Car owners frustrated with onboard GPS

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Irritated by your car's built-in GPS? You're not alone.

More car [1] owners are less happy with their factory-installed navigation systems than in the past, says a report out today from J.P. Power and Associates.

A survey of drivers conducted late last year found satisfaction with their navigation systems down 13 points [2] from the prior year. The level of satisfaction was down in all of the six factors measured, but ease of use was the biggest complaint, dropping in score by 25 points.

The other five factors included in the study were routing, navigation display screen, the speed of the system, voice directions, and voice activation. Overall, car owners were frustrated by the complexity of the menu systems, the voice control commands, and the methods for entering destinations.

Turned off by their on-board systems, more people are relying on smartphones to help them on their way. In the new study, 47 percent of those polled said they had downloaded a navigation app onto their phones, compared with 37 percent in 2011.

A full 46 percent said they "definitely would not" or "probably would not" buy a factory-installed navigation system if their smartphones could display the directions on a central screen in their car.

"Manufacturers of navigation systems face a serious challenge as smartphone navigation usage continues to rise and gains preference among vehicle owners," Mike VanNieuwkuyk, executive director of global automotive at J.D. Power and Associates, said in a statement. "Free apps, up-to-date maps, and a familiar interface allow for quicker routing and improved interaction, including better voice recognition. Manufacturers have a window of opportunity to either improve upon the current navigation system platforms or focus on new ways to integrate smartphones."

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