



CarGurus Study Reveals How AI and Omnichannel Shopping are Shaping the Car Buying and Selling Experience

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Eighth Annual Consumer Insights Report finds shoppers are blending online convenience with in-person guidance, turning to AI and mobile tools to navigate the market confidently

BOSTON, December 3, 2025 – [CarGurus](#), the No. 1 most visited automotive shopping site in the U.S.¹, today released its U.S. Consumer Insights Report. The eighth annual study examines shopper preferences, challenges, and trends along the car buying and selling journey.

Surveying over 3,000 recent car buyers and sellers, the study uncovers shifts in consumer behavior—from their motivations and research habits, to the types of vehicles and dealerships they consider. Even with economic challenges, consumers remain highly satisfied. The study shows they are embracing digital tools to personalize their journey, boost confidence in their decisions, and streamline steps throughout the process, while still valuing in-person touchpoints before completing a purchase or sale.

Highlights from the 2025 Consumer Insights Report include:

- **Consumers lean on digital tools more than ever, but still value in-person support:** Comfort with online car shopping is at an all-time high—83% of consumers prefer to do more from home, up from 72% in 2022. Even so, most (86%) still choose to see the vehicle in person before buying. The top steps preferred in person include the test drive, price negotiation, and assessing a car's reliability, showing the important role dealers play in supporting final purchase steps.
- **Buyers are casting a wider net:** Shoppers are considering more makes, models, and dealerships to find the best fit. A majority of consumers now consider three or more brands when starting the process (53% in 2025 vs. 43% in 2024), and 66% were flexible on the make/model. Of those who replaced a vehicle, 70% switched to a different brand. Shoppers are also visiting more dealerships to find the right car at the right price. In 2025, 61% of respondents visited two or more dealerships, up from 54% in 2024.
- **Shoppers rely on AI and mobile to support decisions:** As consumers consider more options, they are leaning into digital tools to guide decision-making. Most buyers and sellers (80%) are open to using AI, and 26% are already utilizing it. Consumers are most interested in using AI to compare vehicles (44%), find listings (40%), and summarize reviews on cars (39%) and dealerships (36%). Shopper segments most open to AI are Millennials (86%) and Gen X (77%).

Notably, CarGurus users are more AI-open (88%), benefitting from resources like [CarGurus' AI-powered Discover tool](#)—available online and in the app—to research options, compare vehicles, and uncover their best match listings. The high reliance on mobile devices underscores digital adoption in car buying and selling. Over half (54%) use their phones more than desktops, and an additional 31% use both equally. Gen X is the most mobile-oriented (60%), followed by Gen Z and Millennials (both at 52%).

- **Shoppers are adapting to economic uncertainty:** Most respondents (73%) said economic factors influenced their buying/selling decisions this year, prompting 31% to buy used over new, 24% to hold onto their cars longer, and 23% to delay the process. On the whole, though, transaction timelines were consistent with last year. Over 80% of buyers and 86% of sellers finished the process in under a month.
- **Car buying becomes more personal:** While need-based reasons remain the primary driver among buyers, “treating myself” rose to the No. 3 purchase motivation in 2025 (up from No. 4 in 2024). This aligns with a growing sense of personal connection to vehicles, as 69% say a car reflects their identity—up from 49% in 2022. With more new and used cars on the market today, shoppers may be feeling encouraged by the wider selection and broader mix of price points available.

“Car buyers and sellers are more empowered than ever to personalize their journey, both online and in-person,” said Alison Ciummei, Vice President of Product Marketing and Customer Insights at CarGurus. “They’re using digital tools to research more deeply, take actions from home to feel more prepared for a transaction, and make decisions that lead to a more seamless dealership experience. At CarGurus, we’re proud to support that evolution with deep vehicle information, the largest selection of cars², the No. 1 downloaded car shopping app³, and AI-powered features that build more confidence along every step.”

The full Consumer Insights Report from CarGurus is available [here](#).

Background and Methodology

The CarGurus Consumer Insights Report is primarily sourced from a May/June 2025 study conducted by CarGurus and NielsenIQ, a leading market research firm. The study included a survey of 3,030 past-four-month auto purchasers/sellers of new or used

vehicles. Respondents could qualify as both buyers and sellers, are 18 to 65 years old, and weighted to be representative of the U.S. auto market in terms of demographics (age, gender, income, etc.) and market factors (new/used, price point, etc.). In some cases figures may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

About CarGurus, Inc.

CarGurus (Nasdaq: CARG) is the leading multinational automotive platform helping consumers and dealers confidently buy and sell vehicles. Founded in 2006 with a mission to bring more trust and transparency to car shopping, CarGurus is the No. 1 visited automotive shopping site in the U.S.¹ with the largest selection of inventory and network of dealers.² CarGurus' unmatched selection, trusted automotive insights, and data-driven products and solutions support each shopper's journey — from online research and shopping to in-dealership decisions — to empower them at every step. And, by translating data from billions of monthly site interactions, CarGurus provides dealers a personalized, predictive intelligence platform with software solutions that helps them run their businesses more efficiently and profitably at all stages of inventory acquisition and pricing, marketing, and conversion to sale.

CarGurus operates online marketplaces in the U.S., U.K., and Canada. The company's network of brands includes PistonHeads, the largest online motoring community in the U.K.⁴, and Autolist, a U.S.- based online marketplace.

To learn more about CarGurus, visit www.cargurus.com.

¹Similarweb: Traffic and Engagement Report [Cars.com, Autotrader.com, TrueCar.com, CARFAX.com Listings (defined as CARFAX.com Total Visits minus Vehicle History Reports)], Q3 2025, U.S.

²Compared to Autotrader.com (YipitData July/August 2025), Cars.com, TrueCar.com (YipitData as of September 30, 2025), and CARFAX (Joreca as of September 30, 2025).

³Sensor Tower Data: #1 downloaded Automotive Marketplace & Retailers app across all active markets (US, CA, and UK) for the last eight consecutive quarters.

⁴Similarweb: Traffic Insights, Q3 2025, U.K.

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