

Study: 89% Of Car Buyers Want Broadcast Radio As Standard Equipment.

Nov 10, 2021



Nearly 90% of recent and prospective car buyers in the U.S. say a broadcast radio tuner should be available in every vehicle. That's according to a study conducted by Edison Research that also reveals that the availability of radio has a major impact on consumers' vehicle purchasing decisions: 81% of prospective car buyers in the U.S. say they would be less likely to buy or lease a vehicle that is not equipped with a built-in radio tuner.

The survey – commissioned by WorldDAB in partnership with Radioplayer and sponsored by the NAB, Commercial Radio Australia, and Xperi – interviewed those who had recently purchased or leased a new car, or plan to do so in the near future. In addition to the U.S., the survey also conducted interviews among car buyers in Australia, France, Germany, Italy and the UK.

When considering the most valued standard-fit audio features in a new car, having a broadcast radio tuner ranks highest for prospective car buyers (rated “important” by 88%), ahead of USB ports (rated “important” by 85%) and the availability of Bluetooth (rated “important” by 84%), and well ahead of smartphone mirroring technology (Android Auto is rated “important” by 65% and Apple CarPlay by 60%).

The study also found that day-to-day consumption of broadcast radio among motorists in the U.S. remains significantly higher than for any other form of audio content. More than half (54%) of respondents say they listen to broadcast radio in the car “frequently,” versus 29% for online streaming music services and 19% for CDs.

A majority (78%) agree with the statement: “Radio provides a better listening experience in the car than other types of audio sources.” Respondents say the primary reason for listening is “to get news and information,” cited by 51%, followed by “to hear favorite songs” (45%).

Additionally, 91% say it’s “important” that radio remain free to listen to. Motorists worry about charges associated with streamed content, with 71% of those who currently listen to audio via their mobile device say they are “concerned” about how much data they are using.

Among the most-desired added-value in-car radio features: having the “ability to search for radio stations using voice controls” is the most popular, mentioned by 56% of respondents, followed by “provision of information about content” (52%).

Today’s car buyers in the U.S. continue to consume radio at high levels, says the study, with 84% indicating they have listened in the last week and 69% saying they listen at least once per day. The car remains the most popular location for listening to radio, cited by an average of 90% of respondents, followed by 67% who listen at home and 43% who listen at work.

“This is a major piece of consumer research covering some of the biggest automotive markets, yet attitudes about radio among car buyers across all of the countries surveyed were uncannily similar,” Edison Senior VP Tom Webster said in a release. “It’s clear, too, that broadcast radio was singled out specifically as a must-have option. Roughly two-thirds of motorists across all countries surveyed indicated that they ‘would not listen to their favorite radio stations’ if they were only available online. For consumers the availability of free, easy-to-access broadcast radio as standard is an essential part of the in-car entertainment system and looks set to remain so.”