

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 2127-0682)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Autonomous Vehicle Acceptance Message Testing for New Car Assessment Program Campaign Promotion.

PURPOSE:

The Secretary of the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration (NHTSA) is planning to rollout a new Autonomous Vehicle Policy in mid-September around the safety of automated driving systems. NHTSA plans to deploy a promotion strategy coinciding with the launch of the new policy featuring media events across the nation and a new consumer campaign. The focus of the consumer campaign will be to educate the American commuting public on new-age vehicle automation technology and bolster awareness of the benefits of the potential lifesaving innovation. Strong messaging will be needed to drum-up support around the policy as well as increase interest and boost the public’s comfort level with adopting the new technologies.

NHTSA has identified automation technology as a positive way to improve roadway safety and save more Americans’ lives every year. NHTSA is seeking approval of an information collection to evaluate consumer understanding and perceptions of autonomous driving systems, and assess why some of the public is hesitant to accept these technologies. NHTSA also seeks to build a robust lexicon to effectively inform the general public using straightforward terminology and explanations of the safety possibilities with autonomous vehicles, and determine the most appropriate nomenclature to use in describing different levels of automation and driving assistance to improve understanding and curb potential confusion and miscommunication. In support of this, NHTSA plans to establish and propagate clear and succinct messages to consumers about the future of autonomous vehicles.

Knowledge gained from this research will improve the agency’s ability to engage the public through increased awareness of autonomous driving systems, functions and levels of vehicle automation; inform NHTSA’s messaging efforts to better educate consumers on automated driving systems; and increase public confidence with the technology to accelerate their adoption, with the ultimate goal to save more lives.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

The respondents for this study will look across the general public and focus on two major splits by age – a younger group age 35 or under, and an older group age 40 or above. An initial literature review and secondary analysis have identified these two age-cohorts to be the major differentiating factor when considering acceptance. Groups are divided by younger and older age cohorts to facilitate exploration of how perceptions differ across these audiences. Those ages 36-39 have been purposefully excluded in order to ensure a distinct break between the age cohorts and not muddle the resulting analysis by having participants of nearly the same age across groups. Understanding the distinct positive and negative factors each group associates with autonomous driving, as well as the levels of understanding of the technology, will provide insights into underlying values driving subconscious emotions, and consequently conscious judgment.

To ensure we are sampling a diverse set of perspective, the focus group sessions will be held in three target locations across the contiguous United States (West Coast, Midwest and East Coast). In addition, participants will be screened to ensure a good mix of key demographic criteria (gender, race/ethnicity, and employment status) as well as specific socioeconomic factors (household income and education).

We plan to conduct qualitative research using a focus group methodology. As the current lexicon surrounding autonomous vehicles and the technologies featured therein is at a premature stage of development, we recommend a traditional focus group design to allow for more focused probing and open brainstorming. We find that when you are at such an early stage in consumer education around a topic, it can be extremely helpful to sit a small group of people in a room and have them use their own words and phrases to discuss the topic. This leads to a more robust set of layman vocabulary and terminology to build a nomenclature and targeted communications strategy around to inform and messaging and build a positive, productive public discourse. Although the time commitment is greater than other online qualitative designs, in this case the benefits of increased interaction and additional probing around phonetic and kinetic markers (vocal queues and body language) outweigh the drawbacks in time and cost savings.

The focus groups will total 48 participants equally divided between the two key audiences identified in preliminary exploratory analysis: 24 participants aged 35 and younger, and 24 participants aged 40 and older. In each city, there will be one younger group of eight participants and one older group of eight participants, comprising a grand total of 16 participants per city location. Screening criteria will require that all respondents have a valid driver's license.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: Susan McMeen

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

- 1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? Yes No
The third-party vendor collects information from the research participants in order to provide them with the incentive. No PII is reported to NHTSA. No responses will be connected to individual respondents; only aggregate data will be reported.
- 2. If Yes, will any information that is collected be included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? Yes No
- 3. If Yes, has an up-to-date System of Records Notice (SORN) been published? Yes No

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? Yes No

It is standard practice to provide a basic incentive in order to avoid bias of receiving responses only from individuals generally predisposed to be helpful. Participants in this research will not be offered incentives provided directly by NHTSA. The third-party vendor will fulfill incentives at the rate of \$75 for each participant.

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Pre-screen completes (facility recruitment screener)	240	2.9 minutes	11.6 hours
Validation screener (in-person at facility)	72	1.5 minutes	1.8 hours
Over-recruit holds (Assuming up to additional 4 potential participants per group, will hold briefly in case a swap is warranted)	24	20 minutes	8 hours
Younger group (Aged 35 and below)	24	90 minutes	36 hours
Older group (Aged 40 and above)	24	90 minutes	36 hours
GRAND TOTAL BURDEN HOURS			93.4 hours

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$100,000.

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents

- 1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?
 Yes No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

Convenience samples of research participants are screened and recruited to reflect the target audiences. NHTSA plans to work with Heart+Mind Strategies and focus group facilities (third-party vendors) to recruit individuals that meet the criteria for each audience. Each focus group

facility maintains a database of potential participants in the local area that will serve as the sample frames for this research. Recruitment will take place using seasoned recruiters from each facility who will make calls to prospective participants within their respective operating area. After being screened on the telephone an email invitation and reminder will be sent to individual qualified participants, followed by additional instructions with expected start and arrival times and facility directions. Recruitment will be monitored to include a mixture of gender, age, race/ethnicity, employment, income, and education.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)
 - Web-based or other forms of Social Media
 - Telephone
 - In-person
 - Mail
 - Other, Explain
2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? Yes No

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.