

Kallee Ruff

Kelly Turbeaugh

English 2010 Intermediate Writing

2, May 2012

Position Paper

Texting and Driving. It can wait!

We live in a technology driven time when people multitask behind the wheel. The commute to and from work is a time many like to get caught up on emails or figure out plans for the day or weekend thought texting. The truth is that multitasking behind the wheel is very dangerous and could cost you your life. Text, emails, phone calls, makeup, breakfast; it all can wait! If you don't make it home alive your weekend plans really won't matter much anymore.

We as a society need to all take responsibility when we are on the road and avoid the many temptations and distractions surrounding us. Distracted driving is dangerous plain and simple. Some may be willing to take the risk because they have never had an accident while behind the wheel. But it's not fair to make another pay the price of your careless action behind the wheel. Every time you get behind the wheel and pull out your phone you are taking a risk of killing yourself or someone else. If you are texting while driving you're 23.2 time more likely to get into an accident. More people are guilty of texting and driving than any other form of distracted driving in the U.S. (Blog Spot, 2012)



Texting while driving injures and kills several people each year. Many of us have probably seen these accidents in the news or even on the road and many of us are still guilty of texting and driving to spite the dangers. No text is worth your life! So why

do people still text and drive and who needs to take responsibility for the problem. Most people know driving drunk is wrong and won't do it yet they will pull out their cell phone while behind the wheel without even thinking twice about it. Texting and driving can be deadly yet so many of us are guilty of doing it. So who is really responsible for correcting the problem and bringing more public awareness about the dangers of texting behind the wheel?

Our Government

In one article written by U.S Today, they interviewed a state representative on passing bills to enforce stricter punishment and better public awareness on the hazards of texting and driving. This lawmaker stated that his commute to the office every day is two hours each way. This commute time gives him a chance to catch up on texts and email from the busy day. He is in no hurry to passing any laws that would make his workday even longer. He also stated that many others in the house are in a similar situation. So if even in the eyes of our lawmaker's texting and driving aren't considered a real problem and viewed more of just a fact of our busy day-to-day life. Should we really be concerned with not texting and driving ourselves? The answer is Yes! Texting is more dangerous than drunk driving. I would argue that our law maker could take the lead on

putting a stop to texting and driving both by example and by passing bills to get people to put down their phones while driving. If it takes you an additional time to finish your daily tasks before you leave the office then so be it.

Our Teens

Teenagers are a big contributor to the texting and driving problem. Teenagers don't want to be inconvenient with having to wait to respond to their friends about the latest party or school event that's coming up. Driving is just as good of time as any to text their best friends about the upcoming weekend or update their Facebook status in the mind of a young adult. Even though most teens know they shouldn't text and drive many are guilty of doing it several times a day. "An overwhelming 75% of teens even admit to text messaging while driving." (11 Facts About Teen Driving) Young drivers are more likely to get into an accident due to lack of experience than that of any other driver on the road. Add in texting to the mix it is a recipe for disaster. "About 54% of teenage motor vehicle crash deaths occur on Friday, Saturday or Sunday – with Saturday being the deadliest day of the week for teens. Teenage motor vehicle fatalities are at the highest in the summer months. (11 Facts About Teen Driving)



Our Laws

In some states there are no laws passed to make texting behind the wheel illegal and in others the fine is as little as \$75. It saddens me that someone's life can be worth as little as \$75 and saving a little time each day. (Link & Smith, 2011) So if our lawmakers

don't see a real problem and our teens don't want to recognize the risk who else can take responsibility for this huge issue?

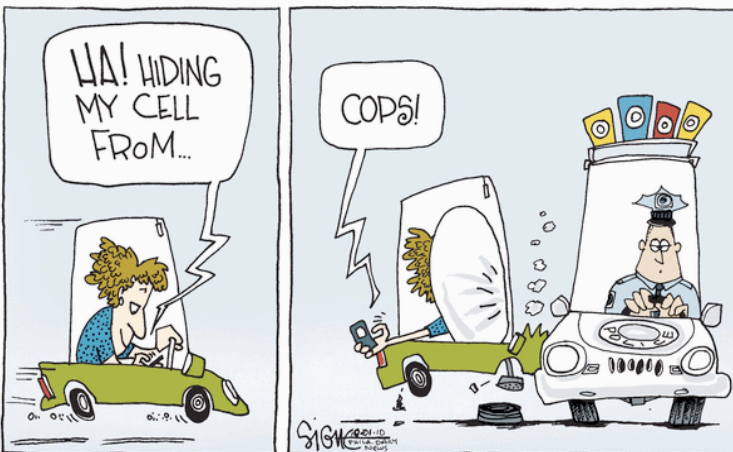
Our Technology

Should our cell phone companies be held responsible for accidents that occur while the phone is on and the car is in motion? Phones are smart enough these days to track your every movement. So should our cell phone companies make phones inactive while the car is in motion? Do they have a right to charge a service fee for providing these services? Although some cell phone companies including AT&T have tried to launch campaigns to bring more public awareness to the hazards of texting while driving they still have done nothing to really stop the problem. (Larry Copperland, 2010) Our cell phone companies might argue they don't have the technology or responsibility to keep track of people while behind the wheel. But the fact is some applications have been released to prevent the use of cell phones while a car is in motion for a monthly fee. ("The No Phone Zone Blog." 2012)

I would argue that cell phone companies should provide this application standard in every phone to keep people from texting and driving. Phones offer a variety of other services and applications for free. If the cell phone company can manage to track our monthly usage they can certainly do something to control when the phone will work and when it won't. If you don't want to undergo the hassle of installing an app to prevent you from the bad habit of texting and driving and you have to stay connected there are a few alternatives people should consider. If you just have to multitasking behind the wheel most cell phones have a free voice recognition command on their phone. So if you

absolutely have to respond to text while the car is in motion why not tell your phone to spell it out for you and send it. If you are looking at your phone and not the road chances are you will get into an accident. So why not just have your phone do the texting for you? Another service that is offered on most cell phones is an auto response. So if you are like most and trying to do several things at once. Why not setup your phone too have any auto reply to send to any text you receive while the car is in motion that simply says something like “ driving now, text you later.” That way you aren’t ignoring anyone and you are creating a safer driving environment for yourself and any one else on the road around you.

Some might argue it’s our automakers that need to take responsibility and action to correct texting and driving. “Despite laws, common sense and abundant evidence that texting and making calls while driving lead to accidents and death, immature



people — teenagers and older — will continue to do so.

The only way to stop this hazard, which threatens the lives of everyone on the road, is to require carmakers to install signal-

blocking devices that turn on when the car engine is running. “ (Michael Spielman, 2010) But how can we enforce this device in all vehicles? Even with the help of our lawmakers, cell phone companies and auto maker would we really be able to put a nation wide ban on texting and driving. How would this law be written and enforce. Could

lawmakers really prohibit the use of a cellphone while the car is in motion? How would they even begin to write the law? Would they have to prohibit even glancing at your cellphone while the car is in moving? Would having a cell phone even in the general sight of the driver be illegal? Would cell phones only be allowed to be active when the car is in park? Would the automakers and cell phones be man-dated to issue these safety devices to all operators? (*Blog Spot. 2010*)

Some would argue texting is no different than any other form of distracted driving. How is sending a text really any different from looking something up your phone or on the navigation system, fiddling with the radio or talking to the passenger in the seat next to you? How can lawmakers really say that texting while driving is any worse then any of the things just listed and how could our law really enforce the no text and driving. A person could just claim they were distracted by something else and not there phone. So with so many arguing that a law to ban texting and driving couldn't be easily enforced and cell phone companies are allowing it to happen.

Our personal promise

What is the answer to not texting and driving? I propose every person take personal responsibility for there own driving habits. Each person should be aware of the hazards on the road and the consequences of texting and driving. It is not our cell phone companies or lawmakers that are causing the many accidents every day from texting and driving. We as parents, teens, and fellow drivers on the road need to make the responsible decision to put the phone down when we get into a car behind the wheel. Driving is a privilege not a right and we as drivers need to

remember that every time we get behind the wheel to make more responsibly decisions. Every text can wait until the vehicle is at a complete stop and the car is in park.

Our Community

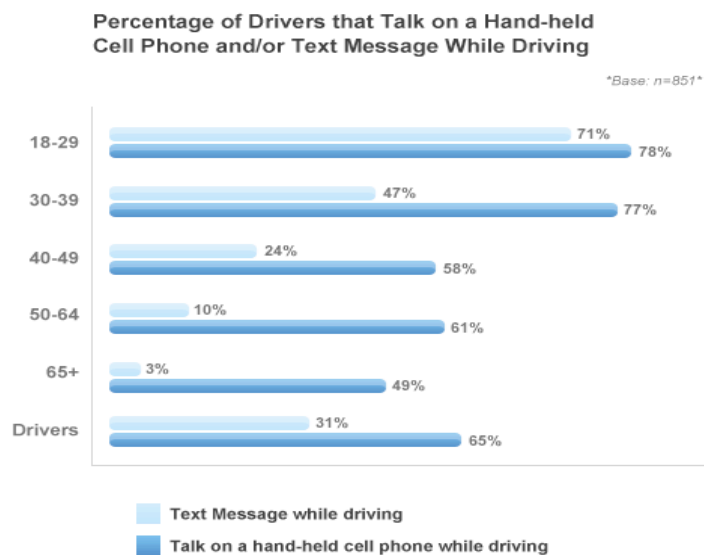
In addition to texting a personal vow to not text behind the wheel we should also encourage our friends, family, and loved ones to do the same. Every life is important and everyone needs to get involved in bringing awareness to the hazards of texting behind the wheel. If you ride in a car with someone and they are driving and pull out their phone offer to read the text too them or ask them to put the phone down until the car is stopped. Even if the driver is irritated at the suggestion they will be thankful they didn't get in an accident over looking at a text.

Public awareness is the key to fixing the texting and driving problem. I think that if our society truly

understood how dangerous it really is to text behind the wheel less people would want to do it. Saving time really isn't worth dying over.

(9Facts & Opinions About Distracted Driving, 2012)

Most people probably aren't aware that if you are texting while driving you are four



*Base: n=851 Consumers that have a valid driver's license, own a cell phone, and drive between 1 and 80 hours per week. Driving is defined as any time the car is en route to a destination, including being stopped in traffic or at a stoplight.

times more likely to get into a crash. (Hagerman, Penny M. 2012) For every 6 seconds of drive time, a driver sending or receiving a text message spends 4.6 of those seconds with their eyes off the road. This makes texting the most distracting of all cell phone related tasks. (Link & Smith, 2011) If our society becomes more aware of the risks of texting and driving and each persona makes a personal effort to not text and drive and also to help make others more aware of the hazards. We as a society could make the roads safe again. Texting and driving has killed so many. Not a single text is worth a life.

Work Cited

1. "11 Facts About Teen Driving." *11 Facts About Teen Driving*. Web. 26 Jan. 2012.
<<http://www.dosomething.org/tipsandtools/11-facts-about-teen-driving>>.
2. Copeland, Larry. "Using Technology to Keep Teens from Driving While Texting | Deseret News." *Deseret News*. 16 Jan. 2012. Web. 25 Jan. 2012.
<<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700216109/Using-technology-to-keep-teens-from-driving-while-texting.html>>.
3. Copeland, Larry. "Word to Youth: Texting, Driving Don't Mix - USATODAY.com." *USA Today. News, Travel, Weather, Entertainment, Sports, Technology, U.S. & World - USATODAY.com*. 03 July 2010. Web. 26 Jan. 2012.
<http://www.usatoday.com/tech/wireless/2010-03-07-teendriving_N.htm>.
4. Greene, Kamile, Michael Spielman, and Richard F. Rothbard. "Calling, Texting and Driving? Maybe Not." Rev. of *Ban on Cell Use by Drivers Urged*. *New York Times* [Chestnut Ridge] 19 Dec. 2011. Print.
5. Hagerman, Penny M. "Drivers: 7 Important Facts about Texting That Could Save Your Life." *Drivers: 7 Important Facts about Texting That Could Save Your Life*. Web. 26 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.insureme.com/auto-insurance/drivers-7-important-facts-about-texting-could-save-your-life>>.
6. Link & Smith. "Serious Injuries Deserve Superior Results." *Texting Accident*. Web. 26 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.textingaccident.com/texting-driving-statistics/>>.
7. Richtel, Matt. "Drivers and Legislators Dismiss Cellphone Risks." *The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia*. The New York Times, 18

July 2009. Web. 26 Jan. 2012.

<<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/19/technology/19distracted.html>>.

8. "The No Phone Zone Blog." *The No Phone Zone Blog*. Web. 21 Feb. 2012.

<<http://enddistracteddriving.wordpress.com/txtng-and-driving-it-can-wait-campaign/>>.

9. "State Farm Insurance - Auto, Life, Fire." *Facts & Opinions About Distracted Driving*. Web. 21 Feb. 2012.

<<http://learningcenter.statefarm.com/auto/safety/facts-and-opinions-about-distracted-driving/>>.