Manufacturer Apps for Gas-Powered Vehicles Still Struggle to Meet Owner Expectations, J.D. Power Finds

Vehicle Status, Functionality, Speed/Stability Remain Hurdles to Higher Satisfaction with User Experience

TROY, Mich.: 1 Dec. 2022 — While remote control function speeds and accuracy are improving on original equipment manufacturer (OEM) mobile apps for vehicles with internal combustion engines (ICE), many apps still do not execute the desired task in a reasonable amount of time. According to the J.D. Power 2022 U.S. OEM ICE App Benchmark Study, many apps fall short of owners’ desire to complete a task in 10 seconds or less.

Overall satisfaction is 699 (on a 1,000-point scale), which highlights manufacturers’ need for continued focus on app content, transparency, accuracy and software stability. No single OEM app is the top performer in all of these key areas.

J.D. Power continues to work with manufacturers to improve the user experience with their brand’s app. The OEM smartphone app continues to be problematic, as evidenced in the J.D. Power 2022 U.S. Initial Quality Study (IQS) as owners find the mobile app to be the second-most problematic feature on their vehicles. Issues with connectivity and incorrect information are plaguing apps and creating dissatisfaction for users which causes many owners to abandon the brand’s app.

“Some OEM apps are quickly implementing new functionality such as vehicle settings, advanced climate control functionality, and Phone as a Key (PaaK),” said Jason Norton, senior manager of global automotive consulting at J.D. Power. “However, many OEM apps still lack basic functionality. For example, while an app may provide users the ability to lock or unlock their vehicle remotely, the app fails to provide information on if their vehicle is locked or unlocked. The lack of current vehicle status creates an unknown for users and hinders the overall usefulness of the app.”

Following are key findings of the 2022 study:

- **Phone as a Key (PaaK):** Only 16% of OEM ICE apps provide Phone as a Key (PaaK) technology, falling well short of the 40% provided by OEM EV apps. As this is a highly desired feature among vehicle owners and greatly increases app usage, more manufacturers should be looking to include this technology.

- **Dedicated climate control functionality scarcity:** While 94% of manufacturers provide remote start within their OEM-branded app, only 34% are offering more advanced features. For example, advanced climate functions provide owners the ability to select a specific cabin temperature and activate heated/cooled seats, defrost and heated steering wheel. Allowing users to precisely select the desired precondition of the vehicle prior to departure is critical to higher customer satisfaction.

- **Dealership support continues to affect app usage:** More than three-fourths (86%) of survey respondents who currently use an OEM-branded app say they received dealership support when picking up their new vehicle.

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1 J.D. Power 2022 OEM EV Benchmark StudySM
Most consumers remain unwilling to pay for app services: Nearly 60% of respondents said they are still unwilling to pay for an OEM-branded app, which is unchanged from 2021. Among those who are willing to pay for an OEM-branded app, 27% said they would not pay more than $5 per month.

Among the 32 brands in the study, the top-performing mobile apps are **Mercedes me connect, my[GM] apps, MySubaru** and **MyINFINITI**. Each of these top-performing apps execute well in each of the 12 categories analyzed in the study. However, none of these top-performing apps rank best in class for more than half of the categories reviewed.

“The study results underscore the need for every OEM—even the top performers—to focus on continuous improvement to ensure that the content and speed of the app are meeting customers’ needs and expectations,” Norton said.

The OEM ICE App Benchmark Study gauges owners’ experience with their brand’s mobile app. Insights are derived from surveying new-vehicle owners and an expert benchmarking assessment of the most relevant mobile apps. Results are based on a standardized evaluation approach relying on more than 270 best practices for vehicle apps. The expert benchmarking includes apps from 32 brands that sell gas-powered vehicles in the United States. The usage survey data represents more than 1,000 owners who said that they have used their brand’s app. The study was fielded in October 2022.


See the online press release at [http://www.jdpower.com/pr-id/2022181](http://www.jdpower.com/pr-id/2022181).

**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 has offices in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific. To learn more about the company’s business offerings, visit [JDPower.com/business](http://JDPower.com/business). The J.D. Power auto shopping tool can be found at [JDPower.com](http://JDPower.com).

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