

PRESS RELEASE

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Young Researcher of the Year lauded at Summit of Transport Ministers

Canadian researcher based at University of California wins prestigious international award for identifying influences that shape sustainable mobility decisions

The winner of the International Transport Forum's **2011 Young Researcher of the Year Award** is being honoured in a ceremony at the annual summit of transport ministers from around the world held in Leipzig, Germany.

The Award, which is open to researchers under 35 years of age and carries a prize of 5,000 Euros (US\$ 7,000), goes to Canadian national **Dr. Jonn Axsen** of the University of California at Davis, USA for his contribution on understanding what shapes consumers' decisions about sustainable mobility choices - such as buying a hybrid or an electric car.

"I am truly thrilled about this award", said winner Jonn Axsen. "It is deeply inspiring and validating to see behavioural research recognized as important by the International Transport Forum, which represents ministers of transport from around the world."

Axsen's work was chosen from a short list of four candidates, drawn from 40 entries representing 22 nationalities and research institutions from 16 countries.

Jan Mücke, Parliamentary State Secretary of Germany's Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, commended Axsen's findings at the presentation ceremony at the International Transport Forum's 2011 summit in Leipzig: "Dr Axsen's paper has convinced the jury. It is highly topical and contains impulses for politicians who are working to introduce e-mobility. In Germany, we aim to put one million electric vehicles on the road by 2020."

By integrating data from consumer surveys, in-depth interviews, social network observation and constructive consumer design games with theoretical models of consumer innovation and identity, Axsen sheds light on the process and **importance of social influence**. Specifically, Axsen looked at **consumer experiences with plug-in hybrid vehicles** (PHEVs) in California. He found that car buyers formed perceptions of cost savings, reliability, and environmental impact by drawing on their social reference groups, such as family and co-workers.

Explains Axsen: "We have clear evidence that sustainable mobility decisions can be strongly influenced by the thoughts and actions of friends, family and even strangers. To meet long-term environmental and energy goals, policymakers and practitioners can learn to facilitate the development of sustainability-oriented consumer values and behaviors."

“Jonn’s study showcases how creative research can provide real value for decisions that policy makers face”, said Jack Short, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum. “The award is well-deserved, and the study will be widely read, and used, by transport policy-makers around the globe.”

- ▶ Jonn Axsen’s award-winning paper can [be downloaded here](#).
- ▶ [Forbes magazine](#) quotes Jonn Axsen’s research on consumer behaviour and e-Mobility.

Biographical Information:

Jonn Axsen was born near Vancouver, Canada, in 1981. He earned a Bachelor in Business Administration, First-Class Honours and a Master’s degree in Resource Management from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. In 2010, he completed a Ph.D. in Transportation Technology and Policy at the University of California, Davis, in the United States, where he is currently a post-doctoral fellow. He will begin a faculty position in the School of Environmental and Resource Management at Simon Fraser University in August 2011. Jonn applies his interdisciplinary research skills to investigate important questions regarding consumer behavior, transportation technology and environmental policy. He enjoys backpacking, hiking, cycling, and camping in whatever wilderness he can get to.

[Follow the Webcast from the International Transport Forum’s annual summit](#)

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