

Example of usage of mobile phones while driving: its effects and solutions case s...

[Environment](#), [Disaster](#)



Wannasri Srip hatsaraphikhup

Strayer University

ENG215: Research and Writing

Revision of Part One A: Problem exists

Introduction

The increasing use of cell phones on our roads has become a major issue, not only for those who use them while driving, but for others who use the road as well. Cellphones are a major distraction, and many deaths have been reported largely due to its use while driving. Texting while driving is a common phenomenon, as it takes the risk of being detected by law officers away, and while it has become an alarmingly growing trend, it has also become one of the nation's top killers. There is a false notion that drivers can handle texting while driving and remain safe, but the numbers tell otherwise. " The National Safety Council reported that there are 1, 600, 000 accidents per year, while the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis Study quoted 330, 000 injuries per year while texting and driving. The Institute for Highway Safety Fatality Facts say there are 11 teen deaths every day"

(textinganddrivingsafety. com, 2014). Cellphones are an important and essential means of communication and will remain in use for a long time. However, this should not be interpreted as a tool that can be used at the risk of causing injuries or deaths to self and/or others. Therefore, a solution, then, must be sought to curb mobile phone usage while driving. Some of the solutions to curb the use of cell phones while driving could come from technology, introduction of more severe laws, from educating drivers.

Discussion

A very common phenomenon that one encounters almost every day is accidents caused by driving under the influence of cellphones. Cellphone-related accidents have claimed numerous victims, not just in the United States but all over the world. Despite strong rules, they are flaunted very often leading to accidents which leave a trail of destruction and loss to precious lives. My professor and my classmates may agree that cell phone use while driving is a major problem because of the fatalities and near fatalities it causes. “ Using a cellphone while driving is similar to drunken driving as both has similar effects,” says McCartt, Hellinga & Bratiman (2006). Drunken driving distracts the mind of the driver and disorients him the same as, driving using a cellphone disorients and makes a person lose focus. Drivers who use cellphones while driving are a threat to other people using the road and to themselves too. Cellphone use is a growing norm as it is an efficient and effective way to communicate. The number of cellphones in America exceeds the country’s population.

An increasing use of cellphones means an increase in the use of cellphones while driving especially in states where there is no law to prevent cellphone usage while driving (McCartt, Hellinga & Bratiman, 2006). Research shows that only about twelve states prohibit the use of cellphones when driving. Some states prohibit texting while driving, but people can still receive calls while on the road. Furthermore, the law against cell phone use in different states varies. For example, in Washington, the use of cellphones while driving is considered a secondary offense. Cellphone usage by itself doesn’t lead to trouble, but if connected to another offense it will. In the District of

Columbia for example, using a cellphone while driving is a primary offense, says Strayer & Johnstone (2011). Despite there being a law prohibiting the use of cellphones while driving, the consequences for being caught in the act are not tough enough to prohibit it (Strayer & Johnstone, 2011). Statistics indicates that in the United States about 1, 600, 000 accidents annually are caused because of the use of cellphones while driving (NSC). If a solution to this problem is not established soon, accidents will continue to happen, and a lot of innocent lives will be lost due to the inadvertent behaviour of some. Many drivers, classmates and even professors admit to having used a cellphone while driving at least once (Rochester, 2009). Some people even claim to have mastered the art so much that they can brag about how good they are at multitasking while driving. To make the situation worse, some people even control the steering wheel using their elbows when attempting to text while driving. Driving with hands off the steering wheel poses a great risk to pedestrians and other motorists. Drivers using cellphones are at a risk of running red lights that can lead to fatal accidents. What's more, the nature of text messages can have a strong influence on the mindset of the person behind the wheel of a car, and such influences could be catastrophic. A report by the National Highway Traffic Administration showed that in 2002 cellphone use while driving led to 240, 000 accidents and 955 fatalities (Rochester, 2009).

It is conversations and texting that makes driving unsafe and not the use of hand-held phones. Thus, the use of hands-free phones does not mean that the safety will increase. It is a conversation and not the device that is distracting. Trading hand-held devices for hands-free ones won't provide a

solution to the problem. Passenger-driver conversations are harmful, but not as harmful as hands-free conversations using communication devices.

Conversations between passengers and drivers usually tend to decrease in areas where there is heavy traffic.

“ On November 1, 2001, New York became the first state to implement a law prohibiting drivers from talking on a hand-held cellphone while driving,” says McCartt, Kidd & Teoh (2014). Such laws banning the use of cellphones while driving is not efficient enough to stop drivers from using it, as they only have a limited impact on drivers, and gradually lose its importance with time. Use of cellphones when driving causes the driver to take his eyes off the road, hands off the steering wheel, and mind from driving. Such distractions cause instability while driving, causing major safety issues for others following, those beside it and in the opposite direction. Caution is thrown to the wind and the distracted driver, oblivious of his or her surroundings, can make that fatal move that could maim or kill innocent people on the road.

Distraction of cognitive function is usually the last form of distraction, and, hence, studies suggest that the use of hand-free phones doesn't necessary reduce the risk of accidents happening. Use of hand-free phones still causes cognitive impairment. People who use their cellphones while driving are four times more likely to be involved in an accident than drivers who don't.

Texting while driving is more dangerous than being involved in a conversation while driving. It is estimated to be 23 times more likely to cause a crash (Burns, Lecuyer & Chouinard, 2008).

“ In vehicle” systems of communication are rapidly being introduced and this will only make the problem of distraction of drivers worse. Cellphone use

while driving is expected to continue increasing. The use of cellphones while driving is more prevalent among the young people. “ More than a quarter of teens (26 percent) read or send a text message at least once every time they drive, although only 1 percent of their parents said their teen did this” reports DeGroat (2012).

Solution to problem and advantages

The solution to end cellphone usage while driving, could be the introduction of technology, rather than educational or legislative (Robinson, 2013). Lots of countries have attempted to come up with a law to prevent the usage of cellphones while on the road, but laws banning cellphone use while driving are not effective in ending this trend (Burns, Lecuyer & Chouinard, 2008). Education through media campaigns may help some people stop the habit, but a large number of people would still continue driving while texting. It may also not be effective to educate drivers, as some people find learning from experience far more effective, which is what we are trying to stop. . The proposed solution for ending cellphone usage, as mentioned in the thesis, is by developing software that incorporates default factory setting to prevent texting while driving (Robinson, 2013). A suitable design for the software would be such that, in the event of a person reaching out to someone who is driving, it sends a prompt to the sender that the receiver is unavailable at the moment, and should be contacted later. This way, the driver will never be distracted by messages, and can drive attentively till he or she, reaches their destination. The software can also reduce, or dissuade the frequency with which people pick up calls. There are applications that

have been developed to this effect. The following table shows a list of applications that can be used to regulate the use of cellphones while driving (Kantra, 2011).

(Table courtesy: Kantra, 2011)

Key2SafeDriving and T-Mobile's DriveSmart Plus uses GPS to measure the speed of the vehicle, and when a certain speed is reached they disable the connectivity to the phones (Kantra, 2011). The application however has exceptions; it allows a passenger to use his or her cellphone through Web-based monitoring (Kantra, 2011). The passenger can ask for permission from the administrator to use their phone while travelling, thus enabling their phone the connectivity while travelling. As long as this is not misused, the system will help minimize such accidents. However, it comes as no surprise that, such features will only be misused and accidents will continue. Other apps require the attachment of a hardware device on the car that, when triggered, disables the driver's phone when driving. Other applications that can be used to prevent texting and receiving calls while driving are; iZUP, tXtblocker, CellSafety, textecution and otter (Robinson, 2013).

All said and done, while technology can assist in controlling or minimizing the use of cellphones while driving, they can easily be negated by people who want to do so. Educating drivers on the risks they run while using cellphones would be an ideal solution. Just as advertisements that show the effects of alcohol and tobacco consumption on human lives, the advertisement of the horrors of accidents due to distractions can also be popularized. Education can be at the forefront of stopping bad habits.

Educate people by asking them to turn off their cellphone when they enter

their car, or switch it to silent mode and place in a place that is hard to reach while driving. This will automatically mean that the person who wants to take the call, will pull over and then speak or text. Set up caller ID and a reliable voice mail system that tells callers that the receiver is driving, and will return their call later. Get passengers to offer help in answering calls to tell them that the person is driving; it will save time and ensure safety. Avoid calling friends, co-workers, clients, or family while driving, and vice-versa. These simple steps can help save a precious life, and save the country the money spent on attending to such emergencies that result in death (Lee, 2013).

As for technology, it has its benefits. One of the advantages of using software to reduce the problem of cellphone usage while driving is that the police won't have to keep on peeping inside peoples car windows to see if they are using their cellphones or not. It makes the work of the police much easier (Kantra, 2011). These applications could be advanced in such a way that they are connected to the police department and if a person texts while driving, makes or receives a call, the police will be notified with the location of the car indicated.

Use of applications to regulate cellphone usage while driving is also an effective way of managing the usage of cellphones of teenagers when they are driving (Robinson, 2013). Teens are very fond of using their phones while driving. Reports show that young adults comprise the largest population of people who text or call while driving (Ginsburgh et al., 2008). Eighty percent of young adults think that cellphone usage while driving doesn't influence their performance, while 68 percent of young adults are likely to reply to a text message, or answer a phone call while driving. In addition to these,

teens are 26 times more likely to use their phone while driving than their parents think (Robinson, 2013). 11% of accidents reported involving young adults showed that the driver was distracted at the time of the accident (Ginsburgh et al., 2008). The chances of accidents from cellphone usage is likely to be about 6 times more than driving intoxicated, and expected to be the same as driving after 4 beers (National Hwy Transportation Safety Admin, 2014). It is, undoubtedly, the number one driving distraction reported by teen drivers.

The third advantage of using technology as a means of reducing use of phones while driving is that it's a cheap and effective method (Robinson, 2013). Use of applications does not require a lot of money. Applications are less expensive, and they require little maintenance. Applications are also quite effective as they are not subject to human error. They also do not suffer fatigue and their judgment cannot be impaired unless it caused by a technical problem. Use of software helps in stopping phone usage, while it makes driving pleasurable. If every phone came with this applications or everyone was required to have such phones, the use of phones while driving would decrease considerably.

A fourth advantage that comes to mind is that, in the use of applications to curb mobile phone usage while driving, people will habitually stop using mobile phones while driving. It will reduce the number of accidents caused by mobile phones while driving, says Robinson (2013), and this view is further supported by Kantra (2011), who says that the use of software applications will deter people from texting, receiving and making calls while driving. Their concentration level increases and they begin to actually enjoy

the experience of driving. When was the last time, a person enjoyed his or her drive? Were they conspicuously conscious of the fact that there are so many things to look at while driving? Once they are relieved of the distraction caused by cellphones, drivers would be able to react faster, stay in their lanes, and regulate their speed according to the situation. Parents will sigh in relief that their children are driving in complete awareness of their surroundings. What more could we ask than to see an America with little, or no accidents caused due to ignorance?

Conclusion

While much has been said about the use of cellphones while driving and its dangers, curbing it has become a milestone effort. Use of technology to stop it is an effective approach; much more effective than the other approaches that was introduced earlier, such as the legislations, and campaigns. Road accidents cause the loss of lives of loved ones that leads to pain and suffering among the victims, their families, and others involved in the accident. While technology is seen as a great beneficiary to ward off accidents caused by cellphones while driving, it is also evident not to discard educating people on the simple ways to stop talking and texting while driving.

References

Burns, P, Lecuyer, J. F, and Chouinard, A, (2008), Observed driver phone use rates in Canada, Ottawa: Transport Canada.

DeGroat, B, (2012), Driver distraction: Do as I say, not as I do (or what you think I do), Michigan News, University of Michigan, Accessed June 17, 2014,

<https://assignbuster.com/example-of-usage-of-mobile-phones-while-driving-its-effects-and-solutions-case-study/>

from

Ginsburg, K. R., et al, (2008), National young-driver survey: teen perspective and experience with factors that affect driving safety, *Pediatrics* 121(5), p. 1391-403

Kantra, S, (2011), Apps that prevent your teen from texting while driving: These solutions automatically kick in when the car starts rolling, New York: Techlicious

Lee, V, K, (2013), Fatal distraction: Cell phone use while driving, *Canadian Family Physician (CFP)*, Web, Accessed June 17, 2014, from

McCartt, A, T, Kidd, D, G, and Teoh, E, R, (2014), Driver Cellphone and Texting Bans in the

United States: Evidence of Effectiveness, *Annals of Advances in Automotive Medicine*, Volume 58, Accessed June 17, 2014, from <http://dev.mirasmart.com/IndexSMARTBetaCD/AAAM/files/008.pdf>, p. 99-102

McCartt, A. T, Hellinga, L. A, and Bratiman K. A, (2006), Cell phones and driving: Review of research, *Traffic Inj Prev*. Issue 7, p. 89-106

Robinson, M, (2013), *The Technology Exists To End Texting While Driving*. Distracted Driving Foundation, New York: Sage

Rochester, K, (2009), Large majority of drivers who own cell phones use them while driving even though they know this is dangerous, New York: Harris Interactive

Strayer, D. L, and Johnston, W, A, (2001), Driven to distraction: dual-task studies of simulated driving and conversing on a cellular telephone, *Psychol Sci*. 12(6), p. 462-6.

Texting and Driving Safety, (2014), Because Texting and Driving Kills, Web,
Accessed June 17, 2014, from