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## Why the MyFord Touch Control System Stinks - Consumer Reports

We've never liked MyFord Touch, Ford's high-tech control design that is spreading to more models across the company's lineup. Our recent experiences have convinced us it's high time to detail how the system works and why it's so distracting.

Despite some [recent updates](#), MyFord Touch still frustrates us like few other control systems in any other brand's automobiles. (Although our [Fisker Karma](#) has even worse controls.) And worse, it is influencing competitors, such as GM, with its [Cadillac CUE](#) system.

MyFord Touch leaves the interiors of fitted models almost completely absent any conventional knobs or buttons. Instead, it offers a variety of different ways to enter commands: flush capacitive switches on the center stack, a big center touchscreen, steering-wheel controls, and voice commands. But none are well designed, and combined they make the cars feel really complicated—especially when trying to perform the most common audio and climate adjustments.

There are various versions of the system, and they get worse as they get more advanced and expensive. All systems come with the touchscreen. The base version at least offers two knobs: one for

volume and one for fan speed, along with separate climate controls in some models.

The upgrade in Ford models is MyFord Touch with the Sony radio, which incorporates tuning and seek buttons within the volume knob and does away with the separate climate controls. Other buttons and knobs are replaced by flush buttons on a shiny piano-black background.

MyLincoln Touch does away with all knobs. Instead, it uses touch-capacitive bars that look like sliders for volume and fan speed.

But the differences are mostly trivial; it's the fundamental design of the system that's flawed.

For example:

- The flush, touch-sensitive buttons on the dashboard below the screen are maddeningly fussy and can be hard to distinguish. You can't just feel for them; you need to look directly at them to tap the right spot. Once we finally found and pressed the one we wanted, it frequently didn't register or actuated multiple times. Sometimes you have to press hard. And this is supposed to be the simplest way to make control inputs.
- In some models, such as the [2013 Ford Taurus](#) and [Lincoln MKS](#), the dashboard screen is a long reach on top of the sloping console, which flies in the face of the whole "touch" concept. In the new [2013 Escape](#), it's recessed in a binnacle that makes the

corners of the screen hard to see or reach. Those corners are important because they select main functions like climate and audio. And the screens themselves are poorly designed for drivers. Despite some recent updates that brought marginal improvements, all have small fonts that are difficult to read quickly, and some pages are cluttered with too many buttons. And that makes it hard to quickly identify and touch the right one.

- The seek and tune buttons in the Sony version of MyFord Touch can change the station accidentally when your fingers get near them to turn the volume knob. The "sliders" in MyLincoln Touch are difficult to grasp and fine tune.
- Other than an analog speedometer, all the gauges are digital and can be arrayed in a seemingly infinite variety via two four-way touch pads on the steering-wheel, even on the fly. Screens flanking the speedometer can also select things like radio presets and climate settings. But even these menus are really involved and distracting to use while you're driving. And unlike the center screen, a passenger can't work them for you. Some screens seem like overkill: Do you need to see your fuel economy displayed with multiple bar graphs, selectable for every five, 10, or 30 minutes? This system needs an editor.
- The voice commands are helpful for complicated inputs, like entering a destination in the navigation system or choosing a playlist from a phone or an iPod. But using them for basic

commands, such as temperature or radio tuning, is time consuming and cumbersome. It feels like a Band-Aid for the car's poorly designed physical controls.

Ford has recently made improvements to the system to address earlier complaints about it crashing and being slow to register. At least the updated MyFord Touch was more reliable and quicker in 2013 models we have tested. But several of our drivers still found it was slow to start up and accept commands.

Keep in mind that we drive cars with every different control system available. In fact, we've tested six cars with MyFord Touch or MyLincoln Touch and have driven well over 20,000 miles in them. By now we're very familiar with the system, so it's not that our drivers haven't acclimated to it. And we've found other touchscreen control systems, such as Chrysler's, that are much less complex and work better.

Like a computer, MyFord (and MyLincoln) Touch crams a lot of function into a small space. The problem is that it's too much like a computer: It works OK statically, but when you're driving it diverts too much attention away from the road.

Ever consider why video games still use separate controllers with physical buttons, knobs, and joysticks? You never have to take your eyes off the screen, where the bad guys could appear suddenly and shoot you. The same should be true for the view of the road out the windshield while driving. Studies have shown that crashes escalate dramatically the longer drivers take their eyes off the road. We think MyFord Touch and MyLincoln Touch require far too many glances

away from traffic to operate even common functions. And the voice command system is awkward enough that for simple adjustments, most of our drivers don't use it instead.

In the end, our frustration with MyFord Touch has hammered many Ford models' test scores to a level below our threshold to recommend a model. In any case, we wouldn't recommend dealing with the frustrations of MyFord Touch on a daily basis even to an adversary.

See: "[MyFord Touch defends itself against critics, including Consumer Reports.](#)"

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