

WILL CAR USERS SHARE THEIR PERSONAL DATA?

Surveyed consumers in China, Germany, and the United States say yes, if they see value in return.

by Michele Bertoncetto, Paul Gao, and Hans-Werner Kaas

Advanced data analytics comes with a significant set of challenges, such as determining data quality, rendering data in functional form, and creating sophisticated algorithms to achieve practical insight. But one of the first problems to solve is whether the data can be viewed at all. This can be especially sensitive when companies seek personal information from private individuals. Will people share the data they have? And if so, what kind? Would they share only technical data (such as oil temperature and airbag deployment), or would they agree to communicate vehicle location and route, for example, or allow access to even more personal data like their calendar or communications to and from the car (such as email and text messages)?

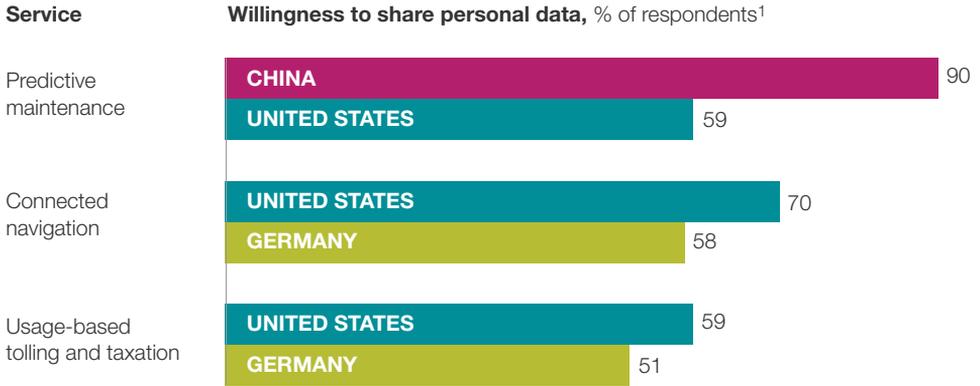
We surveyed more than 3,000 car buyers and frequent users of shared-mobility services across China, Germany, and the United States (more than 1,000 in each country), taking care to represent consumers across personal demographics, car-buying segments, and car-using characteristics.¹ Among other issues, we sought to learn more about car buyers' attitudes, preferences, and willingness to use and pay for services made possible by the sharing of vehicle-specific and related personal data.

Car buyers across geographies seem both aware about matters of data privacy and increasingly willing to share their personal data for certain applications (exhibit). Of all respondents, 90 percent (up from 88 percent in 2015) answered yes to the question, "Are you aware that certain data (such as your current location, address-book details, and browser history) are openly accessible to applications and shared with third parties?" And 79 percent (up from 71 percent in 2015) of respondents answered yes when asked, "Do you consciously decide to grant certain applications to your personal data (for example, your current location, address-book details, and browser history), even if you may have generally disabled this access for other applications?" In each case, American consumers proved somewhat more guarded than their Chinese or German counterparts, but even at the low end, 85 percent of the US respondents answered in the affirmative to the first question, and 73 percent answered yes to the second.²

When it comes to sharing personal data for auto-related apps, a majority of respondents in each country were on board—if the use case was one that met the consumer's needs. For example, among American respondents, 70 percent

Exhibit

Respondents were willing to share personal data in return for services they preferred.



¹ Respondents selected version of given offering that requires access to personal and system data.

Source: 2016 McKinsey survey of >3,000 car buyers and frequent users of “shared-mobility services” across China, Germany, and the United States

were willing to share personal data for connected navigation (the most popular use case among surveyed American car buyers), while 90 percent of Chinese respondents would share personal data to enable predictive maintenance (the most popular use-case option in that country). Even more encouraging for automakers, surveyed consumers expressed willingness to pay for numerous data-enabled features. In Germany, for example, 73 percent of surveyed consumers indicated they would pay for networked parking services, and in China 78 percent would pay for predictive maintenance rather than choose free, ad-supported versions of those options. Even in data-sensitive America, 73 percent would pay for usage-monitoring services, 72 percent for networked parking, and 71 percent for predictive maintenance instead of selecting free ad-supported versions. Although the game is still early, these expressions of consumer

cooperation—in the auto industry, at least—suggest that concerns about data-sharing can be satisfied when the value proposition is apparent. 

¹ The survey was in the field from April 27, 2016, to May 16, 2016, and received responses from 3,186 recent car buyers (three-quarters of the panel per country) and frequent shared-mobility users (one-quarter of the panel per country) of different ages, genders, incomes, and places of residence.

² Of surveyed Chinese car buyers, 91 percent answered yes to the first question and 86 percent answered yes to the second, versus 94 percent and 76 percent, respectively, for German car buyers.

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