



## Press Release

### **J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Automotive Websites Focused on Greater Usefulness Integrate Social Media Throughout**

#### Overall Satisfaction with Automotive Websites Declines Significantly, as Sites Adapt to Accommodate Both Tablet and Desktop Computer Users

**WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 25 January 2012** — Many of the most useful automotive websites share a common thread—they consistently integrate access to social media platforms throughout their pages, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Manufacturer Website Evaluation Study<sup>SM</sup> (MWES)—Wave 1 released today.

The semiannual study, now in its 13th year, measures the usefulness of automotive manufacturer websites during the new-vehicle shopping process by examining four key measures: speed, appearance, navigation and information/content.

All automotive brand websites provide users with the ability to access various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, to connect with the brand's social media presence or share information about a brand or model under consideration. However, there is wide variation among websites in the pervasiveness of social media access—for example, whether it's available from only the site's home page, or from a variety of pages.

The study finds websites that are the most useful tend to provide users with social media access from a variety of pages, including the home page, model pages, configurator tool and photo gallery. Brands that do not perform well in usefulness tend to have limited social media availability throughout their sites, such as access only from the home page and model pages.

“The widespread usage of social media has created an expectation of constant availability,” said Arianne Walker, senior director of media and marketing solutions at J.D. Power and Associates. “By integrating links to social media platforms throughout several site features, automotive brand websites enhance convenience for users and also increase the possibility that website users will promote the brand within their social networks.”

Overall satisfaction with the usefulness of automotive brand websites has decreased significantly to an average of 772 on a 1,000-point scale in Wave 1 of the 2012 study from 784 in Wave 2 of the 2011 study, which was released in August 2011. Much of this decline is due to decreased satisfaction with navigation and information/content. These declines may be attributable to the challenges that automotive brand websites are facing in designing sites that are usable on both tablets and desktop computers.

While only 20 percent of new-vehicle shoppers say they own a tablet, among those who do, 47 percent say they have used their tablet to access automotive information. Tablet ownership is expected to increase during the next several years, which makes it particularly important for brand websites to be able to accommodate both tablets and desktop computers without sacrificing usability on either type of device.

“As automotive brand websites attempt to accommodate the dimensions, resolution and layout best suited for tablet use, some have changed their design in ways that inhibit usage on desktop computers,” said Walker. “For example, pages that require scrolling to view all of the content on a particular page may be preferred by tablet users, but they are quite frustrating for desktop computer users, who are used to clicking to access content directly, rather than finding it on the page by scrolling.”

In addition to differing levels of tolerance for scrolling, following are two key differences in navigation conventions between tablets and desktop computers:

- For tablet devices, big button links are preferable to text links, while text links work well for website navigation on desktop computers.
- Users of tablet devices often utilize finger swiping to access website content, while desktop computer users click and drag their mouse cursors. Effective websites should allow for navigation both ways.

Acura’s website ranks highest with a score of 808 on a 1,000-point scale, and performs particularly well in the navigation and speed measures. Rounding out the five highest-performing automotive websites are Honda (806), Hyundai (803) and Infiniti and Lincoln, in a tie (802 each).

The 2012 Manufacturer Website Evaluation Study—Wave 1 is based on evaluations from more than 9,400 new-vehicle shoppers who indicate they will be in the market for a new vehicle within the next 24 months. The study was fielded in November 2011.

#### **About J.D. Power and Associates**

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is a global marketing information services company providing performance improvement, social media and customer satisfaction insights and solutions. The company’s quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. For more information on [car reviews and ratings](#), [car insurance](#), [health insurance](#), [cell phone ratings](#), and more, please visit [JDPower.com](http://JDPower.com). J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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#### **J.D. Power and Associates Media Relations Contacts:**

John Tews; Troy, Mich.; (248) 680-6218; [media.relations@jdpa.com](mailto:media.relations@jdpa.com)

Syvetril Perryman; Westlake Village, Calif.; (805) 418-8103; [media.relations@jdpa.com](mailto:media.relations@jdpa.com)

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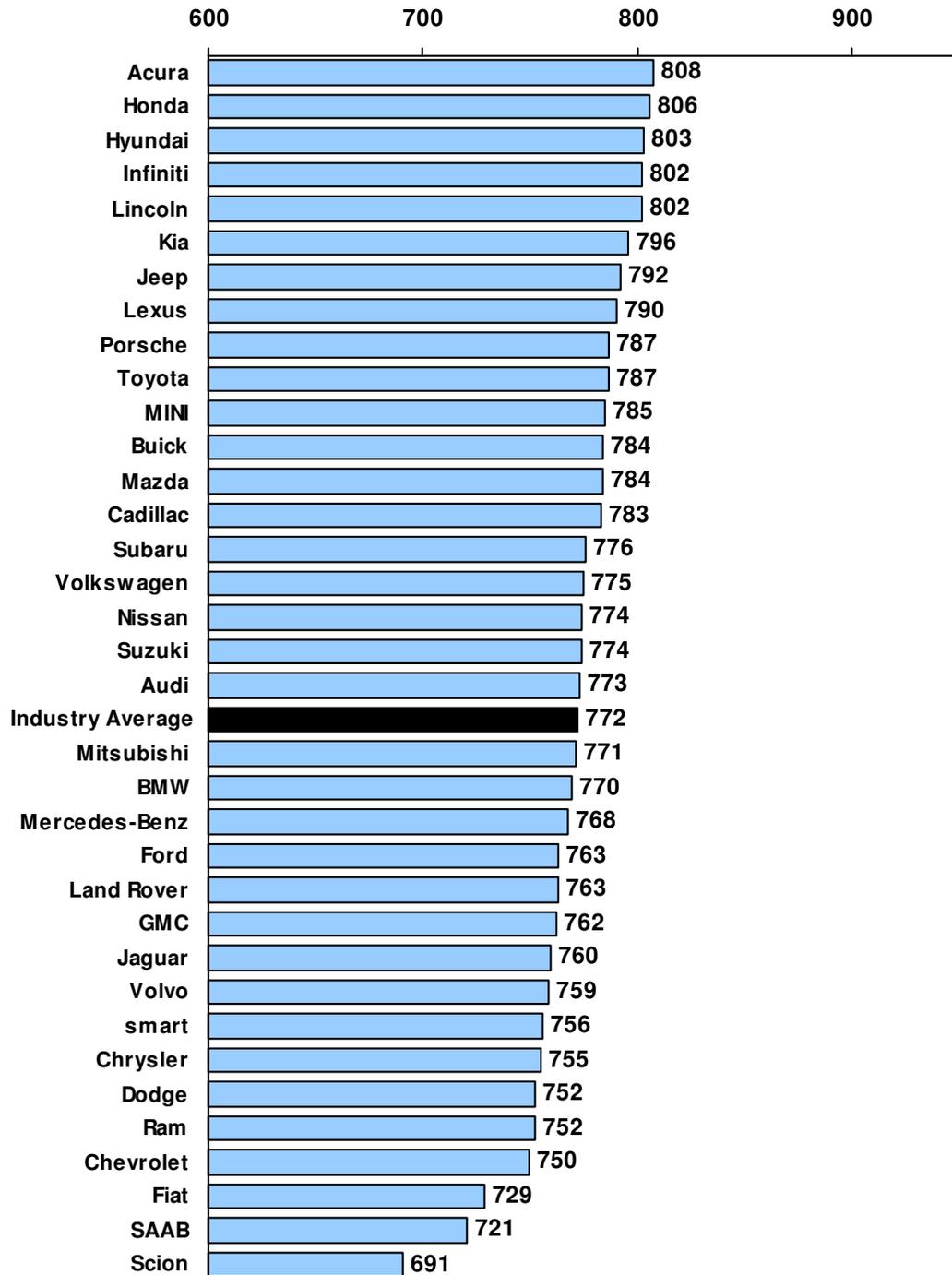
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NOTE: One chart follows.

# J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Manufacturer Website Evaluation Study<sup>SM</sup>—Wave 1

## Manufacturer Website Ranking

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Manufacturer Website Evaluation Study<sup>SM</sup>—Wave 1

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