

Eyes on the road: What Car? reveals the least and most distracting infotainment systems

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- BMW's iDrive system best for ease of use, and MG's 8.0-in touchscreen most distracting on the move
- 20 in-car infotainment and air-con systems tested to reveal which require the driver to take their eyes off the road the least
- Prestige brands dominate the top three, but Mazda system is almost as good
- It can take four times longer to zoom out of a sat-nav map on cars with the most fiddly systems, creating a potential hazard on the road
- Distracted driving is a contributing factor in 15% of all road accidents
- To read the full results visit:
www.whatcar.com/news/the-best-and-worst-car-infotainment-systems/n21268
(<https://www.whatcar.com/news/the-best-and-worst-car-infotainment-systems/n21268>)

The UK's most and least distracting infotainment and air-con systems have been revealed, with BMW's iDrive named as the easiest to use, as part of new research by the UK's leading consumer champion and new car buying platform, What Car?.

Twenty different in-car systems were tested that encompass the majority of the different types of infotainment systems and dashboard layouts on offer in the latest new cars. What Car?'s testers performed six tasks that drivers frequently do while on the move, including changing the temperature, zooming out on a set sat-nav route and changing from one radio station to another, with each action timed.

Distracted driving accounted for 15% of all road accidents in 2018, compared to 13% in 2016 and 14% in 2017, according to Department for Transport data*. In fatal collisions, distracted driving was a contributory factor in 25% of incidents. Every second spent looking away can be dangerous, as a vehicle moving at 30mph will travel 13.5m every second.

The research demonstrates that systems with physical buttons are much less distracting to use on the move than those that can only be altered using a touchscreen.

It took twice as long to adjust heating controls on some cars with touchscreen controls rather than physical dials. And it took up to four times longer to zoom out of the sat-nav map to view a pre-programmed route using a touchscreen than it did using a rotary dial controller. The easiest systems for adjusting the sat-nav map were Audi's Virtual Cockpit Plus and BMW's iDrive, while the most fiddly was the Lexus 12.3in multimedia display.

The tests also highlighted the benefits of having a range of different ways of doing a task, so the driver can choose the most convenient for each situation. The best systems let you use physical buttons, the touchscreen or voice control to do a wide range of commands.

Using a sophisticated voice control system is the least distracting way of doing many tasks. The systems

in the Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz all recognise natural speech, so you can activate them by talking and then ask them to carry out your desired task and hardly take your eyes off the road at all. However, not all voice control systems are as intuitive or fast to respond; What Car?'s testers were looking away from the road for more than twice as long in cars with the worst systems.

Steve Huntingford, editor of What Car?, said:

"Distracted drivers are a factor in a growing number of road accidents, so it's important to choose a car with controls that are responsive and easy to use while you drive. The best systems provide physical buttons and voice control, while those that are most distracting have sluggish touchscreens and require too many steps to carry out commands."

ENDS

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ras50-contributory-factors>

**The What Car? ease of use rating is only applicable to the specific system fitted to each test car, it will not be the same for other systems in the same model line-up.

About What Car?

What Car? is the UK's leading consumer motoring champion and new car buying platform, reaching car buyers through its magazine, website, video and social media channels. It has been helping Britain's car buyers to make purchasing decisions for more than 45 years and its reviews are widely regarded as the most comprehensive source of new car advice.

Whatcar.com offers verdicts and data on every new car, and has won numerous awards and accolades. It attracts 2.2m unique users and more than 12m page impressions every month.

In recent years What Car? has invested heavily in its digital infrastructure with the development of its new ecommerce platform, allowing users to act on the trusted advice What Car? offers by chatting online to car dealers through the website. Users are guaranteed to be able to buy their chosen car at What Car?'s Target Price discount, which is established by mystery shoppers and updated daily.

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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