



## Press Release

### **J.D. Power and Associates Reports:**

#### **New-Vehicle Shoppers Find Lexus.com to be Most Useful among Manufacturer Web Sites**

**WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 1 February 2006** — Lexus.com is the most useful automobile manufacturer Web site for new-vehicle shopping, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2006 Manufacturer Web Site Evaluation Study<sup>SM</sup> – Wave 1 released today.

The study, which is conducted twice a year, measures the usefulness of manufacturer Web sites during the new-vehicle shopping process. Sites are evaluated by new-vehicle shoppers in four key areas: appearance, speed, navigation, and information/content. Information/content, which includes vehicle features, specifications, images, configurators, payment calculators and dealer locators, is the most important factor area to shoppers, accounting for 36 percent of the overall index score.

Lexus ranks highest with an index score of 874 on a 1,000-point scale—an increase of 32 points from Wave 2 of the study in June 2005. Only 6 percent of Lexus site evaluators rate the site 700 or less—down from 14 percent in the previous wave and the lowest percentage ever recorded since the study began in 2000.

“Vehicle shoppers come to automotive sites with a wide range of shopping patterns, Internet skills, Internet connections, computer configurations, automotive understanding and automotive vocabulary,” said Dennis Galbraith, senior director of digital marketing solutions at J.D. Power and Associates. “Creating one site that works well for so many new-vehicle shoppers is an extraordinary challenge, but Lexus has demonstrated that it can be done.”

Across all manufacturer sites, the industry average of 834 is the highest recorded in the seven-year history of the study. The industry average increased significantly from the previous wave (823). In fact, for the first time no manufacturer scores below 800 on the 1,000-point scale.

“While it’s true that some sites are significantly more useful than others, the industry has improved to a point where there are no bad manufacturer sites,” said Galbraith. “This study again confirms that the more useful a site is, the more traffic it is likely to drive to dealerships. The automotive industry is providing better online shopping experiences to more shoppers than ever before, making manufacturer sites an increasingly important stop when researching a new vehicle to purchase.”

Reflecting the increased usefulness of manufacturer sites are the large number of consumers that include these sites in their shopping process. According to the J.D. Power and Associates 2005 New Autosopper.com Study<sup>SM</sup>, 57 percent of new-vehicle buyers visit at least one manufacturer site before buying a new vehicle, and most visit several manufacturer sites.

“More new-vehicle shoppers are visiting manufacturer sites, and their experiences on these sites have never been better,” said Galbraith. “We expect to see even more emphasis on these sites as manufacturers compete to deliver the best total shopping experience possible and shoppers wade through the largest selection of models ever offered.”

The 2006 Manufacturer Web Site Evaluation Study – Wave 1 is based on evaluations by 11,800 new-vehicle shoppers who indicated they would be in the market for a new vehicle within the next 24 months.

**About J.D. Power and Associates**

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is an ISO 9001-registered global marketing information services firm operating in key business sectors including market research, forecasting, consulting, training and customer satisfaction. The firm’s quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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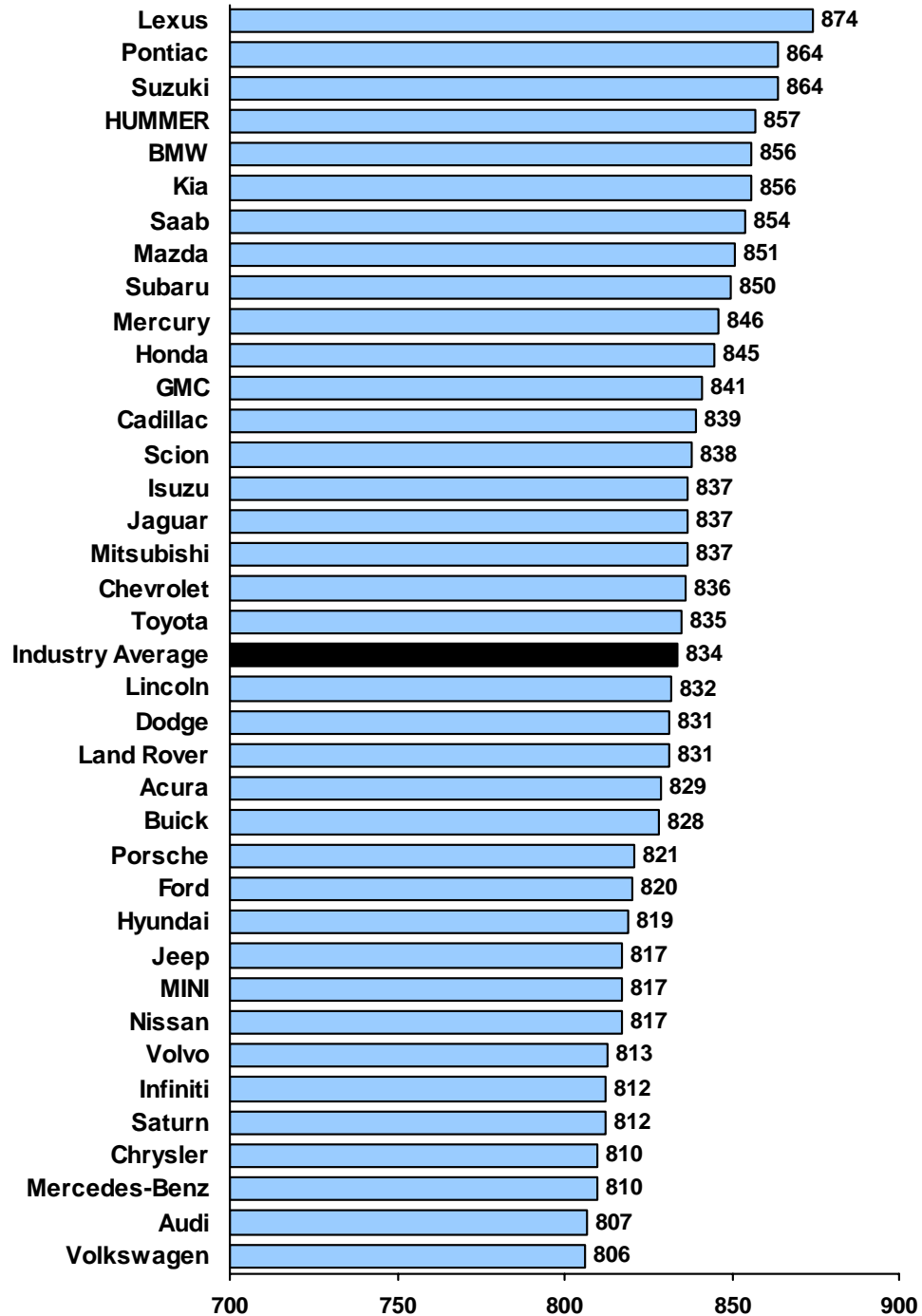
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NOTE: One chart follows.

# J.D. Power and Associates 2006 Manufacturer Web Site Evaluation Study<sup>SM</sup>–Wave 1

## Manufacturer Web Site Ranking

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2006 Manufacturer Web Site Evaluation Study<sup>SM</sup>–Wave 1

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