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BRITISH DRIVERS DON'T UNDERSTAND GREENER CARS, SAYS HONDA



- 51% of drivers have never heard of hybrid cars
- 77% would be more motivated to change their driving habits by money than environmental damage
- 70% say the Government or car manufacturers are responsible for encouraging people to buy cleaner cars

New research revealed at the launch of Honda's Civic Hybrid car shows that British drivers are in blissful ignorance when it comes

to understanding greener motoring.

The research, carried out by TNS on behalf of Honda (UK), questioned 1,200 British drivers on their attitudes towards the environment and their understanding of alternative fuel vehicles.

More than half (51%) of British motorists were not even aware of hybrid cars. Of the drivers who said they knew of hybrids, more than 40% didn't know that it was a car that uses both petrol and electric power. Incorrect responses ranged from the intelligent guess ("a car that uses a combination of fuels") to the bizarre ("two cars welded together" or "a car made by more than one manufacturer").

The research also asked people to name a type of alternative fuel vehicle and a huge 82% failed to mention the petrol-electric hybrid car. Despite the fact hybrid are as easy to use and refuel as a standard petrol car, people were more likely to quote LPG (far more complex for a day-to-day motorist) or fully electric cars (impractical because of the frequent need to stop and recharge).

People were even less aware of the potential cost savings of owning a hybrid car. Only 35% of those surveyed correctly associated hybrids with lower fuel costs. Very few knew that hybrids entitled the owner to reduced company car tax (4%), lower road fund tax (2%) and the 100 per cent discount from the London congestion charge (2%).



The irony is that the research shows British drivers are more likely to be motivated by money rather than by environmental responsibility. When the 73% who said they were unlikely to buy a hybrid were asked what would make them consider one, the top factor (43%) was "if I was sure running costs would be lower" followed by "if petrol became too expensive" (34%). This substantiates the number one reason for rejecting a hybrid: "too expensive" (34%).

Similarly, of the 18% who would consider a hybrid car, the top motivating factor was lower fuel costs (54%) rather than environmental benefits (39%).

When asked who should be responsible for encouraging better take up of greener vehicles, 70% suggested the Government or car manufacturers (35% each).

Further confirming the 'head in the sand' attitude, less than a fifth (17%) of drivers saw it as their own responsibility to lessen the environmental impact of their vehicles.

Notes:

The research was carried out by TNS using the RSGB's Omnibus Survey, questioning a representative sample of 1,200 UK-based drivers during January 2006.

The Honda Civic Hybrid goes on sale on 1 April, priced at £16,300.

- More power than a 1.6-litre car (115PS)
- 1.1-litre economy (61.4mpg)
- Super-low CO2 exhaust emissions of 109g/km
- Futuristic interior design with 'dual link' dash concept
- Multi-link double-wishbone rear suspension
- 100 per cent discount from the London congestion charge

Top speed: 115mph

0-62mph: 12.1secs

Combined MPG: 61.4

CO2: 109g/km

Engine: 1339cc, SOHC, i-DSI, petrol

Motor: IMA electric motor/generator

Power: 115PS (95 petrol + 20 electric) at 6,000rpm

Torque: 166lb.ft at 4,600rpm

Auto: CVT transmission as standard

Insurance group: 7

Service interval: 12,500 miles/12 months