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RAC warns against buying a car on 'face value' alone

70% of used-car buyers carried out no vehicle history checks before purchase

The RAC is calling on used-car buyers to exercise caution rather than rely on gut instinct when looking to purchase a vehicle privately, as research by the motoring organisation suggests more than two thirds (70%) have bought a second-hand car without carrying out any checks into its past.

In fact, just over a third (34%) said they relied on a friend or relative to inspect the vehicle instead, while only three out of 10 (30%) had paid for any

kind of report into the vehicle's history – a worrying finding considering a quarter (24%) list taking home a stolen vehicle as their biggest concern when buying privately and 13% say ending up with a write-off is their top fear.

According to the [RAC Car Passport](#) study of more than 2,300 motorists*, consumers are failing to take advantage of the range of information now available about vehicles, with just 8% of those who have bought a car privately saying they paid for a [professional inspection](#) before handing over their cash.

What's more, a quarter (25%) of motorists confessed to buying on 'face value', not taking any help or professional advice, something which was no doubt later regretted by the 45% of buyers surveyed who said they had felt deceived by the seller.

With 2.7 million** used cars sold privately in the UK every year, the RAC says there are concerns that buyers are not doing the right homework despite half of motorists (43%) spending upwards of 10 hours researching their purchase.

RAC Car Passport managing director Robert Diamond said: "Consumers have never had so much access to information when buying a used car, but while the internet is a great research tool there are some simple and inexpensive searches such as vehicle history checks that buyers are not taking full advantage of.

"By failing to carry out these simple checks into the vehicle's history, they could end up paying the price later on when they find out the car they have just acquired is actually owned by a third party rather than the person they bought it from.

"We responded to the need for a cheaper, more comprehensive and trusted vehicle history check by creating the RAC Car Passport. It gives buyers real confidence that their intended vehicle is free from outstanding debt, hasn't been stolen or written off and combines this with a vehicle valuation to reassure them they are being charged a fair price. In addition, the RAC Car Passport gives RAC technical insight into common breakdown faults for all makes and models, and provides potential reasons for the vehicle failing its MOT – advanced knowledge that could be very beneficial as according to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency*** 40% of vehicles fail the MOT first time.

“Our research has also revealed that one in five (21%) car-buyers feels they have paid too much for a used car.” said Robert. “The RAC Car Passport valuation gives consumers greater confidence and power to negotiate on price so they pay a fair amount for the vehicle.

“This is why we believe the RAC Car Passport is the UK’s most comprehensive car check available and could save consumers thousands of pounds in the long run.”

Priced £14.99 and taking only minutes to run, the RAC Car Passport Buyer’s Report also includes a list of important checks for buyers to carry out themselves, advice on how to negotiate with a seller, and comes with £30,000 insurance cover to protect the buyer against suffering a financial loss as result of incorrect vehicle alert information.

For added peace of mind when buying a used vehicle, the RAC also offers a [Vehicle Inspection service](#) that includes both a visual check-up by an experienced vehicle inspector . There are two levels – a £99 inspection which involves 218 checks and a full inspection starting at £175 with 307 checks.

For more information about the RAC Car Passport, visit www.rac.co.uk/carpassport.

For more information about RAC Vehicle Inspections, visit www.rac.co.uk/buying-a-car/vehicle-inspections.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

* Research conducted online with 2,300 members of the RAC Opinion Panel from 23-30 September 2014

** BCA Used Car Market Report 2013

<http://www.bca-group.com/~media/Files/B/BCA/documents/bca-2013-used-car-market-report.pdf>

***VOSA effectiveness report 2013-2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vosa-effectiveness-report-2013-to-2014>

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