

Smartphone Connectivity Now Most Common Problem Cited by New-Vehicle Owners, J.D. Power Finds

Ram Ranks Highest Overall in Initial Quality; Lexus Ranks Highest among Premium Brands

TROY, Mich.: 31 Aug. 2021 — New-vehicle quality improves 2% from 2020, according to the J.D. Power 2021 U.S. Initial Quality Study (IQS),SM released today. This is slightly lower than the average rate of improvement (3%) seen during the past decade. Infotainment systems are the primary area preventing faster improvement, remaining the most problematic area for new-vehicle owners.

“Owners are caught in the middle when vehicle and phone technologies don’t properly connect,” said **Dave Sargent, vice president of automotive quality at J.D. Power**. “This year there are many examples of smartphone technology not working as intended in new vehicles. With more vehicles being fitted with the wireless technology owners want, the study reveals an increase in connectivity problems between smartphones and vehicles, leaving many owners unhappy.”

Initial quality is measured by the number of problems experienced per 100 vehicles (PP100) during the first 90 days of ownership, with a lower score reflecting higher quality. The industry average of 162 PP100 is 4 PP100 better than in 2020, with 20 of 32 brands improving their quality from 2020.

Following are key findings of the 2021 study:

- **Infotainment remains most problematic category:** One in four (25%) of all problems cited by new-vehicle owners are in the infotainment category, and six of the top 10 problems across the industry are infotainment-related.
- **Smartphone connection is top problem:** For the first time since 2011, voice recognition is not the top problem cited by new-vehicle owners. The top complaint this year is Android Auto/Apple CarPlay connectivity, which worsens significantly. This is a particular problem when these systems are operated wirelessly, which is increasingly common. “Owners want wireless connectivity, and the industry has responded,” Sargent said. “However, this has created a bigger technical challenge for both automakers and tech companies. Automakers generally are the ones facing the wrath of owners, but this is definitely a shared problem. Owners don’t care who’s at fault—they just want their phone and their vehicle to talk to each other.”
- **Mass market brands continue to outperform premium brands:** For the past six years, owners of mass market vehicles have cited fewer problems, on average, than owners of premium vehicles. Premium brands generally equip their vehicles with more and more complex technology, which can cause problems for some owners. Lexus (144 PP100) and Genesis (148 PP100) are the only premium brands that perform better than the industry average.
- **Nissan Maxima achieves highest score of any model:** The Nissan Maxima, with just 85 PP100, has the best score of any model in this year’s study.
- **Tesla’s unofficial score improves from 2020:** Tesla receives an initial quality score of 231 PP100, an improvement of 19 PP100 from 2020. The automaker is not officially ranked among other brands in the study as it doesn’t meet ranking criteria. Unlike other manufacturers, Tesla doesn’t grant J.D. Power permission to survey its owners in 15 states where it is required. However, Tesla’s score was calculated based on a sample of surveys from owners in the other 35 states.

Highest-Ranking Brands and Models

Ram is the highest-ranking brand in overall initial quality for the first time, with a score of 128 PP100.

Dodge (139 PP100) ranks second, followed by **Lexus** (144 PP100)—the highest-ranking premium brand—and **Mitsubishi** (144 PP100) in a tie, and **Nissan** (146 PP100).

The parent corporation receiving the most model-level awards is **Hyundai Motor Group** (seven awards), followed by **Toyota Motor Corporation** (five); **BMW AG** (four); **Nissan Motor Co. Ltd.** (three); and **General Motors Company** and **Stellantis NV** (with two each). Among brands, **Kia** receives the most segment awards (five), followed by **BMW** (four).

- Hyundai Motor Group models that rank highest in their respective segments are **Genesis G80**; **Hyundai Accent**; **Kia Forte**; **Kia Sedona**; **Kia Soul**; **Kia Sportage**; and **Kia Telluride**.
- Toyota Motor Corp. models that rank highest in their segments are **Lexus RC**; **Lexus RX**; **Lexus UX**; **Toyota Sequoia**; and **Toyota Tundra**.
- BMW AG models that rank highest in their segments are **BMW 2 Series**; **BMW X4**; **BMW X6**; and **BMW X7**.
- Nissan Motor Co. Ltd. models that rank highest in their segments are **Nissan Altima**; **Nissan Maxima**; and **Nissan Murano**.
- General Motors Company models that rank highest in their segments are **Cadillac CT5** and **Chevrolet Corvette**.
- Stellantis NV models that rank highest in their segments are **Jeep Gladiator** and **Ram 2500/3500**.

Plant Quality Awards

Toyota Motor Corporation's Motomachi 2 (Japan) plant, which produces the Lexus LC, receives the Platinum Plant Quality Award for producing vehicles with the fewest defects or malfunctions. Plant quality awards are based solely on defects and malfunctions and exclude design-related problems.

Nissan Motor Co. Ltd.'s Smyrna 1 (Tennessee) plant, which produces the Nissan Murano, and BMW AG's Dingolfing 2 (Germany) plant, which produces the BMW 7 Series and BMW 8 Series, receive the Gold Plant Quality Award for the Americas and Europe/Africa regions, respectively.

The 2021 U.S. Initial Quality Study, now in its 35th year, is based on responses from 110,827 purchasers and lessees of new 2021 model-year vehicles who were surveyed early in the ownership period. The study is based on a 223-question battery organized into nine vehicle categories (infotainment; features, controls and displays; exterior; driving assistance; interior; powertrain; seats; driving experience; and climate) designed to provide manufacturers with information to facilitate the identification of problems and drive product improvement. The study was fielded from February through July 2021.

Find detailed information on vehicle quality, as well as model photos and specs, at [jdpower.com/quality](https://www.jdpower.com/quality).

For more information about the U.S. Initial Quality Study, visit [http://www.jdpower.com/resource/us-initial-quality-study-iqs](https://www.jdpower.com/resource/us-initial-quality-study-iqs).

See the online press release at [http://www.jdpower.com/pr-id/2021066](https://www.jdpower.com/pr-id/2021066).

About J.D. Power

J.D. Power is a global leader in consumer insights, advisory services and data and analytics. A pioneer in the use of big data, artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic modeling capabilities to understand consumer behavior, J.D. Power has been delivering incisive industry intelligence on customer interactions with brands and products for more than 50 years. The world's leading businesses across major industries rely on J.D. Power to guide their customer-facing strategies.

J.D. Power is headquartered in Troy, Mich., and has offices in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific. To learn more about the company's business offerings, visit [JDPower.com/business](https://www.jdpower.com/business). The J.D. Power auto shopping tool can be found at [JDPower.com](https://www.jdpower.com).

Media Relations Contacts

Geno Effler, J.D. Power; West Coast; 714-621-6224; media.relations@jdpa.com

Shane Smith; East Coast; 424-903-3665; ssmith@pacificcommunicationsgroup.com

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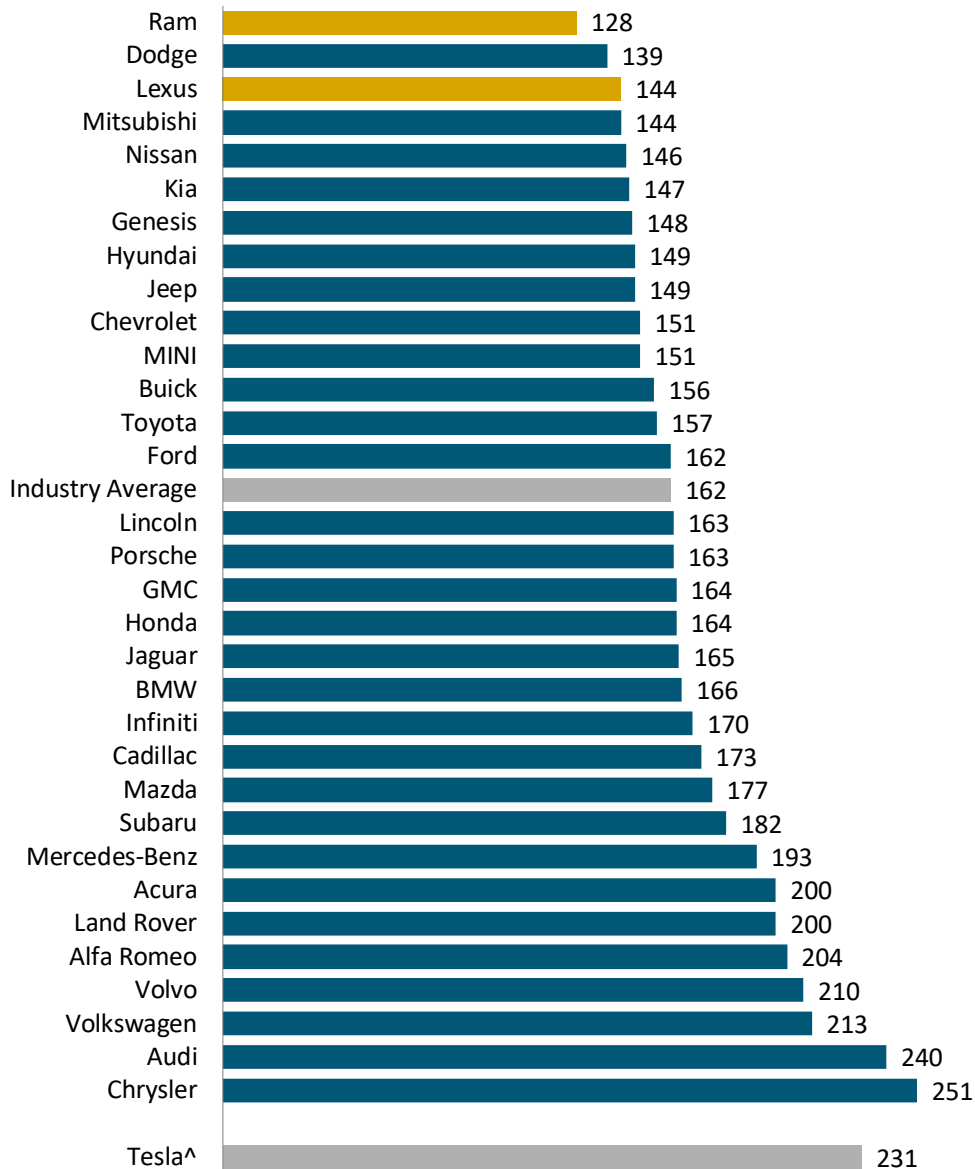
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NOTE: Five charts follow.

J.D. Power 2021 U.S. Initial Quality StudySM

Brand Ranking

Problems per 100 Vehicles (PP100)



Note: [^]Brand is not rank eligible because it does not meet study award criteria.

Source: J.D. Power 2021 U.S. Initial Quality StudySM

Charts and graphs extracted from this press release for use by the media must be accompanied by a statement identifying J.D. Power as the publisher and the study from which it originated as the source. Rankings are based on numerical scores, and not necessarily on statistical significance. No advertising or other promotional use can be made of the information in this release or J.D. Power survey results without the express prior written consent of J.D. Power.

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Highest Initial Quality Model

Nissan Maxima

Top Three Models per Segment

Car Segments

Small Car*

Highest Ranked: Hyundai Accent
Chevrolet Spark

Small Premium Car*

Highest Ranked: BMW 2 Series
Acura ILX

Compact Car

Highest Ranked: Kia Forte
Nissan Sentra (Tie)
Toyota Corolla (Tie)

Compact Premium Car

Highest Ranked: Lexus RC
BMW 4 Series
Lexus IS

Premium Sporty Car

Highest Ranked: Chevrolet Corvette
Porsche 718
Lexus LC

Midsize Car

Highest Ranked: Nissan Altima
Chevrolet Malibu
Toyota Camry

Midsize Premium Car*

Highest Ranked: Cadillac CT5
Lexus ES

Upper Midsize Premium Car

Highest Ranked: Genesis G80
BMW 5 Series
Mercedes-Benz E-Class

Large Car

Highest Ranked: Nissan Maxima
Chrysler 300
Dodge Charger

**No other model in this segment performs at or above segment average.*

Models must have sufficient sample to be considered for the highest initial quality model award. Models are considered from all segments regardless of segment eligibility.

There must be at least three models with 80% of market sales or four models with 67% of the market sales in any given award segment for an award to be presented. In the Compact Sporty Car, Large Premium Car and Midsize Sporty Car segments, these criteria were not met, thus no awards have been issued.

Source: J.D. Power 2021 U.S. Initial Quality StudySM

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Top Three Models per Segment

SUV Segments

Small SUV	Midsize Premium SUV*
Highest Ranked: Kia Soul Mitsubishi Outlander Sport Chevrolet Trax	Highest Ranked: Lexus RX
Small Premium SUV	Upper Midsize SUV
Highest Ranked: Lexus UX Audi Q3 Volvo XC40	Highest Ranked: Kia Telluride Chevrolet Traverse Toyota Highlander
Compact SUV	Upper Midsize Premium SUV
Highest Ranked: Kia Sportage Hyundai Tucson Buick Envision	Highest Ranked: BMW X6 Genesis GV80 Porsche Cayenne
Compact Premium SUV	Large SUV*
Highest Ranked: BMW X4 Lincoln Corsair Porsche Macan	Highest Ranked: Toyota Sequoia Chevrolet Tahoe
Midsize SUV	Large Premium SUV
Highest Ranked: Nissan Murano Chevrolet Blazer Jeep Grand Cherokee	Highest Ranked: BMW X7 Lexus LX (Tie) Toyota Land Cruiser (Tie)

*No other model in this segment performs at or above segment average.

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Top Three Models per Segment

Van and Pickup Segments

Minivan

Highest Ranked: Kia Sedona

Honda Odyssey

Toyota Sienna

Midsized Pickup

Highest Ranked: Jeep Gladiator

Ford Ranger

Chevrolet Colorado

Large Light Duty Pickup

Highest Ranked: Toyota Tundra

Ram 1500

Nissan Titan

Large Heavy Duty Pickup*

Highest Ranked: Ram 2500/3500

Ford Super Duty

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Plant Assembly Line Quality Award Recipients

Based on Models Produced for U.S. Market

	Problems per 100 Vehicles (Defects/Malfunctions Only)	Model(s) Produced at Plant
Platinum Award		
Toyota Motor Corporation—Motomachi 2, Japan	14	Lexus LC
North/South America		
Nissan Motor Co., Ltd.—Smyrna 1, TN <i>Gold</i>	20	Nissan Murano
Toyota Motor Corporation—Cambridge South, Ontario, Canada (TMMC) <i>Silver</i>	25	Lexus RX
Honda Motor Company—Alliston 2, Ontario, Canada (HCM) <i>Bronze</i>	26	Honda CR-V
Asia Pacific		
Toyota Motor Corporation—Kyushu 2, Japan (TMK) <i>Silver</i>	22	Lexus RX
General Motors Company—Bupyeong 2, Korea <i>Bronze</i>	24	Buick Encore, Chevrolet Trax
General Motors Company—Yantai Dongyue 2, China (North) <i>Bronze</i>	24	Buick Envision
Toyota Motor Corporation—Kyushu 1, Japan (TMK) <i>Bronze</i>	24	Lexus NX, Lexus UX
Toyota Motor Corporation—Tahara Lexus, Japan <i>Bronze</i>	24	Lexus IS, Lexus LS, Lexus NX, Lexus RC
Toyota Motor Corporation—Takaoka 1, Japan <i>Bronze</i>	24	Toyota Corolla
Toyota Motor Corporation—Yoshiwara, Japan (TABC) <i>Bronze</i>	24	Lexus LX, Toyota Land Cruiser
Europe and Africa		
BMW AG—Dingolfing 2, Germany <i>Gold</i>	21	BMW 7 Series, BMW 8 Series
BMW AG—Oxford, United Kingdom <i>Silver</i>	24	MINI Clubman, MINI Cooper
BMW AG—Dingolfing 1, Germany <i>Bronze</i>	27	BMW 4 Series, BMW 5 Series

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