

## Gas Prices Drive Online Searches For Fuel Efficiency Up By 156 Percent

### Analysis Based on New Addition to comScore Media Metrix qSearch System

**RESTON, Va., May 24, 2005** - A new analysis based on comScore Media Metrix qSearch data revealed that nearly 700,000 Americans searched online for fuel efficiency-related terms in March 2005. These consumers conducted more than 1.5 million searches for terms such as "gas prices," "hybrid cars," "Toyota Prius," and "gas mileage." This online search activity has increased with growth in overall gas prices, with the number of consumers searching for fuel efficiency terms growing by 112 percent between February and March.

Consumer interest in fuel economy is also evident in online searches related to hybrid vehicles. Hybrids still represent a small segment of the auto industry, with only 88,000 vehicles sold in all of 2004, according to J.D. Power and Associates. Yet according to comScore qSearch, more than 300,000 Americans submitted hybrid-related search terms in March 2005 alone.

Interestingly, growing gas prices have not completely squelched Americans' interest in SUVs. comScore's analysis found that more than one million consumers conducted approximately 2.5 million SUV-related searches in March.

"We've consistently found that online search activity describes the dynamics of consumer demand, especially for high consideration products such as automobiles," said James Lamberti, vice president of comScore Networks. "For marketers across all industries, search can provide not only a marketing tool, but also a critical consumer profiling and segmentation resource."

Search Activity: Fuel Efficiency vs. SUVs February 2005 vs. March 2005 Total U.S. Home, Work and University Internet Users			
Source: comScore Media Metrix qSearch			
	Feb-05 (000)	Mar-05 (000)	% Change
<u>Searchers</u>			
Fuel Efficiency	322	683	112%
SUVs	1,029	1,075	4%
<u>Searches</u>			
Fuel Efficiency	598	1,528	156%
SUVs	2,491	2,462	-1%

### Hybrid Searchers Tend to be Older, Higher Income Consumers

Not surprisingly, comScore found significant demographic differences between consumers who search for hybrid vehicles and those who search for SUVs:

- **Age:** Hybrid searchers were 18 percent more likely to be 45 to 54 years old than the average Internet user, while SUV

searchers were 19 percent more likely to be 25 to 34 years old.

- **Income:** Just over 50 percent of hybrid searchers had household incomes of \$75,000 or more, compared to just under 40 percent of SUV searchers.
- **Region:** While SUV searchers are relatively evenly distributed across the country, hybrid searchers are 35 percent more likely than average to live in the Pacific region.
- **Children:** Not surprisingly, SUV searchers are 10 percent more likely than average to have children in their household, while hybrid searchers are slightly less likely than the average consumer to have children.

### Consumers Turning to Content Sites to Learn More about Hybrids

While each of the top ten sites with the highest composition of SUV searchers was an automotive site, a number of sites with the highest composition of fuel efficiency searchers were general content sites. An article describing how hybrid engines work, which ranks highly at the top search engines, helped HowStuffWorks.com land a spot among the top ten sites by composition of fuel efficiency searchers. Articles chronicling rising gas prices were likely behind top rankings for USA Today.com and Reuters.com. This high level of interest in learning more about hybrid cars through resources such as About.com, HowStuffWorks.com and other content sites highlights the need for continued consumer education regarding hybrids.

Online Activity: Fuel Efficiency & SUV Searchers March 2005 Total U.S. Home, Work and University Internet Users					
Source: comScore Media Matrix qSearch					
Fuel Efficiency Searchers			SUV Searchers		
	% Composition	% Reach		% Composition	% Reach
<i>Total Fuel Efficiency Searchers</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>Total SUV Searchers</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>100%</i>
About Autos	7.9%	6.3%	About Autos	14.1%	7.2%
EDMUNDS.COM	4.6%	18.2%	EDMUNDS.COM	7.1%	17.9%
USATODAY.COM/MONEY	3.6%	7.9%	AUTOBYTEL.COM	6.2%	8.6%
AUTOBYTEL.COM	3.1%	6.6%	Yahoo! Autos	4.6%	18.8%
HOWSTUFFWORKS.COM	2.6%	6.0%	AUTOTRADER.COM	4.1%	21.7%
Yahoo! Autos	2.5%	15.9%	CARS.COM	3.8%	15.6%
REUTERS.COM	2.4%	9.4%	AUTOWEB.COM	3.8%	6.0%
CARS.COM	2.4%	15.1%	KELLEYBLUEBOOK.COM	3.2%	19.4%
FOOL.COM	2.2%	6.0%	EPINIONS.COM	2.9%	10.2%
AUTOTRADER.COM	2.1%	17.7%	CARSDIRECT.COM	2.8%	16.1%

comScore found that the majority of fuel efficiency searchers conducted searches for non-branded terms, such as "gas prices", "hybrid cars" and "electric cars." While newer offerings from Ford, Lexus and Dodge have not yet gained significant awareness among online searchers, the well known Toyota Prius was the top ranked branded search term in the fuel efficiency category. On the opposite end of the fuel economy spectrum, Hummer landed three of the top ten SUV search terms in March.

Search Term Ranking: Fuel Efficiency & SUV Searches March 2005 Total U.S. Home, Work and University Internet Users	
Source: comScore Media Metrix qSearch	
<b>Top Fuel Efficiency Terms</b>	<b>Top SUV Terms</b>
GAS PRICES	HUMMER
HYBRID CARS	RANGE ROVER
TOYOTA PRIUS	SUV
HYBRID VEHICLES	FORD EXPLORER
HONDA HYBRID	CADILLAC ESCALADE
GAS MILEAGE	HONDA PILOT
HYBRID SUV	HUMMER H2
PRIUS	HUMMER H3
HONDA ACCORD	
HYBRID	CHEVROLET TAHOE
ELECTRIC CARS	ESCALADE

comScore Media Metrix Launches Search Marketer Planning Reports

The analysis above was conducted using Search Marketer Planning Reports, a new report suite based on comScore Media Metrix's industry-leading qSearch system. Unlike other keyword campaign tools, qSearch now reports on the demographics and online behavior of the consumers behind search activity. qSearch is based on the online search behavior of comScore's panel of more than 2 million U.S. consumers.

Users of comScore Search Marketer Planning Reports can:

- Determine which search engines have the highest reach among consumers searching for specific terms
- Understand the demographic profiles of consumers searching for specific terms
- Develop highly integrated campaigns by understanding the Web-wide behavior of consumers searching for relevant terms
- Evaluate the total volume of searches and searchers for virtually any set of keywords

"More and more clients view search marketing as a vital piece of the overall marketing mix, and qSearch helps close the loop in cross-media planning and buying," said Mike Zeman, Associate Director of Insights & Analytics for Starcom IP. "By linking search activity to both demographics and site visitation habits, we now have a better handle on both who these hand-raisers are and what passions they exhibit. Clearly, this allows us to more narrowly pinpoint the advertising opportunities in other media, including TV and print, that are most appropriate for our clients' audiences."

About comScore Networks

comScore Networks provides unparalleled insight into consumer behavior and attitudes. This capability is based on a massive, global cross-section of more than 2 million consumers who have given comScore explicit permission to confidentially capture their browsing and transaction behavior, including online and offline purchasing. comScore panelists also participate in survey research that captures and integrates their attitudes and intentions. Through its patent-pending technology, comScore measures what matters across a broad spectrum of behavior and attitudes. comScore consultants apply this deep knowledge

of customers and competitors to help clients design powerful marketing strategies and tactics that deliver superior ROI. comScore services are used by global leaders such as AOL, Yahoo!, Verizon, Best Buy, The Newspaper Association of America, Tribune Interactive, ESPN, Nestlé, Universal McCann, the United States Postal Service, GlaxoSmithKline and Orbitz. For more information, please visit [www.comscore.com](http://www.comscore.com).

###

Contact:  
Andrew Lipsman  
comScore Networks  
(312) 775-6510  
[press@comscore.com](mailto:press@comscore.com)