

AUTOMOTIVE

Bluetooth connectivity, power locks essential features: CarMax

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Consumers are more actively seeking certain technology feature for their next car purchases. Image credit: Audi

By KATIE TAMOLA

Consumers are increasingly looking beyond the basics when vehicle shopping and prioritizing tech features, according to a new [study](#) from automotive retailer CarMax.

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When considering features while buying a vehicle, 36.7 percent of respondents said tech features were very important, while 49.1 percent said they wish their current car had more tech features. The new data indicates that technology has become an expectation when car shopping, with top features including cruise control, power windows, power locks and Bluetooth connectivity.

CarMax surveyed 1,026 current vehicle owners in April 2021 about technology features, with 55.6 percent of the respondents being men and 44.2 percent being women, and three nonbinary respondents. The average age of respondents was 39.2.

More than a set of wheels

Consumers ostensibly are pivoting from desiring certain technological features in their vehicles to outright expecting them.

When listing which features were already present in their cars, 71 percent of respondents said cruise control was included in their cars, while 71 percent also indicated power windows and locks were included and 67 percent noted Bluetooth connectivity was present in their cars.



The top car brands ranked highest for best tech features are also all luxury brands. Image credit: BMW

Fifty-five percent said power seats were included, 45 percent said they had a rearview camera, 34 percent noted seat heaters, 32 percent listed a navigation system and 29 percent listed parking sensors. One in four respondents also noted having a remote start or smart key.

The features respondents use most on a regular basis included power windows at 61 percent, power locks at 59 percent, Bluetooth at 53 percent, rearview camera at 38 percent, power seats at 31 percent and cruise control at 28 percent.

Few respondents reportedly used less common features, including seat massagers at 2 percent, air-conditioned seats at 4 percent and automated parking at 5 percent. These are more common features seen in luxury vehicles.

The top car brands ranked highest for best tech features are also all luxury brands, with 40 percent of respondents ranking Tesla best, 27 percent listing BMW as best, 24 percent ranking Mercedes-Benz as best and 20 percent ranking Audi best, respectively.

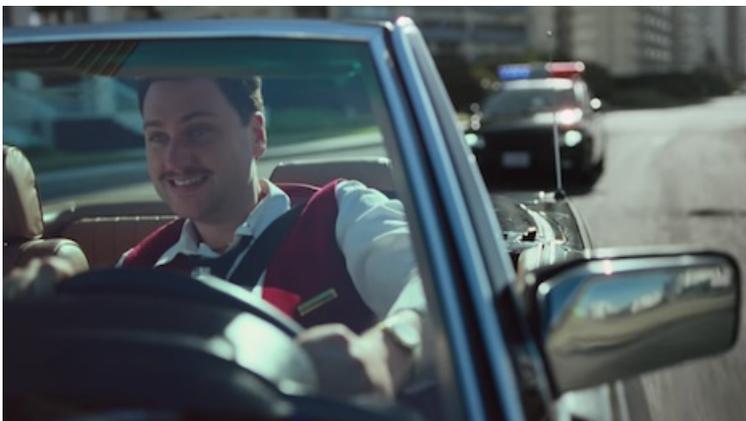
Consumers also indicated which technology is a "must-have" for their next car, listing Bluetooth connectivity and power locks first at 55 percent, power windows at 53 percent, rearview camera at 46 percent and power seats at 43 percent. Other technology on consumers' wish lists included cruise control at 41 percent, blind spot camera and monitoring at 34 percent and navigation systems at 32 percent.

Consumers are also actively contemplating their most desired vehicle features for the future, with 43 percent of respondents saying their most desired tech feature is self-driving cars, 36 percent saying they want night vision capabilities, 35 percent seeking smart headlights and 33 percent seeking ultra-classic airbags which help stop cars.

Thirty-three percent of respondents are also hoping for drowsiness detection features in the future, while 30 percent indicate wanting energy-storing body panels, 22 percent want digitally connected smart cars, 21 percent are hoping for flying cars and 15 percent want augmented reality cars.

What's in your car?

As the luxury automotive sphere evolves, there is a continued emphasis on fostering technological offerings.



"Valet Guys" follows three valets throughout their day of parking cars. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

Earlier this year, Mercedes-Benz unveiled an entertaining and action-packed preview at its future-ready intelligent park pilot feature.

The "Valet Guys" film campaign introduced the new S-Class model equipped with technology to pull in and out of parking spaces in parking garages equipped with automated valet parking (AVP). The S-Class is the first series-produced vehicle to feature technology required for future infrastructure-based AVP operation, therefore is prepared to operate driverless through smartphone command in the future ([see story](#)).

Brands are also using storytelling campaigns with notable actors which also highlight vehicles' technology features.

Earlier this month, Toyota Corp.'s Lexus tasked Kumail Nanjiani, actor, comedian and star of Marvel Studios' upcoming film Eternals, with finding a safe parking spot for the new Lexus IS 500 sports sedan.

A Lexus IS 500 sports sedan speeds through the streets, dodging obstacles and flying objects. In a matter of seconds, Kingo is revealed to be driving the car. Through the vehicle's Bluetooth dashboard system, he receives a text message from Sersi, Ms. Chan's character in the feature film ([see story](#)).

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