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CHICAGO - With all the car-buying services on the Internet, one would think they offer all options for the consumer.

Not so, says Jon Christensen, president of InvoiceDealers.com.

The tools that can help consumers decide whether they want a \$30,000 new car or a \$30,000 used car do not exist in good form yet, Christensen said at last week's eAutoWorld trade show and exhibition.

“Ultimately, there's going to be a lot of blending between the two, as I believe it fits what the consumer really wants,” Christensen said. The industry, he said, needs to “get away from the concept of, ‘Do you want to buy new or do you want to buy used,’ and then we will take you down one of those routes.”

Christensen was one of four participants on the Web Retailing Super Panel at the conference. Consumers use InvoiceDealers.com to obtain and compare multiple price quotes on new vehicles from the Web service's affiliated dealers.

GROWING BUSINESS

Autoweb.com, one of the leading online referral services, anticipates offering more options, including used cars, said company Chairman Dean DeBiase.

“What's important is letting consumers look for cars and giving them all kinds of options, and pre-owned is a huge market,” DeBiase said. Autoweb.com will integrate used cars into the research area of the site, he said.

PLENTY OF PLAYERS

DeBiase said the online car-buying arena is crowded with players and consumers are becoming confused. The next phase of online car-buying is consolidation, he said.

“As more and more things get complex out there, whether it's buying a record or buying a car, consumers want more simplicity,” DeBiase said. “You definitely will see some banding together. And some of the little sites will come and go. It's all a natural evolution.”

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