

Distracted Driving

Distracted driving is an issue for all age groups but is an especially large issue for teenage drivers. With less overall driving experience, teen drivers have a higher risk of car crashes than any other age group. Scarily, “Per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash” (“Teen Drivers, Get the Facts”). In general, students are aware of the danger, but no one thinks they are going to be the unlucky one to be in an accident. The consequences of texting and driving seem very separate from ourselves; we are all still young enough to think we are invincible.

With 35 percent of teen drivers still texting and driving despite being aware of the risks, it is imperative that actions are taken to inform teens of the risks in ways that will resonate with them more deeply. The solution to preventing texting and driving from the teenage point of view is simple; the benefits for teens to not text and drive must outweigh the cost of convenience in doing so. My generation is used to multitasking, and driving is no different.

The solution is informing teens of the risks in a way that is relatable. We have all seen presentations on the dangers of texting and driving, but the lessons never hit home because we feel no personal connection to the information. Statistics do not make us want to change our habits, again, because teenagers believe themselves invincible. There has to be some sort of tangible reward for teenagers to be willing to change their ways, and the best way to convince teens to do something is to give them an incentive to do so.

My solution to the problem of texting and driving is a phone app. Many movie theaters have apps that lock your phone for the duration of a movie and then reward you if you stay off your phone for the duration of the film. A driving app could work the same way, locking your phone and then rewarding you if you leave your phone alone for the duration of the car ride. The reward could be something like tickets in a lottery for gift cards, or something similar.

One problem with this app idea is that there is no way to tell if the driver has actually reached their destination when they unlock their phone. There is an easy solution to this as well. Snapchat has a filter that tracks how fast your car is moving, so incorporating a feature similar to that would make it possible to know if a driver is texting while driving, or has reached their destination and is no longer driving.

Texting and driving is an epidemic among teenagers across the country, and stopping this problem will prevent many accidents in the future. Teenagers will not be willing to change their ways without an incentive of some sort though, which is why the phone app I have proposed is the best solution for this problem.

"Teen Drivers: Get the Facts." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 13 Oct. 2016. Web. 13 Feb. 2017.

<https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen_drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html>.