

## Switch to Stick

Eleven. That is the number of teens who die every day from texting and driving. Nearly 330,000 injuries are sustained from accidents caused by texting and driving. According to the National Safety Council, 1.6 million crashes happen each year because of cell phone use(Edgar Snyder). 21% of teenage drivers that were distracted by their phones while on the road end up in serious, and often fatal, accidents. Although 94% of teenage drivers are informed of the consequences of texting and driving, 35% of these teens admit to doing it anyway(Edgar Snyder). Texting and driving has become an enormous danger to teenagers as our society succumbs to this technology epidemic. No matter how many times teens today are educated about texting and driving, they still do it anyway. We should stop talking about this crisis and take action. By bringing back manual cars, we can save teenagers from this texting and driving nightmare.

As the human race evolves, our cars do also. Less and less cars come with manual transmissions. In 2006, 47% of the new car models contained both automatic and manual transmissions. However, in 2016, the number dropped to 27%. The sales rate today, according to Edmunds senior analyst Ivan Drury, is that less than 3% manual cars are sold in the United States(LA Times). Since more and more cars no longer require two hands to drive, it is easier for teenagers to get away with texting and driving. But what if we took a step back in technology? Cars equipped with stick shifts require one to figure out the clutch, shift timing, and other manual transmissions(NY Daily). With all concentration on how to work the car, teenagers would not have time to check their phones. Especially for new drivers, learning how to drive stick takes a lot of effort to handle and still be safe on the roads. On top of that, manual cars require the driver to use both hands to drive. Therefore, it would be physically impossible to text while driving. My proposal is to incorporate stick shifts in new models of modern day cars. What was considered old can be brought back and be considered “cool” enough for teenagers to want to drive in. More lives would be saved from the horrible consequences of texting and driving. The new car models that would be enabled with manual transmissions will be part of a new line of cars; SwitchToStick.

Some may argue that there are some disadvantages to driving a manual car. Jerking and stalling is bound to happen when learning to drive, and the joints in your left leg can become damaged thanks to the clutch pedal(NY Daily). However, with the new technology these days, SwitchToStick cars will have more comfortable, but just as effective, models of manual transmissions. Besides, the current teenage generation has forgotten what it is like to take time on something, instead obtaining and “I want it now attitude”(Medical Bag). But if one takes the time to learn how to drive a stick shift car, they can retain better control over their vehicle, and things like braking will come easier to them(NY Times). In the long run, it’s worth it to prevent the harm of texting and driving.

I strongly advise for the SwitchToStick car line to be created to prevent the consequences of texting and driving. Old can become the new once more, and lives can be saved. With this new line of cars, texting and driving will soon be nothing more but an old horror story to scare new drivers.

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