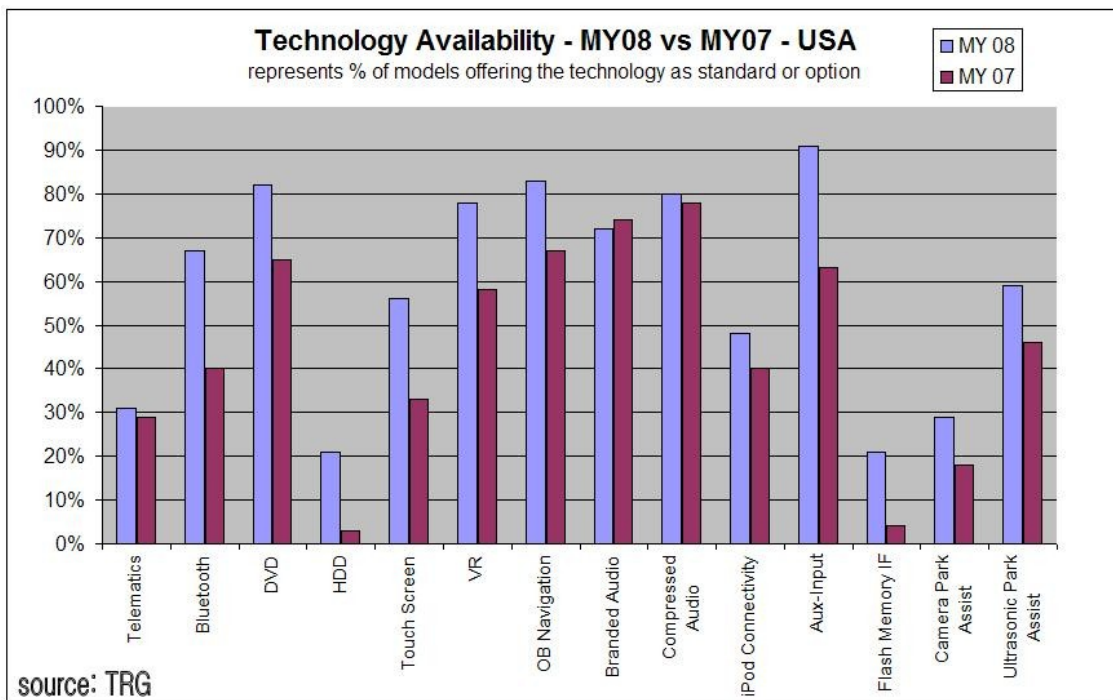




## Sneak Peek: Connectivity a "Must Have" for Model Year 2008

MINNETONKA (MN), August 16, 2007 – Automakers preparing cars for the '08 model year have turned to technology to stay competitive. Bluetooth connections for hands-free phone operation, navigation, and support for digital music devices will be available as standard or optional equipment on the majority of '08 models.

A survey of 100 upcoming 2008 models shows nearly 70% of the models for sale in North America will offer a voice-activated Bluetooth interface for hands-free phone operation. "Hands-free phone operation with voice recognition is becoming a must have in all segments of the auto industry," says Phil Magney, co-founder and principal analyst at Telematics Research Group (TRG).



But the technology does not stop there. Navigation systems continue to gain in popularity. About 80% of announced MY08 models offer navigation as standard or optional equipment. "This is driven largely by the increasing popularity of portable navigation," states Magney. "OEMs are responding with feature-rich infotainment solutions that support navigation, camera park assist, Bluetooth hands-free, digital radio, real-time traffic, and music server capability."

### **Connectivity Becomes Vital:**

"Connectivity with portable music players is becoming another must have technology," says Magney. According to TRG's Technology Availability Index, direct to iPod, auxiliary input and flash memory interfaces are on most new models with 50% and 90% availability, respectively. Meanwhile, USB will be offered on nearly 20% of new models, up sharply from the handful of models supporting it for MY07.

### **Safety Sells:**

On the safety front, Park Assistance Systems are going mass market, according to TRG data. Nearly 60% of MY08 cars will offer ultrasonic park assist as standard or optional equipment while camera-based park assist (using the navigation screen) will be available on 30% of MY08 vehicles. Blind Spot Detection, still in the early phases of deployment, is nevertheless offered on 4% of announced MY08 cars. "The cost benefit for safety technologies using sensor technologies is overwhelmingly favorable," says Magney, who predicts both technologies will be as common as side curtain airbags in a few years.

### **Most Technology Packed Vehicle:**

According to TRG's Technology Availability Index, the 2008 BMW 5-Series is the most technologically advanced vehicle in world, edging out the Lexus LS-460, the leader for the '07 model year. Chief among its high-tech features

are Active Cruise Control with stop-and-go function, camera-based Lane Departure Warning (LDW), Night Vision and Head Up Display (HUD).

“BMW has pioneered many new technologies,” says TRG’s Magney. “They made a bold move with their iDrive controller, introduced five years ago. Now the iDrive is offered on nearly all BMW models while competitive luxury brands have followed suit.”

The TRG Technology Availability Index is based on 32 high-tech criteria. The new 5-Series offers 28 of the Technology features as standard or optional equipment.

Link to chart→

[http://www.telematicsresearch.com/imageArchive/MY07\\_vs\\_MY08.JPG](http://www.telematicsresearch.com/imageArchive/MY07_vs_MY08.JPG)

**About TRG:**

TRG (Telematics Research Group, Inc.) tracks and analyzes the markets for automotive telematics, navigation, infotainment and driver assist and licenses this competitive intelligence to leading companies around the world.

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