

Mind the knowledge gap: Lack of understanding and information is preventing motorists from taking the EV plunge

Submitted by: Performance Communications

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- What Car? study of 9000 motorists finds 8.4% are considering a fully electric vehicle (EV) as their next vehicle
- However, a knowledge gap surrounding EV technology prevents many from making the switch
- Study finds it takes potential buyers three months of research to have the same understanding of EVs as they have of petrol and diesel cars
- Conflicting and unclear information on EVs leaves buyers more confused as they research the technology
- What Car? has a new hub dedicated for electric vehicles, find out more at: www.whatcar.com/electric-cars

Conflicting and confusing information on the latest generation of battery electric vehicles has created a 'knowledge gap' for potential buyers, holding them back from choosing an EV as their next purchase, a new White Paper from the UK's leading consumer champion and new car buying platform, What Car? has found.

This is despite 2019 being set to become the year of the electric vehicle, with up to 20 new models scheduled to be launched. Meanwhile, whatcar.com traffic data suggests public interest in EVs is at record levels. In a study of over 9000 motorists, What Car? found 8.4% are already considering a fully electric car as their next vehicle.

The What Car? What Fuel? comparison tool, with 80,000 users, also found EVs are already an optimal choice for one in 10 drivers. In comparison, the UK market share of fully electric vehicles was only 0.7% in 2018, meaning electric vehicle sales are achieving just 7% of their sales potential.

Over a period of three months, What Car? surveyed how 9000 consumers rated their understanding of electric vehicles as they researched the technology. Buyers rated their initial knowledge at an average of 2.7 out of five during the first 10 days, rising to 3.4 after 10 days of research. However, after a month of research understanding fell to 3.3, suggesting some respondents came across confusing or conflicting information. After three months, the average understanding peaked at 3.8.

By comparison, What Car? found buyers rated their initial understanding of both petrol and diesel cars at 3.8 – meaning it takes three months of research for potential EV buyers to close the knowledge gap they have on EVs in comparison to petrol and diesel vehicles.

What Car?'s research also found that EV costs, not range, are the biggest barrier for buyers. Steve Huntingford, editor of What Car? explained: "Of the 9000 drivers surveyed, over 40% told us the price premium electric vehicles continue to command over petrol and diesel cars is too much for them to make the switch. However, when given time to research the potential cost savings of owning and running an electric vehicle, the response rate fell to 35.6%."

Range was the second-largest concern for buyers, with 28% put-off by the reduced flexibility compared to

petrol and diesel, even though 10% would be able to drive an EV without making changes to their lifestyle**. A further 15% said they were concerned about charging opportunities and infrastructure, while 16% wished for a larger selection of electric vehicles to choose from before buying one.

Huntingford, added: "Our research has shown there exists a gap when it comes to the public's understanding of electric vehicle technology and their features – and this is holding back some from actually buying one. It's understandable that it takes buyers three months of research to be as comfortable with electric vehicles as they are at the beginning of their research on petrol and diesel vehicles because the technology is new – but it is clear that the industry and legislators must start making it easier for would-be buyers.

"This year is set to be the year of the electric car, but it is clear the technology will not reach its full potential until more comprehensive and up-to-date information is more widespread."

To read the full What Car? Electric Vehicle White Paper, visit:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/d8pdxdhhecxf7z/AAC8yo0t2dWDGoo1FUVLBg1Ha?dl=0>

Try the What Car? What Fuel? comparison tool here:

<https://www.whatcar.com/news/what-fuel-comparison-tool>

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*According to UK Google Trends data, there was a 123% increase in the number of people researching EVs online between October 2016 and October 2018. What Car? saw a 1726% increase in web traffic to its electric vehicle content over the same period.

** What Fuel? Comparison tool, with more than 80,000 users, found an electric car is the optimal choice for one in 10 drivers, without any need to change their lifestyle.

About What Car?

What Car?, the UK's leading and most trusted car buying brand, has the magazine, a market-leading website and several established brand extensions. It has helped Britain's car buyers to make purchasing decisions for more than 40 years and its tests are widely regarded as the most trusted source of new car advice.

Whatcar.com is the UK's leading car buying website, offering trusted reviews and data on every new car. A winner of numerous awards and accolades, whatcar.com is recognised as one of the UK's leading consumer websites and attracts 1.7m unique users every month and over 13m monthly page impressions. The brand has seen major investment in its digital infrastructure as it develops a new ecommerce platform, allowing users to act on the trusted advice What Car? offers.

With a print circulation of 55,459, combined with its mobile and social reach, What Car? has more than 5.5 million monthly points of contact with its audience on the move, at work, at home and at the crucial point of sale. It is the top performing monthly on the UK newsstand in the motoring category.

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