

The Zero Moment of Truth Automotive Study

Google/Shopper Sciences April 2011

Summary

- The path to purchase in the automotive category is quite extensive. The vast majority of shoppers take several months to go from decision to action.
- During this time, shoppers are using a wide array of sources. FMOT, ZMOT and Stimulus all have above average usage.
 - Mobile and Online Social source nodes are the only ones that do not pass the average. However, compared to Online Social and Mobile usage in other categories, the usage for Automotive is quite strong.
- Shoppers clearly identify in-person experiences as the most influential test driving, visiting a dealership, etc.
 - The challenge for brands is generating enough influence during all of the pre-research (ZMOT) sources they interact with to get them to go to a dealership in the first place.
- SMOT participation is incredibly high in this category. Shoppers are eager to talk about their experience after going through such a lengthy process.
- Age truly determines different behavior. Younger shoppers are using many more sources and participating in digital and mobile at a higher rate.
 - However, the younger shopper also has higher expectations and more frustrations with their Internet experience.



Objectives & Methodology

How is auto shopper behavior changing in a digitally powered world?

What role do new media like social & mobile in shopping for automobiles?

How are shoppers' expectations of the physical dealership changing?

Online shopper surveys with interactive game-like construct

Fielded in March 2011 in the US

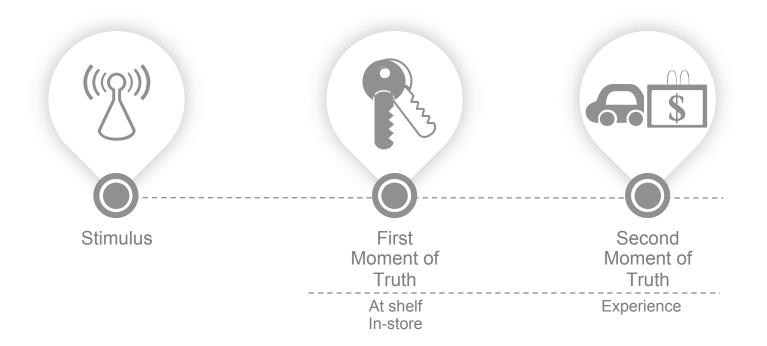
Adults who purchased a new automobile in the past 2 years

N=500 shoppers



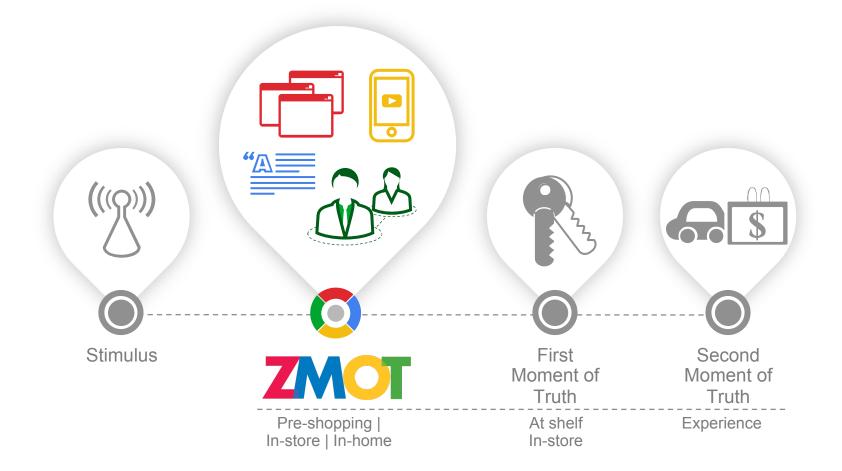


Traditional 3-Step Mental Model of Marketing





The New Mental Model of Marketing





We asked auto shoppers...

When? Purchase Timeline

How far in advance do shoppers start thinking about their auto purchase?

What? Source Usage

What traditional and new media sources did shoppers use to help them decide on their purchases?

How? Influence

How influential were each of the sources in the ultimate decision making?

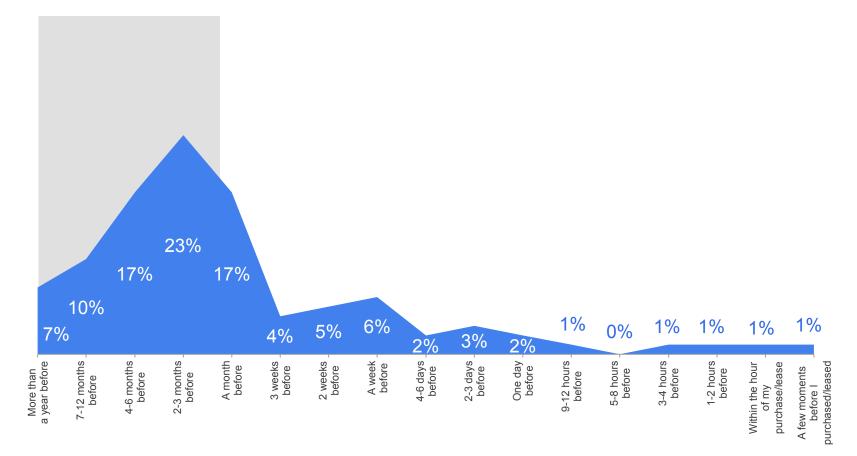
Why? Information-Seeking

Why did shoppers consult the internet? What information where they looking for related to automobiles?

thinkauto with Google

Purchasing an automobile is a very considered decision for shoppers.

Length of Purchase Cycle



Q1 Again, for the rest of this survey we would like to focus on the new automobile you recently purchased/leased. First, in TOTAL, how long were you thinking about buying/leasing an automobile before you actually completed the transaction? N=500

thinkauto with Google

Auto shoppers used on average 18.2 sources of information to help them make their purchase decision



For any one source, on average 34% of shoppers used it.

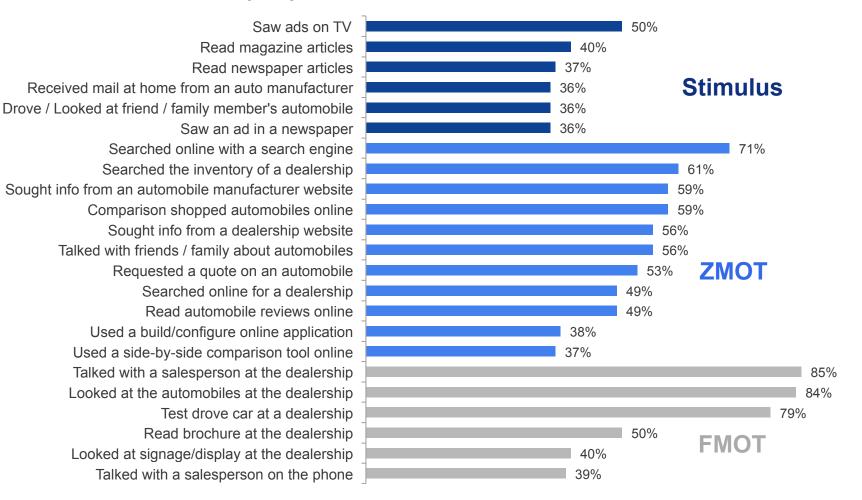


Even among above average sources, ZMOT outpaces traditional avenues of research.

Sources Used - Above the 34% Average Usage Score

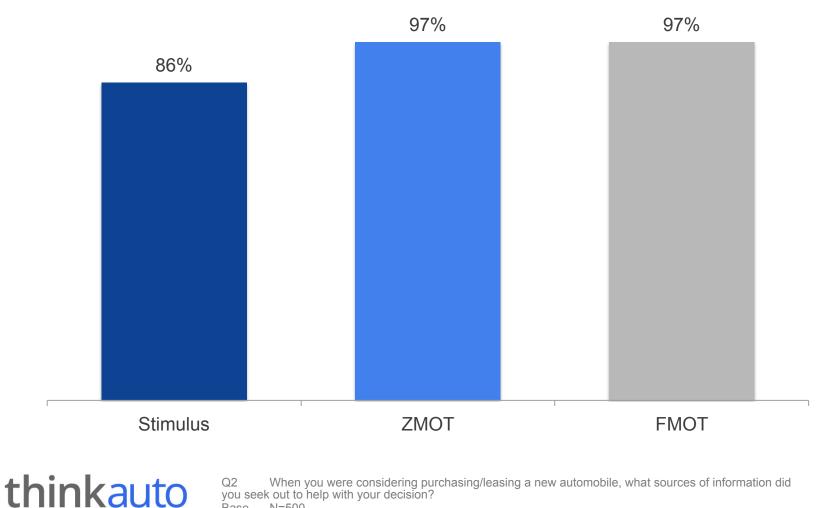
thinkauto

with Google



Q2 When you were considering purchasing/leasing a new automobile, what sources of information did you seek out to help with your decision? Base N=500

Shoppers rely on ZMOT sources as much as **FMOT**



When you were considering purchasing/leasing a new automobile, what sources of information did Q2 you seek out to help with your decision? N=500 Base

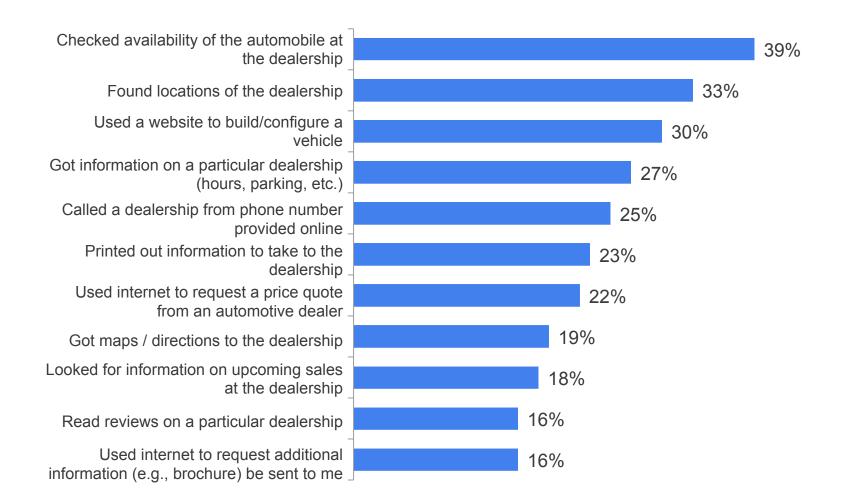
Net Influence – Top Sources

Test drove car		74%	
Looked at the automobiles		71%	
Requested a quote online		59%	
Talked with a salesperson		58%	
Comparison shopped online	45	5%	
Searched the inventory	449	%	
Talked with friends / family	39%	39%	
Read automobile reviews	39%	39%	
Read magazine articles / reviews / information	36%		
Sought information from manufacturer	32%		
website Sought information from a dealership	32%		
Searched online	29%		
ead about automobiles at the dealership	27%		
Searched online for a dealership	22%		
Saw ads on television	13%	Below Average Net Influence	

thinkauto with Google

Q5 We'd like you to tell us how influential each of these sources of information was to you at the time. Please select a number from 1-10 for each of the sources below where 1 s "least influential" and 10 is "most influential." You may select any number in between 1 and 10.

Top reasons for auto shoppers to consult the internet

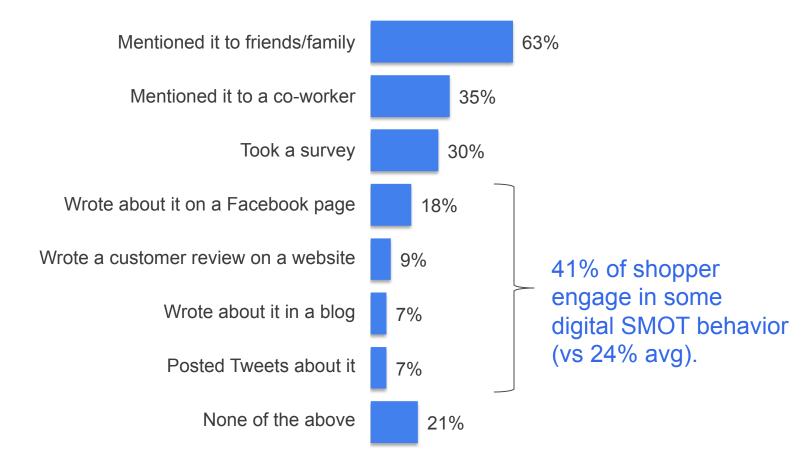


thinkauto with Google

Q8 Below are some ways that other people say they use the Internet when researching a purchase decision. Which of the following things did you do when researching [PIPE]? Base N=500

Post Purchase Behavior

Auto shoppers are excited to share their purchases online





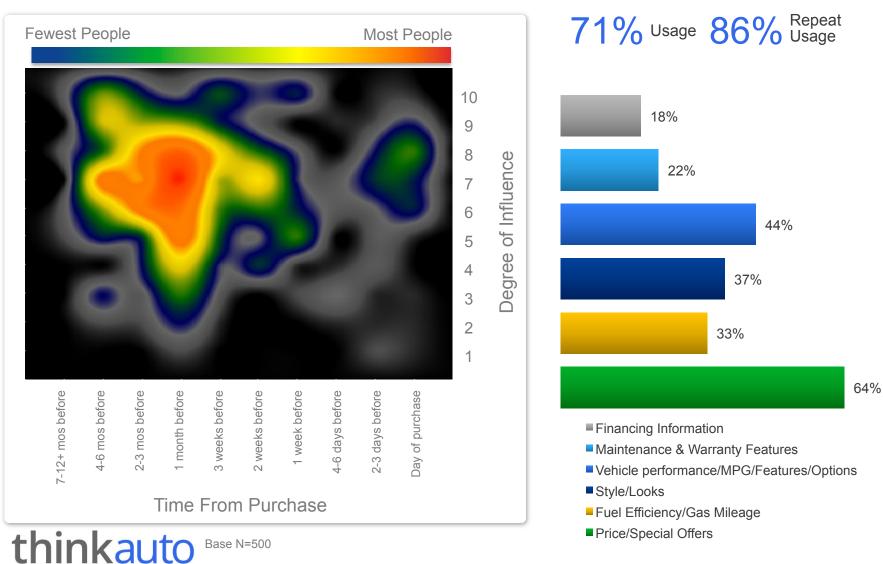
Q7 After buying [PRODUCT], which of the following activities did you do to share your experience? Base: N=5,003



Heat Maps

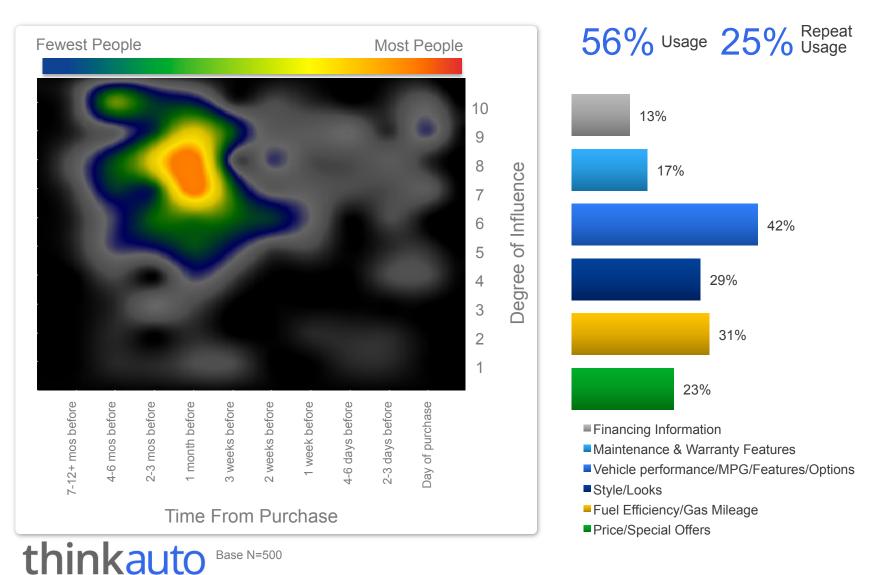
The intersection of when, what, how and why

Searched via Search Engine (ZMOT)

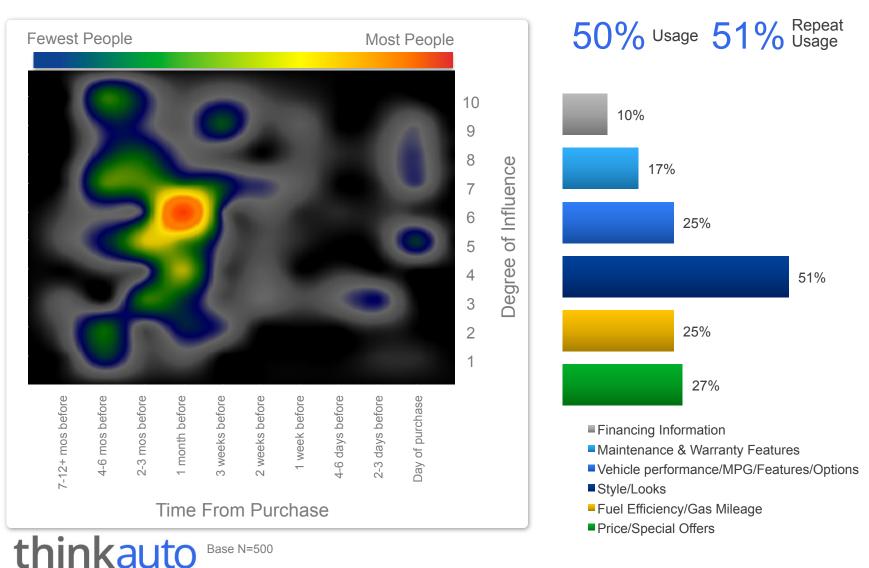


Source: Google/Shopper Sciences, Zero Moment of Truth Study - Automotive, Apr 2011

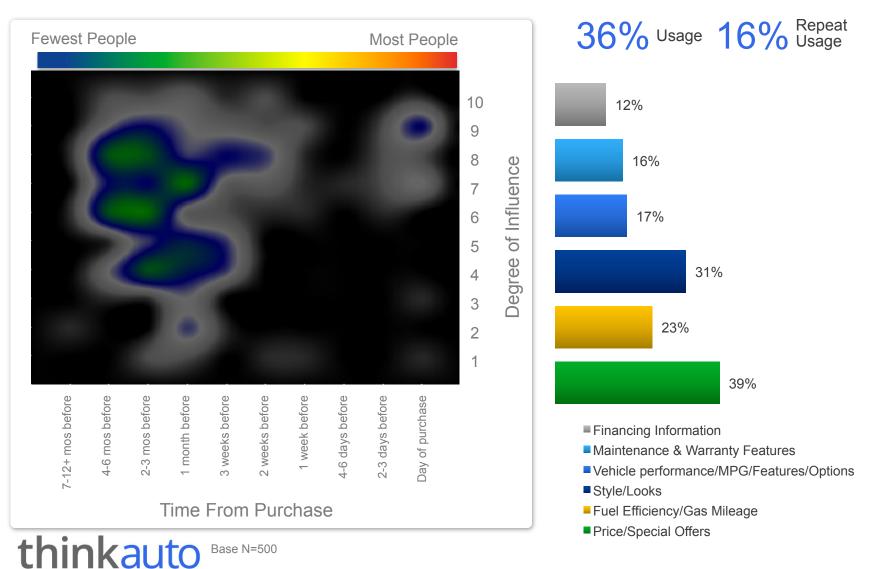
Talked with Friends & Family (ZMOT)



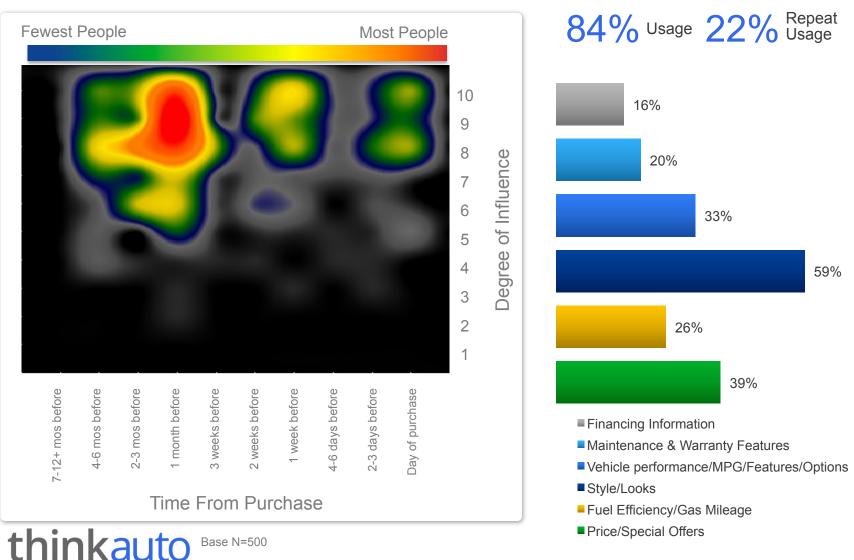
Saw Advertisements on Television (Stimulus)



Saw an ad in a newspaper (Stimulus)



Looked at automobiles on site (FMOT)



Source: Google/Shopper Sciences, Zero Moment of Truth Study - Automotive, Apr 2011

Summary

- The path to purchase in the automotive category is quite extensive. The vast majority of shoppers take several months to go from decision to action.
- During this time, shoppers are using a wide array of sources. FMOT, ZMOT and Stimulus all have above average usage.
 - Mobile and Online Social source nodes are the only ones that do not pass the average. However, compared to Online Social and Mobile usage in other categories, the usage for Automotive is quite strong.
- Shoppers clearly identify in-person experiences as the most influential test driving, visiting a dealership, etc.
 - The challenge for brands is generating enough influence during all of the pre-research (ZMOT) sources they interact with to get them to go to a dealership in the first place.
- SMOT participation is incredibly high in this category. Shoppers are eager to talk about their experience after going through such a lengthy process.
- Age truly determines different behavior. Younger shoppers are using many more sources and participating in digital and mobile at a higher rate.
 - However, the younger shopper also has higher expectations and more frustrations with their Internet experience.



Appendix



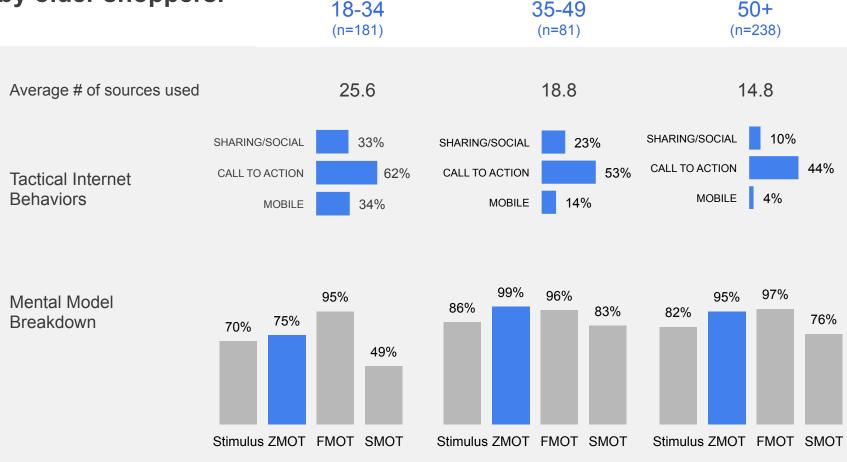
Auto shopping behavior by age, spend and frequency

Younger shoppers use more than double the sources. They exhibit much more ZMOT, sharing and mobile behavior.

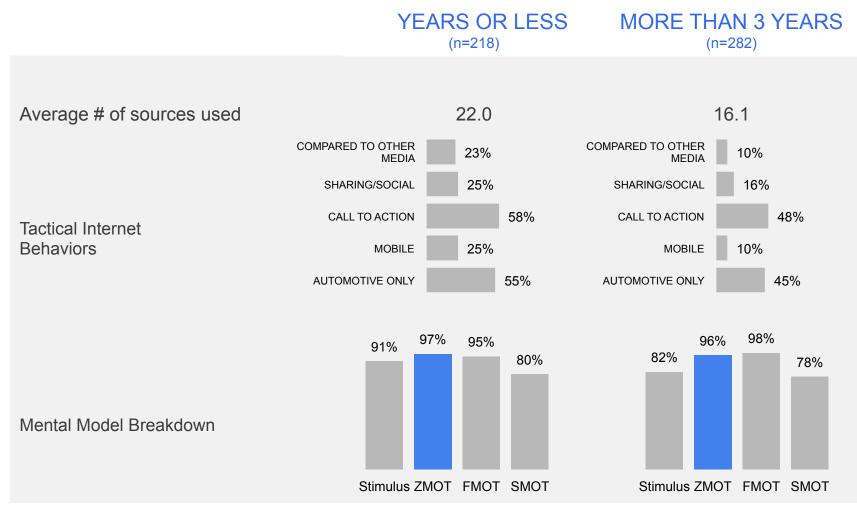


with Google

Younger shoppers are definitely more in tune with engaging the Internet and digital SMOT in their purchase experience. However, the Internet seems to come with some negativity for this group – a necessary component, but not as helpful or convenient as perceived by older shoppers.



Those who purchase cars more frequently tend to use more sources on average toward their purchase. Frequent buyers are more likely to employ online social and mobile sources.



with Google

QS5a On average, how often do you generally purchase/lease a new automobile? Base N=500 Source: Google/Shopper Sciences, Zero Moment of Truth Study – Automotive, Apr 2011