The Negative Aspects of Cell Phones:
Interpersonal Communication, Effects on Youth & Academics, Health Risks, and Driving Distractions

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Executive Summary

Cell phones have been a huge technological advancement for mankind. Not only can they be used as communication tools, but they are also now being used for surfing the web, playing video games, scheduling events in a datebook, and can function as a GPS (Global Positioning System), just to name a few. These unique innovations are changing the way the world works; but at what cost? More and more negative aspects of cell phones are being discovered and consequently, creating a great deal of controversy among scholars.

Cell phones are putting our interpersonal communication in jeopardy. The way that our society is evolving in terms of communication is at a steep decline. Non-Verbal communication skills are being ignored because the use of cell phones and texting. These communication skills include body language, tone of voice and facial expressions. Texting is rapidly becoming more popular with younger generations and is therefore hindering their communication abilities.

Studies show that there are a number of negative consequences of using cell phones in the classroom. The simple ring of a cell phone can cause a significant decline in academic success for students. Cases from around the world show that professors are also abusing cell phone use during class time; this is affecting the students’ opportunity to learn and succeed. Cell phone use by students also affects professors’ confidence and effectiveness when lecturing. This is causing many professors to feel as if their work in going unappreciated and unheard.

There has been an on-going debate on cell phone use and if it directly affects our health in a negative way. There is no proven evidence that cell phones are a danger to our immediate health. The big concern is that cell phones emit non-ionizing radiation. Researchers are concerned that cell phones could have a connection with cancer, brain tumors, fatigue, headaches, and more. Various studies have been done, all having potential problems making it hard to develop accurate results. People should be concerned with this possible risk to their health. Many questions are unanswered such as what could the consequences be of a prolonged exposure to radiation, and are children more sensitive and at-risk than adults?

Cell phone use while driving is becoming a major distraction that is costing lives, especially texting while driving. More and more, research is showing that it is hard for some people to put down their phone while driving because people are actually becoming addicted to their cell phones. Wisconsin will soon join the ban against texting while driving. Even though critics believe that the law banning texting will driving will be impossible to enforce, supporters argue that even though it may not be micromanaging the situation, it is still saving lives, which after all, is the most important part. Fortunately, this is an avoidable accident, and we can take action for making the road a safer place.

With the research gathered, the negative aspects of cell phones were evaluated. Through the input provided by a survey of various respondents, conclusions, and recommendations were produced. Cell phones are a positive addition to society. However, they must be used properly and in moderation. If society relies on them too much, communication, academics, health, and awareness while driving could be threatened.
Introduction

Cell phones have been increasingly popular over the last few years. With this technology come both positive and negative aspects. Cell phones can be a positive technological tool; yet, if used in the wrong way, can become quite a problem in today’s society. Common things that people do not even think about such as misinterpreting the meaning of a text message, texting or playing games on your phone during a math lecture, getting frequent headaches, or even calling someone while driving, ultimately could have a negative impact on one’s daily life. These common things include the following: interpersonal communication, the effects on academics and youth, health risks, and driving distractions are of importance and need to be addressed.
Interpersonal Communication

Introduction

Cell phones are a huge technological advancement, but at what cost? Experts say that cell phones are beginning to hurt interpersonal communication skills. An article from Cambell states, “According to a recent survey by Verizon Wireless of Georgians statewide, close to 50 percent of its customers send and receive more than 100 text messages a week” (Cambell, 2008). This study was done back in 2008, and now two years later, the statistics are much higher.

Non-Verbal Communication

The young adults who are growing up with this new way of talking are not fully communicating with one another. The younger generations are so emerged in technology that they cannot see it is hurting them in the long run. Cell phones are hindering their ability to effectively hold a conversation with someone face-to-face. Important communication tools like body language, tone of voice, facial expressions, and proper communication etiquette are all things that are lost when using technology to communicate. If young adults rely too much on things like texting, it will be harder for them to pick up on all of these qualities in others and will also be hard for them to express themselves while having conversations. These communication skills are important in everyday life and also in the business world that they will someday be a part of.

Tone of Voice

As a result of lacking all these skills, text messages can also be very hard to read. For instance, if someone was sending a text message that had a sarcastic tone, the receiver might
not interpret it correctly. This is a message sending error and the receiver doesn’t understand how to read the message. Is the sender of the text message angry, upset, joking, happy, sad, etc.? The tone and emotion of the message sent is not expressed through the cell phone. The message can get easily lost and confused over technology, creating one big game of telephone, misinterpretation being a huge part of this.

Text Messaging vs. Younger Generations

Just to understand how huge texting has becoming, the Verizon store in Augusta, Maine noticed a 514% increase in texting over a period of four years (Cambell, 2008). Text messaging is easily becoming one of the most common and most used ways to communicate. As seen in the chart below, 65.5% of respondents felt more comfortable texting rather than calling someone on the phone.

![Bar chart showing comfort levels of texting vs. calling](chart.png)

**Figure 1.** This graph shows that the majority of respondents would feel more comfortable text messaging rather than calling someone.
This is what the technological advancements are encouraging. Now even calling is too much of a hassle in our fast paced society. The only way to stop this very fast progressing situation is to start with the younger generations. They are all growing up with these technological advancements. Research found that 52.4% of respondents believed that 16-18 years of age is the appropriate age range to get a cell phone. These respondents who received cell phones from anywhere from 7-12 years of age are in the younger generation.

Conclusion

Overall, is text messaging useful? Yes, there is no doubt about that; however, it is hurting the society’s interpersonal communication skills. Cell phones are very useful and perfectly acceptable; consumers just have to remember not to rely on them too much because if they do cell phones can have detrimental side effects on society.
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Effects on Youth & Academics

Introduction

Cell phones in today’s society are more prevalent than ever. Children in grade school to high school and college students carry the miniature computers with them to and from class every day. The rapid growth of cell phones brings the latest and most advanced technology into our everyday lives. You can check your e-mail and read the newest Facebook “status update” in class all with a simple touch of your thumb.

This technology brings potential academic problems. The loud ring of a cell phone can distract diligent note takers during class. Watching students check their phones and reply back to text messages can greatly affect professors during their lecture and explanations of difficult problems. Text message lingo and abbreviations such as “LOL” and “IDK” can make their way into the everyday talk, writings and e-mails of students everywhere. As cell phone use grows, the communication skills and academic success of students around the globe will begin to decline.

Cell Phones and Academic Success

If one walks into a lecture hall as a lecture is taking place, far too often they will see students on their cell phones text messaging, checking their e-mail, or playing games. If they listen closely, they can hear the clicking of the buttons or someone’s chuckle as they send and read text messages from their friends. Every now and then a student will hear a loud disturbance come from the back of the room, they take their eyes and ears off of the professor to see what the fuss is all about, and find someone frantically search their pockets and backpack to stop their phone from playing the newest hip-hop song from the radio. The
student turns back around just as the professor gets done explaining the most difficult concept of the chapter. Can you see a problem here?

That problem was the same problem a group of students from Xavier University wanted to test out. Would a cell phone ringing in class impair students’ ability to focus and adequately perform in class? The students sampled 23 men and 48 women who thought they were being studied for “the psychology of note taking.” The control room consisted of 39 people in a room where no cell phone would ring and the non-control room consisted of 32 people in a room with a ringing cell phone that would ring at two predetermined times throughout the class. The participants were given a movie to watch and take notes on, then following the movie an eight question comprehensive exam to test their comprehension of the video. Two of the eight questions, Test item 1 and Test item 2, were questions that came from information given at the two times in which the cell phone rang. Below are the results from their experiment.

| Table 1. Comparison of the Academic Performance of Participants in the Control and Ringing Conditions |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Academic Task                                   | Disrupted Item                                 | Control          | Ringing          |
| Correctly answered                              |                                                 |                  |                  |
| Test Item 1                                     | 94.9%                                          | 68.8%            |
| Test Item 2                                     | 79.5%                                          | 50.0%            |
| Presence in notes                               |                                                 |                  |                  |
| Test Item 1                                     | 79.5%                                          | 53.1%            |
| Test Item 2                                     | 82.1%                                          | 43.8%            |

Note. Table indicates the percentage of participants in each condition.

From the table you can see that the participants in the “Ringing Condition” performed far worse than those in the control condition. In Test item 1 the participants in the “Ringing
Condition” had almost one-third more incorrect answers than the participants in the “Control Condition” had, with a total of just over two-thirds of the students giving the wrong answer. In Test item 2 the participants in the “Ringing Condition” had just over one-third more incorrect answers than the participants in the “Control Condition,” with a total of half of the students giving the wrong answer. From looking at the table you can also see that one-third more of the participants in the “Ringing Condition” missed taking notes on the information given for Test Item 1 than did the participants in the “Control Condition.” The gap between the “Control Condition” and the “Ringing Condition” for Presence in Notes for Test Item 2 is even larger for the two groups, with less than 50% of the participants in the “Ringing Condition” missing the essential information given at the time of the ringing cell phone.

Consider the number of instances in La Sapienza University, a college in Italy. A national Italian newspaper reported that a number of students complained about the disruption of ringing cell phones during oral exams. The disruptions were not by students, but instead by the professors themselves. The disruptions started to spiral so far out of control, that the students saw no other solution but to go to the national newspaper about the topic. In one instance, during an oral exam, a professor’s cell phone started to ring. The professor proceeded to answer his cell phone and carry on with a conversation as he told the student, “carry on, I’m listening” (Cosmelli, 2003). In other cases, the students of La Sapienza University reported that professors would “...hold up a hand for silence and then proceed with lengthy personal conversations” (Cosmelli, 2003). Cell phones cannot only be a problem for students, but as in this case, cell phones can also be a problem for professors as well.
Frank Furedi claims, “Academics’ insecurity about their lecturing skills has hit new lows in an age of unrepentantly rude mobile phone users” (Furedi). That is a quote said by Professor Frank Furedi of the University of Kent regarding students’ use of cell phones during class time. In the article, Furedi talks about the constant struggle to maintain the attention of students during class. For ages, professors from all over have battled to keep students engaged in class, and according to Furedi, this struggle is becoming even harder with the ever growing and changing cell phone industry. Furedi explains that professors feel that it is hard to confront the problem of texting during class because it has become such a part of so many students’ everyday lives. Some students even claim that, “… texting has become so embedded in their lives that they are not even aware when they unthinkingly check their mobile and send text messages” (Furedi). This is not only a problem for the students because they are missing out on important information that the professor needs to get through to them (as shown from the Xavier University experiment explained earlier), but this also has large negative effects on professors too. Later on in the article Furedi talks about a former colleague of his that resigned from teaching because he felt so terrible that students cared more about texting than listening to his lecture and he felt he could not get through to the students.

Here is what Furedi (2008) had to say,

I was particularly saddened by the sense of resignation of one seasoned academic, who has opted for ignoring the intrusion of text messaging into his classroom. He has decided that it is bad enough that students are so much more interested in texting than engaging with his teaching. But he believes that it would be humiliating to make an issue out of this disruption. (p. 24)
From this, there is an obvious negative effect that cell phones have not only on students, but on professors as well.

Conclusion

As cell phones become more advanced and more prevalent in schools, it is obvious to see that there are going to be a number of negative outcomes that cell phones will have on academics as a whole. Students are paying less attention to their professors and more attention to their cell phones. Whether the phone is just ringing or the student is texting a friend, there has been proven negative consequences on the students' academic performance. Good professors are even being affected by the growing use of cell phones during class. Professors, as well as students, are having a hard time concentrating and presenting in class because of cell phones. As cell phones become more advanced, academic success in our schools is going to be harder and harder to achieve.
Health Risks

Introduction

Walking around the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater campus, one will witness daily, multiple people using their cell phones. They may be engaging in a conversation, texting, playing games, paying a bill, etc. Cell phone popularity has increased tremendously over a short period of time. More and more people of just about any age use cell phones. Regardless of this trendy device, there is one aspect about cell phones that many people do not even think of. Are cell phones potentially a health risk? There has been an ongoing debate on cell phone use and whether it directly impacts our health in a negative way. The truth of the matter is unknown. There has been no evidence determining that cell phones are generating danger to our immediate health. Even though there is no immediate impact, it does not mean that in the future we could be affected. Cell phones have only been around for a limited amount of time. Because of how “new” they are, there is only so much research that was done giving the allotted time. More studies are currently being done. Without knowing if indeed cell phones are a threat to health, a few questions have been addressed on this controversy. What is the big concern? What are the different studies that have been done so far? Should we be concerned?

What is the big concern?

Many people can justify that they do not know how a cell phone works. Yes, they know how to use the different applications the phone offers, but they do not know the process behind these applications. In order for a cell phone to work, it needs to emit electromagnetic radiation. There are two types of radiation. The first type is ionizing radiation. It is very
dangerous for it can change chemical reactions to the body as well as damage tissue. When having an x-ray done, you are required to wear a lead vest of some sort to block this hazardous radiation. The other type of radiation is non-ionizing. This is considered to be safer. It still produces heat, but usually not enough to harm tissue for long-term. Cell phones produce non-ionizing radiation. The big concern is that even though this form of radiation does not immediately harm tissue, could it possibly have a long-term effect? Scientists are concerned that cell phone use could potentially have a connection with cancer, brain tumors, fatigue, headaches, and possibly even Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.

Studies

When regarding human health, epidemiological studies are determined the most significant. According to Leszczynski and Xu (2010), “…due to their low sensitivity in detecting health effects within the population, epidemiology alone is unlikely to be able to conclusively determine whether weak stimulus, such as mobile phone radiation, causes cancer or other ailment” is one of the problems with epidemiological studies (p. 2). The other concern is the amount of time. Some studies have been taking place for 10 years. When the study started, there were far less people who used cell phones when compared to today.

Human volunteer studies focus on effects that radiation could partake in such as sleep disorders, blood pressure, memory, etc. One major problem this study has is that volunteers could be effected by the atmosphere and instruments used. These aspects could psychologically change behavior during the testing, leaving the results skewed and defective.

Animal and in vitro are the last two types of studies. “Animal studies are commonly used when examining whether physical and chemical agents affect human health” (Leszczynski
& Xu, 2010). These studies have been difficult because when exposing animals to too much radiation, it causes them to heat up and sometimes have useless results. Leszcynski and Xu state (2010), “The majority of research on the biological effects of mobile phone radiation has been done in laboratory *in vitro* studies and the vast majority of the conducted research has focused on cancer” (p. 4). The greater parts of these studies have been performed using rats and mice. Some researchers argue that animals such as rats and mice are not closely related to humans. They feel that in order to get more accurate results and new findings, different animal’s experimented would be more beneficial.

Kohli, Sachdev, and Vats (2009) brought up a valid point about *in vitro* studies:

It would also be beneficial to the current body or evidence to conduct *in vitro* studies of animals more closely related to humans, such as pigs and primates. The majority or existing *in vitro* animal studies are of the effects of RFR on rats or mice. Well-designed studies on animals more closely related to humans might serve to eliminate concerns that arise from potential recall bias among human users of cell phones, especially in studies that are retrospective/ rely on self-reporting of use. (p. 11)

**Should we be concerned?**

This question is at the reader’s discretion. Since research has not proven cell phones to be an immediate risk or danger, many people are not concerned. Many people do not consider long-term effects when compared to short-term effects (what is going on right now). Cell phone studies take a long time to assess information and determine results. Since cell phones have not been around for a long period of time, there is very limited research. If getting results takes a long period of time, should we be concerned with the children who are exposed, and
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using cell phones at a younger age?

According to Leszczynski and Xu (2010):

We are still missing some of the basic information that is required to determine whether mobile phone radiation could be hazardous for humans and whether our safety standards are adequate—we do not know whether human body reacts at all to mobile phone radiation. If the answer is yes then: are children more sensitive than adults and what could be the consequences of prolonged exposures to this radiation, when users will be exposed for their life-time. (p. 5)

Thinking on that same idea, Kohli, Sachdev, and Vats (2009) indicated in their study that:

Of note, children of grade-school age have recently become the new marketing target for cell phones. This previously unstudied population is especially important for two reasons: (1) children’s skulls are of thinner bone; so stimuli may have stronger effects on children than adults and (2) this trend is novel, therefore, the optimal time to begin prospective studies so that if adverse effects are indeed discovered, there is less exposure before solutions are implemented. (p. 10)

Conclusion

Although the evidence introduced so far does not prove cell phones to be life-threatening in terms to our health, it is something that needs attention. As technology advances, this concern needs to be assessed. We need to consider health-related studies that have not been done yet. We are only judging our evidence on the experiments that have been done so far. The studies have mainly focused on one aspect, the possibility of cancer. Some things that people would not consider a “danger” to everyday living could potentially be a
threat. More studies need to be made on different attributes such as headaches or loss of sleep.

On the survey conducted, participants were asked, “If you knew cell phones could affect your health, would you discontinue using them?” The results are displayed in Figure 2, as displayed below.

**Figure 2.** The percentage of people who would discontinue using a cell phone if it affected their health.

The majority of people would still use their cell phones regardless if it could potentially harm them. One person’s overall comment on the survey pertaining to health and cell phones was, “I would stop using cell phones if they were proved harmful to one’s health, but it would still depend on what kind of ‘health’ problems we’re talking about here...”
Driving Distractions

Introduction

Consider this:

A 17-year-old driver in New York swerved into oncoming traffic and hit a truck head-on, killing herself and her four passengers. She had been texting while driving. A California train engineer was involved in a collision near Los Angeles that killed 25 passengers and injured 130 others. He had been texting at the time of the mishap. A 27-year-old Arkansas driver crashed his vehicle into another car, killing the driver. He was charged with negligent homicide, because he had been drinking a beer at the time...and also had been texting. (A message to die for, 2010, p. 20)

These are just a few of the many cases that happen on a daily basis due to cell phone use while driving. Whether it is during a work meeting, school, home, or somewhere else, cell phones are becoming more of a distraction in today’s world. In a society that is constantly busy, and always “on the go,” using cell phones while driving is one of the major issues that we, as individuals, face. We are taught from an early age to be able to multitask—in this context, using a cell phone and driving, right? Wrong. With a technology that most of us rely on so much each day, without using it wisely, this inattentiveness could cost you your life, or someone else’s.

Distractions when driving lead to hazards such as the following: slower reaction time, shorter following distance, and a reduced ability to control speed (Young, 2009, p. 326). It takes no more than three seconds to cause an accident (Boyter, 2009, p. 12). Operating a cell phone, whether using it to text or make/receive a call, requires one to look down at their
phone, or otherwise away from the road. However, using a cell phone while driving is not the only distraction drivers have. They have distractions such as the radio, other passengers, food/drinks, etc. Even with these other distractions, cell phone use is one of the distractions that have been quickly on the rise.

**Texting While Driving**

The latest among safety officials is the *texting while driving* issue. Boyter (2009) explains, as of 2009, Arkansas, Maryland, Utah, and Virginia are just a few of the states to ban texting while driving (Boyter, 2009, p. 12). Comparing the U.S. to other countries around the world, we seem to be the least strict on this ban. In a recent article by Hanes and Masis, others such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Kenya, Netherlands, and Russia have had bans in place as early as 1999 (Hanes & Masis, 2009, p. 25).

Causing accidents or possibly even deaths due to texting and driving is an accident that is avoidable (Boyter, 2009, p. 12). Experts say texting is one of the most dangerous uses of cell phones while driving (Agency Group, 2010). According to Agency Group (2010), “There is heightened concern about the risks of *texting* while *driving* because *texting* combines three types of distraction - visual, taking the eyes off the road; manual, taking the hands off the wheel; and cognitive, taking the mind off the road” (p. 1).

According to the National Safety Council (2010), “at least 28% of all traffic crashes – or at least 1.6 million crashes each year – are caused by drivers using cell phones and texting” (National Safety Council, 2010, p. 1). Studies show that drivers ages 16-19 are four times more likely to be involved in a crash (Boyter, 2009, p. 12). Studies also show that texting while driving
causes an impairment similar to that of a blood alcohol content (BAC) level of .08, with the legal limit being .05 (2010, p. 20).

So why is it so hard for some individuals to put down the phone when driving? Ratey states, “some research suggests that Americans are actually addicted to their phones ... the brain receives a rush when it processes a text message or ring -- the same high a gambler feels when hitting the jackpot” (as cited in Hanes & Masis, 2009, p.25). Without their phone, this addiction takes over and makes them feel alone, lost.

There are ways that vehicle manufacturers are trying to help the situation, through hands-free systems. Even though manufacturers have seen an increase in the number of hands-free mobile subscriptions, which is a step in the right direction, it does not stop those who currently text and drive. Nationally, “over one in five admit reading or sending text messages or emails while driving.” (Safety Culture, 2009, p. 1)

How Does it Affect You?

As shown below in Figure 3, with the 571 people (ages 7 to 65) that participated in the survey, 18.1 percent admit to being in an accident or close call while using a cell phone. Luckily, they survived the accident, and can tell others about their experience and the dangers of how quickly an accident can happen.
Wisconsin recently is in the process of passing a law banning texting while driving with fines ranging from $20 to $400. The governor of Wisconsin fully supports this bill and is planning on signing it as soon as it is revised. The bill will then go into effect seven months from the signing date. Wisconsin would then join the other 21 states that already have this law.

Despite this, critics still believe it will be impossible to enforce, for not only texting and driving, but that for all distractions in the car that lead to inattentive driving: radio, food, GPS, passengers, etc.

George (2010) states the following:

The difference between the aforementioned activities and texting is they have not been outlawed by state legislatures. That is because it is next to impossible for law enforcement officers to prove a wreck was caused by a driver paying more attention to his hamburger than the road ahead. But it's just as difficult for law enforcement officers to know whether a driver is tapping out a text while behind the wheel. (p. 8)
Supporters of the ban argue that it may not be micromanaging and controlling the whole situation, but it is saving lives, and that is the most important part.

Conclusion

Extra distractions, such as the use of a cell phone, while driving is an avoidable accident. Fortunately, others have also noticed this problem, and are working towards banning the use of cell phones while driving. Regardless of what critics say about other distractions in the car, the use of a cell phone is unnecessary, unless in emergency situations. With Generation Y’s strong use of texting, the problem needs to be addressed before it gets worse. By putting a ban especially on texting while driving, we can set an example for others to adjust to, regardless of the social stigma we currently have. One-step in the right direction, even if it is small, still makes an impact on the lives of many.
Conclusion

In a world that is becoming more dependent on technological advancements, namely cell phones, the negative aspects are proving to be more of a problem. Negative aspects especially affect interpersonal communications, youth and academics, personal health, and driver awareness. The negative impacts that cell phones are having on society are becoming greater as cell phone advancements are made. Rather than having a verbal conversation with a friend, more people will resort to the much less effective communication form of text messaging. Academics will start to suffer as cell phones become a more powerful computer. Students will pay more attention to their text message conversation with a friend than they will to a professor. Because there is no proven evidence of cell phones harming our immediate health, many people are not concerned. People are more so focused on the short-run rather than what could possibly affect them in the long-run. Research shows that driver awareness is considerably lower when the driver is using a cell phone. Texting while driving has the same effect on driver awareness as having a .08 BAC level.

All of these negative aspects of cell phones are in existence, and people need to be aware of these threats to our everyday living. This is of special importance with cell phones marketing the younger generation. Cell phones can be a positive influence if used maturely. Through education and continuing further research, we, as a society, can continue to spread the word and make a difference in the lives of many.


Appendix A: Survey

1. Have you ever owned a cell phone?
   □ Yes  □ No
   *If answer is no, skip to question 11.

2. What age did you first get a cell phone?
   _____ (Please answer in a whole number only)

3. What do you use your cell phone for? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)
   □ Making or receiving calls
   □ Texting
   □ Email
   □ Internet
   □ Games
   □ Emergency
   □ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): ___________

4. What do you primarily use your cell phone for? (CHECK ONLY ONE)
   □ Making or receiving calls
   □ Texting
   □ Email
   □ Internet
   □ Games
   □ Emergency
   □ Other (AS SPECIFIED ABOVE)

5. Do you think that you could live without your cell phone for:
   Yes  No
   A Day?  □  □
   A Week? □  □
   A Month? □  □

6. Do you feel more comfortable texting rather than calling someone?
   □ Yes  □ No  □ I do not text

7. Do you feel more comfortable texting rather than meeting face-to-face?
   □ Yes  □ No  □ I do not text

8. Do you use abbreviations while texting? (i.e. LOL, IDK, JK, etc.)
   □ Yes  □ No  □ I do not text

9. Have you ever been in an accident/close encounter while using a cell phone?
   □ Yes  □ No
10. Have you ever cheated on an exam using your cell phone?
   □ Yes          □ No

11. Overall, what impact do you feel cell phones have on society?
   □ Positive     □ Negative

12. What do you think is the appropriate age to first get a cell phone?
   □ Less than 7  □ 7-9
   □ 10-12        □ 13-15
   □ 16 -18       □ 19-21
   □ 22 +

13. If you knew cell phones could affect your health, would you discontinue using them?
   □ Yes          □ No

14. Would you agree or disagree to a law banning the use of cell phones while driving?
   □ Agree        □ Disagree

15. What is your gender:
   □ Male         □ Female

16. What is your age:
   _______ (Please answer in a whole number only)

17. Anything about cell phones that you would like to share (personal experiences, thoughts, or opinions):
Appendix B: Frequencies

A majority (99.1%) of respondents own/ have owned a cell phone.

**Have you ever owned a cell phone?**

- Yes
- No

99.1%

The average age when respondents got their first cell phone was 19.94 years.

**What age did you first get a cell phone?**

Responses varied from 7-55 years of age.
Most respondents (99.6%) use their cell phone for making or receiving calls.

A majority of respondents (59.6%) primarily use their cell phones for texting.

(Other* includes responses such as the following: music, camera, pictures, alarm clock, business/work, GPS,

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Most respondents answered they could live without their cell phone for a day (90.7%) and even a week (55.8%). However, a majority of respondents (74.6%) said they could not live without their cell phone for a month.

Most respondents (65.5%) feel more comfortable texting rather than calling someone.
A majority (63.1%) of respondents do not feel more comfortable texting than meeting face-to-face.

A majority (79.9%) of respondents use abbreviations while texting.
A majority (81.9%) of respondents have not been in an accident or close encounter while using a cell phone.

A majority (95.2%) of respondents have never cheated on an exam using their cell phone.
A majority (74.6%) of respondents feel that cell phones have a positive impact on society.

Overall, what impact do you feel cell phones have on society?

Most respondents (52.4%) feel the appropriate age to get a cell phone is between the ages of 16-18.
A majority (69%) of respondents would still continue using their cell phone even if they knew it could affect their health.

If you knew cell phones could affect your health, would you discontinue using them?

- Yes: 31
- No: 69
A majority (71.3%) of respondents would agree to a ban against the use of cell phones while driving.

Would you agree or disagree to a law banning the use of cell phones while driving?

61.0% of respondents were female.
The average age of respondents was 22.42 years.

*Respondents ages varied from 7-65*
Appendix C: Comments

We asked the following question to respondents:

“Is there anything about cell phones that you would like to share (personal experiences, thoughts, or opinions)?”

Here is a few of the responses we received...

“texting is a love-hate relationship with me. it is convenient to send short, important messages in a text. however, when someone wants to have a long conversation with me in text, i get annoyed after a while, especially if i am busy, or it is a person i really don’t want to talk to.”

“While I answered yes to feeling more comfortable about texting, i would rather meet face-to-face. I know that’s the better thing to do, just not always as easy. I think many people would agree.”

“Cause too many arguments in relationships cause no one ever talks to each other. They take messages the wrong way when they mean something else.”

“I think the benefits of cell phones outway any health risk(s) they possess. I think cell phones can be safely used while driving if used hands-free. I am against texting while driving.”

“I am against police officers typing on their computers while driving and talking on their cellphones while driving without hands-free adaptations. Police officers should not be exempt from such laws, if laws are enacted.”

“Yes, in certain circumstances cell phones are not available post-accident, but im MOST cases if you are in a crash and have a cell phone in the car, you can reach it and dial 911... When you get into even a small collision they, the police, EXPECT you to report that there has been an incident, without cell phones, this would not happen.”

“Two weeks ago a friend of my mother’s and his 5 year old daughter were in a small cart pulled by a horse. They got rear ended by a girl on her phone, I am unaware if she texting or if she was talking. They were both launched, the horse was killed but landed on top of the little girl. She was rushed to Madison by chopper but is now ok. The father is ok despite needing shoulder surgery. I believe we should outlaw the use of cell phones with the exception of hands free devices.”

“I know I’m guilty of using my cell phone (mostly text) rather than call the person or even seeing them face-to-face, which is really pathetic! :( what has become of people (i’m not judging b/c i’m guilty of it too!)”