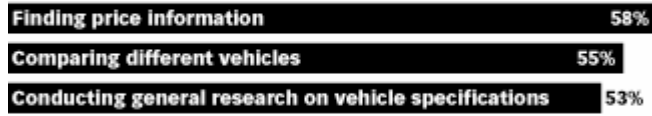
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Lonnie Miller, managing director for the Polk Center for Automotive Studies, notes the marketing upshot of this phenomenon: "First-time buyers' dependence on Web-based media validates the need for an aggressive interactive strategy to court them on the manufacturer and retail level. The Internet's relevance in the 18-30 year-age group has reached critical mass and is completely reconfiguring how car companies need to reach out to first-time buyers."

Polk predicts that car-buying will be even more influenced by new technologies in the near future. This extends beyond the Net to Internet-enabled phones, podcasts and video-on-demand. These technologies will reach elements of the youth market who are screening out traditional media.

A [Feedback Research](#) poll conducted in the summer and fall of 2005 found that new car buyers (not necessarily first-timers) use the Net for a variety of reasons, including finding price information, comparing different vehicles and looking up vehicle specifications.

Top Reasons that US New Car Buyers* Used the Internet as an Information Source When Shopping for an Automobile, July-October 2005 (% of respondents)



*Note: *who use Claria Corporation software
Source: Feedback Research, November 2005*

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