



## Shopping for a Car? Let Edmonds.com Help

By Robyn M. Young

I haven't yet met a person who rates car buying as one of their favorite activities. The buying process can be so convoluted that it is not always easy to determine whether you are paying a fair price. The website, [www.edmunds.com](http://www.edmunds.com), can help.

Last year I replaced my 11-year-old car. I began my search in July. With a list of the top-rated makes for my desired car type in-hand, I looked at four brands. Test driving was easy and fun. Then came the hard part – actually buying a car. I dragged my feet until I learned about Edmonds.com, recommended by a loan officer at a local credit union. Here I was able to research and compare the vehicles I was considering and, armed with solid information, felt confident negotiating my price.

Here are the tools that I found particularly helpful:

**True Cost to Own.** Edmonds calculates the true cost of owning the vehicle over five years. It includes depreciation, loan interest, taxes and fees, insurance premiums, fuel costs, maintenance, and repairs. To find this, at the top of the website page, click on either “New Cars” or “Used Cars” and then click on “True Cost to Own” in the drop-down list.

**Incentives and Rebates.** Find this in the drop-down list under “New Cars” at the top of the page. Click on a make and you will see a list of the manufacturer's current rebates and financing incentives by model.

**Compare Cars.** This link (under “New Cars” at the top of the page) compares four models side by side. This shows you the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP), Invoice Price (what the dealer pays for the car), the True Market Value, and vehicle features.



**True Market Value (TMV).** Here you enter your zip code and Edmunds calculates what others have paid for a car model based on actual sales data from your region. This is great information to have in your pocket when negotiating a price. To read how to use TMV when negotiating, Edmunds offers this article: How to Use TMV at [www.edmunds.com/car-buying/how-to-use-tmv.html](http://www.edmunds.com/car-buying/how-to-use-tmv.html)

To locate the True Market Value, go to the Edmunds home page. Choose a make and then a specific model. Click on “Price with Options.” Follow the prompts to choose a style, then color and options, and then the TMV.

Edmunds has many articles on how to buy, lease, trade, and sell a car, including *10 Steps to Buying a New Car* at [www.edmunds.com/car-buying/10-steps-to-buying-a-new-car.html](http://www.edmunds.com/car-buying/10-steps-to-buying-a-new-car.html)

Here is another tip from the credit union loan officer: buy a car in October when the dealers are trying to get rid of last year’s models and there may be additional incentives. December is another good month; no one else is shopping – for cars.

I bought my car on December 31<sup>st</sup>. The data I gathered from Edmunds.com gave me the confidence to negotiate what I felt was a fair price and to not feel intimidated by the process. The dealer wanted to sell four cars by the end of the year. That, I’m sure, also helped me to get a good price.

