

# It's time for automakers to stop putting everything on touchscreens

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Large touchscreens give modern cars a 'sci-fi', modern and utilitarian feel. It can be said that equipping an overall touch screen for both entertainment purposes and as a control center for all vehicle functions is becoming a trend in the auto industry.

However, it's not without reason that old-style buttons and controls have been the go-to choice for controlling car features for more than a century. Touch screens have their place, but it seems that automakers are getting a little too enthusiastic about cramming large screens into vehicles and 'forgetting' the potential dangers they bring.

## Touch screens in cars have many disadvantages

Touch screens are great when equipped on phones, tablets or laptops. But those are devices where the main target of user interaction is the content on the screen. As for cars, the driver will have to focus on everything that is happening on the road, and having to glance at the screen to adjust the car's features will certainly cause more or less distraction. Since there is no haptic feedback, the driver will always have to look through the screen to interact. Those moments are the times when there is a hidden risk of traffic accidents.

Tesla is probably the brand that started the trend of using large touch screens to adjust all features in the car. This can be justified because its cars possess the extremely advanced AutoPilot driving assistance system. But until self-driving cars truly become a reality and are proven to be absolutely safe, using screens while driving is still a big potential risk factor.

Also, whether a car screen needs to be that large is a good question. Reality proves that the central touch screen with a size of only about 6in, 7in (can use Android Auto or Apple CarPlay) brings a much more balanced and reasonable feeling to the driver.



## Physical buttons are safer for drivers

While the main safety benefit of physical car controls is that you can operate them without looking, that's not the only reason they're safer than touchscreens. You can also easily remember button positions and operate them quickly. They will always be in the same location and function the same way.

The main strength of the monitor is that you don't have to be tied to a specific layout or user interface design. However, the main thing you want is not to have to waste time searching through several menus to operate the air conditioning system, or the familiar interface being changed after software updates. Control parameters and layout should be easy to understand at a glance and not require much attention.

Euro NCAP standards now require fewer touchscreens in cars from 2026 onwards to qualify for a 5-star rating. Automakers are encouraged to use physical controls for devices such as windshield wipers or turn signals. While these regulations won't directly apply to regions outside Europe, they could affect car design around the world.

There's also the obvious problem that touch screens are more complex, more fragile, and more susceptible to damage than physical buttons.

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