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Online Repair Information Helping Consumers Save Both Money and Trips to the Repair Shop, According to New Survey

- 73% using online repair cost estimates saved money; average savings of 34%**
- Nearly one in three who usually go to the repair shop now more likely to perform own repairs**
- 59% report greater availability of online repair info and economy driving more DIY**
- Over 3.5 million car owners helped by repair site AutoMD.com in just twelve months**

CARSON, Calif., April 12, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- A new report from AutoMD.com reveals that the wider availability of online repair information in a challenging economy is spurring a sea change in the way car owners approach vehicle repair and maintenance. And these twin factors are driving them to not only perform more research online about repairs and repair pricing, but also are helping them save an average of nearly 34% on repair shop bills.

The report reveals that greater access to online repair information (such as pricing info and [how to guides](#)) in the current economy is making car owners feel smarter about auto repair and more likely to attempt vehicle repairs themselves than they were just one year ago. Site user data from online repair site AutoMD.com, which has helped over 3.5 million users since the current site's launch just over twelve months ago, confirms this growing adoption of online repair tools by car owners.

"We estimate that online repair resources are now saving car owners in the hundreds of millions of dollars each year," said AutoMD.com President Shane Evangelist. "The potential savings to AutoMD.com car owners using our cost estimator is almost \$300 million dollars annually.(1) When factoring in online how-to guides(2), and the convenience of vetting local repair shop labor rates online, the cost-savings skyrocket. But perhaps the greatest impact of online repair information is taking car owners from disempowered and uninformed, to empowered and informed. And by any calculation, that is priceless."

Online Repair Information Report Highlights

The AutoMD.com Online Repair Information Report is based on a series of online surveys conducted among over 3,000 car owners in Q4 2010 and Q1 2011, offering a snapshot of how online repair information is transforming the way car owners – both DIYers and DFMers

(Do-it-For-Me's - those who usually go to the repair shop) – approach auto repair.

Increased Access to Repair Information Helps Drive More DIY (Do-It-Yourself)

Nearly half of respondents (48.7%) say they're more likely to do their own auto repairs today than a year ago, with nearly a third (31.3%) of DFMers ('Do-it-For-Me') saying they are more likely to do their own repairs this year than last.

When asked why, 59% overall agreed that a combination of greater accessibility to online repair information and the challenging economy (i.e. cost savings) is driving this increase in auto repair DIY. In fact, when AutoMD.com users were asked how AutoMD.com information had impacted them, "helping me do more of my own repairs" and "guiding me to diagnose my vehicle issues" were the number one and two benefits cited.

Economic Challenges Drive Repair - and Repair Shop - Information Empowerment

When asked how the economic challenges of the past two years have impacted their approach to car repair, the number one consumer response was they're now more likely to perform research online about repairs and pricing (38%), with over a third (35.1%) also reporting that this online research has made them smarter about car repairs. When segmented for DFMers and for DIYers, performing more online research was number one for DFMers and in the top three for DIYers, who cited continuing to do their own repairs as the top impact.

What Impact Have the Economic Challenges Had on Your Approach to Car Repair?

Top Four for DFMers ("Do It For Me")

1. Made me more likely to perform research online about repairs and pricing
2. Made me smarter about car repair because I did more research to make sure I paid a fair price at the repair shop
3. Made me more likely to go to an independent repair shop versus a dealership
4. Made me more likely to attempt simple car repairs myself

Interestingly, a quarter of respondents say the economy made them more likely to go to an independent repair shop versus a dealership, and AutoMD.com site data reflects this trend. The number of AutoMD.com users searching for a repair shop listing (including their local labor rates) quadrupled in January 2011 compared to April 2010.

Online Information Driving Cost Savings

When those who have used an online [repair cost estimate](#) were asked whether it has helped them save money on their repair bills, 73% said yes, reporting that AutoMD.com's online fair price estimates (based on local labor rates, hours to do the job and real-time parts pricing info) have saved them an average of 34%.

(Photo: <https://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20110412/LA80325>)

Seeking and Sharing: Car Repair Info Goes Social

AutoMD.com has seen dramatic growth in the numbers of car owners seeking help online with their vehicle repair issues, whether they are looking for a repair shop, [diagnostic information](#) or a repair shop estimate – with over 3.5 million users from January 2010 – February 2011.

Nearly half a million viewed "How-to" repair guides, nearly a million found "fair cost" estimates for auto repairs, and nearly two million checked [technical service bulletins \(TSBs\)](#) and [recall info](#) - all in the current site's first twelve months. And, one of the most rapid site growth areas is the sharing of authoritative repair information within the AutoMD.com community, with the number of car owners seeking and posting user-generated repair info and answers to repair questions doubling in just the past five months.

"Greater access to once hard-to-find repair information – as well as the challenging economy - has jumpstarted a consumer empowerment revolution in the auto repair process and the consumer tools and resources will continue to grow. Our mission at AutoMD.com is to build on this revolution by finding new and even more effective ways to advocate for the auto repair consumer, and significant new developments are around the bend. Stay tuned!"

(1) An estimate based on average reported savings using AutoMD.com Fair Repair cost estimator, industry average cost of repair annually (\$971) and number of AutoMD.com users utilizing fair repair cost estimates.

(2) One in three DIYers report saving over \$1,000 annually doing their own repairs
<http://www.automd.com/about-automd/press/10-14-2010/>

About AutoMD.com

AutoMD.com™ (www.automd.com), a wholly-owned subsidiary of US Auto Parts Network, Inc., (Nasdaq:PRTS), is the most comprehensive and unbiased free online automotive repair resource designed to empower car owners with the best way to repair their vehicles. Backed by a team of automotive data specialists and certified auto mechanics who are advocates for the car owner, AutoMD.com allows both car owners and DIYers to 1. Troubleshoot [car problems](#), 2. Get fair [auto repair quotes](#), 3. Understand the steps needed and the time it should take with [How-to Auto Repair guides](#), 4. Find the right local [auto repair shop](#) at the right price for their issue, and 5. Get [auto repair questions](#) answered by the AutoMD.com community. AutoMD.com was named Best Automotive Website in the 8th annual American Business Awards, also known as the Stevie® Awards. AutoMD Mobile is available for the iPhone at [iTunes](#)

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