

Appraiser Blog

Why New Car Tech Features Are Frustrating Buyers in 2024



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New car models in 2024 are loaded with the latest tech, from advanced safety systems to high-end infotainment setups. On paper, these innovations seem like a dream come true for modern drivers—promising ease, convenience, and even a touch of luxury.

But, when it comes down to real-world use, many buyers are feeling more overwhelmed than impressed. So, what's going on? Why are these shiny new features turning into sources of frustration rather than joy?



The Allure of Tech-Heavy Vehicles

There's no denying that technology has dramatically transformed the automotive landscape. Over the last decade, cars have evolved from simple modes of

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transportation into sophisticated machines that can almost drive themselves. Whether it's lane-keeping assistance, gesture controls, or extensive touchscreen displays, today's vehicles offer a level of functionality that was once the stuff of science fiction.

However, as automakers rush to outdo one another with the latest gadgets and gizmos, they might be losing sight of something crucial: the user experience. And as it turns out, more tech doesn't always equate to better satisfaction.

Tech Overload: When Innovation Turns into Irritation

One of the main issues buyers face with new car tech is the steep learning curve. Imagine this: you've just driven your brand-new car off the lot, excited to try out all the bells and whistles. But soon, you're faced with a barrage of unfamiliar features, cryptic menus, and settings that seem anything but intuitive. What should be a thrilling experience quickly turns into a stressful one, as you spend more time flipping through the owner's manual than enjoying the drive.

Gesture Controls: A Prime Example of Tech Gone Wrong

Take gesture controls, for example. On the surface, the idea of controlling your car with a simple wave of your hand sounds incredibly futuristic. Yet, many drivers are finding that these systems are more trouble than they're worth. According to recent studies, gesture controls have one of the highest rates of reported issues among new car tech features. Drivers complain that the system often misinterprets their intentions or fails to respond at all, leading to frustration and, in some cases, outright abandonment of the feature.

The Misstep of Passenger Display Screens

Then there are the passenger display screens—those extra monitors that automakers are increasingly adding to higher-end models. While they might look impressive, many owners are scratching their heads and wondering, "Do I really need this?" In fact, only a small percentage of vehicles regularly carry front passengers, making these screens more of a novelty than a necessity. Even worse, dealers report struggling to educate

buyers on how to properly use these displays, leading to a lack of engagement and overall dissatisfaction.

The Double-Edged Sword of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) have become a staple in modern vehicles, with features like adaptive cruise control and lane-keeping assist promising to enhance both safety and convenience. And in many cases, these systems do deliver—especially when they tackle straightforward tasks like monitoring blind spots.

But when it comes to the more complex, semi-autonomous features, problems start to surface. Instead of making driving easier, these advanced systems can sometimes overwhelm drivers with too many alerts or corrections, leading to more stress rather than less.

Many drivers report that these features can be overly intrusive, delivering a barrage of warnings and corrections that detract from the driving experience. Some systems are so aggressive in their operation that they cause more stress than relief, prompting drivers to disable them entirely. The irony is that the very technologies designed to make driving safer and easier can end up having the opposite effect.

The Tesla Conundrum: A Case Study in Growing Pains

Tesla, known for its cutting-edge technology and fanatical customer base, is experiencing its own set of challenges. As the company expands its reach beyond early adopters to a more mainstream audience, certain features that were once celebrated are now causing issues. The direct driver monitoring system, for instance, has received mixed reviews from new owners, some of whom find the constant monitoring invasive and problematic.

This shift highlights a critical point: while tech-savvy consumers might embrace these advanced features, the average buyer may not be ready for—or interested in—such high levels of automation and surveillance. As Tesla and other automakers continue to

push the envelope, they'll need to strike a delicate balance between innovation and usability.

Are Automakers Pushing Too Much Too Soon?

So, what's the bottom line here? In the rush to cram vehicles with the newest tech, car manufacturers might be overlooking a key principle: just because it's possible doesn't mean it's practical. Eager to differentiate themselves in a competitive market, they're rolling out features that, while flashy on paper, might not hit the mark for the average driver.

The Need for a Better Return on Investment

As more buyers express frustration with complex tech, the industry may need to reconsider its approach. A more measured rollout of new features, with a greater emphasis on user experience and real-world benefits, could help mitigate the current backlash. After all, it's not enough to simply load a car with technology—if it doesn't enhance the driving experience, what's the point?

The Road Ahead: Finding the Right Balance

Moving forward, automakers might do well to focus less on quantity and more on quality when it comes to car tech. Features that address specific pain points, like blind spot monitoring or rearview cameras, are generally well-received because they provide clear, tangible benefits. On the other hand, systems that are seen as gimmicky or overly complicated can quickly turn buyers off.

Ultimately, the key to success in automotive innovation lies in understanding the customer. What do drivers really want? What are their biggest concerns? By answering these questions and tailoring technology to meet those needs, automakers can ensure that their advances are seen as true enhancements rather than unnecessary distractions.

As we drive into the future, one question remains: Will automakers find the right balance between innovation and usability, or will tech overload continue to steer buyers in the wrong direction?