

Texting and Driving Essay

In today's world, cell phones have come to be considered a necessity. People have come to rely on them for many aspects of their daily lives. Texting, for example, has revolutionized the way we can communicate with people, but while texting is helpful, it has become the leading cause of car accidents in teenage drivers. Throughout the United States, measures have been taken to try and stop people from texting and driving, such as state-wide laws and bans, but it doesn't seem to be helping. According to Anne McCartt, et al, with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, bans and restrictions on using your phone while driving have not reduced cell phone use in teenagers. Additionally, it was hypothesized that "the lack of special enforcement initiatives and the small number of citations issued were factors." Because bans are ineffective, new methods of reducing texting while driving should be developed and should include cell phone applications and in-car applicators.

The very thing that makes phones dangerous, technology, could also make teen driving safer. New phone technologies can be used for alternative methods in preventing teens texting while driving by using cell phone apps and software. One such app is Illume Software's iZUP. In "INSIDE MOBILE Using Mobile Technology to Prevent Texting While Driving", an article written by J. Gerry Purdy, he describes the software as a solution that "uses GPS to detect if you're driving on a highway. It runs in the background and comes to life when it detects you're moving faster than a preset velocity, typically 5 mph. Once it detects that the phone is moving more than the preset value, it interrupts the normal operation of the phone with the iZUP application." This is important because it would prohibit teenagers using cell phones while driving; therefore, the number of car accidents and injury in teenage drivers would decrease. Alternatively, cell phone applications can also be used to induce safer driving behavior from teenagers by using a reward system. Parents can use cell phone apps to monitor their children's behavior while driving and reward them. For example, a per-day allowance would be provided when the app indicates there was no texting while driving. In an article in Media and Communication Journal, Kit Delgado, et al, states that "In the future, financial rewards could be scaled up and implemented on a larger scale through repurposing existing auto-insurer teen driver discounts into discounts or rewards based on actual driving performance, as measured by in vehicle devices and smartphone applications." This could promote better driving behavior in teenagers and reduce phone-related car accidents.

Cell phone applications are one method to prevent texting while driving, but they are not the only method. In-car applications could be a solution as well. One such application is Key2SafeDriving, which is a device that uses Bluetooth to wirelessly jam the driver's cell phone when the cell phone is within range of the car. According to the article "Key2SafeDriving Disables Teens' Cellphone While Driving", written by Scott Evans, "The inventors hope that the device will condition teens to leave their phones alone while driving so they never have to make a habit out of texting or calling while driving in the first place." In addition to decreasing the chance of car accidents in teenage drivers, this application has the potential to have permanent effects on the behavior of teen drivers. An alternate in-car applicator is a new technology called SeeingMachines. This technology tracks eye movements to determine if a driver is distracted. According to an article written by Kurt Knutsson, a writer for [Cyberguy](#), "Not only will it help by warning when distractions like your smart phone are about to create a dangerous driving scenario, SeeingMachines also is a powerful breakthrough in detecting when fatigue starts affecting drivers before they know sleepiness is impairing their focus." This type of technology helps stop the behavior while it is happening and can make teenage drivers more aware.

As an increasing number of studies conclude that texting and driving bans are ineffective on teens, it becomes even more important that society comes up with new methods of combating this dangerous behavior. It's time to get more creative and innovative with solutions. Technology is growing and we should use that to our advantage. Using in-phone apps and in-car technology seems to be a positive trend in the right direction, leading to safer driving behaviors in teens. It seems as though taking a more direct approach, like apps that prevent texting when driving, may be more effective than non-direct approaches, like bans. Since technology is now an integral part of the lives of teenagers, using that same technology to help protect teens seems natural. While increasing technology is part of the problem, it can also be part of the solution.