

Power Off to Stay Safe on the Road

Ding! A driver glances at his or her phone to check for a text message. Suddenly, the driver screeches on their brakes and crashes into another car. Glass shatters and the driver feels the impact of the crash immediately- they are either instantly injured or pronounced dead. Texting while driving is a scary, severe, and sometimes life changing issue, yet many people do not realize this. In 2016, more than 3,154 people died and another 424,000 were injured in vehicle crashes caused by distracted drivers who were texting [1]. In addition, 1 out of every 4 car accidents in the United States is caused by texting and driving [2]. However, I believe that new technologies can be integrated into cars and phones, which will keep drivers less subject to phone distractions and also bring awareness to the issue of texting and driving.

While there are various educational programs, few inspire drivers to take action. I think that technology will be the best solution to the problem of texting and driving. I propose the idea of a new system that can be downloaded into a driver's car and phone. The system would also come with a wire that would connect a port in the car to the driver's phone. This technology would be titled "Power Off", as the system basically turns the driver's phone off while driving. When the phone is plugged in, it will enter "Driving Mode," in which the driver will not be able to access any of their phone's content. This will not only prevent the driver from accessing text messages, but also other apps, which can distract the driver as well. "Driving Mode" is one screen, with access only to a 911 button in the case of an emergency. Only after the engine has been turned off will the driver be able to unplug their phone and exit "Driving Mode". In addition, for optimal safety, the opposite is true: the driver will not be able to start the engine without entering "Driving Mode".

I trust that this new technology, Power Off, will help bring awareness to the issue of texting and driving and also keep the driver from distractions on his or her phone. When companies start using the Power Off technology in cars, people will begin to realize the severity of texting and driving. In addition, by keeping the phone in "Driving Mode", drivers will be less prone to distractions, which will keep them more focused on the road.

Some may complain about not being able to use their phone while driving, even when stopped at a traffic light or gridlock. However, texting while driving causes a 400% increase in time spent with eyes off the road [2]. Additionally, answering a text is not nearly as important or as serious of a matter when it could result in a critical accident.

I strongly advise for people to consider the "grave" outcomes of texting and driving. I believe that this problem can be solved through technology, such as my idea of Power Off, a car system and wire which will forbid the use of driving without the phone in "Driving Mode". This will keep drivers more focused on the road, and increase the safety of everyone. Therefore, I strongly encourage new technologies, such as Power Off, to be implemented in cars and phones, which will greatly benefit the safety of drivers and bring awareness to the issue of texting and driving.

[1] Helbock, Melinda J. "Facts & Statistics about Texting & Driving 2016/2015." The Law Office of Melinda J. Helbock, 2016, www.personalinjurysandiego.org/topics/facts-about-texting-driving/. Accessed 8 Feb. 2017.

[2] "Texting and Driving Accident Statistics." Edgar Snyder & Associates, www.edgarsnyder.com/car-accident/cause-of-accident/cell-phone/cell-phone-statistics.html. Accessed 8 Feb. 2017.