

# Smartphones



## THE FACTS

Reaching for a mobile phone can be an irresistible temptation for some, despite knowledge of the risks. In the UK, experts have warned of increasing levels of smartphone addiction by users who are unable to go without checking their phone for short periods or even through the night<sup>1</sup>.

Reading and writing messages – such as texting, emailing or using apps or social networks – while driving is even more distracting than talking on a phone, as it takes your mind, hands and eyes off the road.

Texting drivers' reaction times are 35% slower and they also have poor lane control<sup>2</sup>. One large-scale study found texting drivers were 23 times more likely to crash than a driver paying full attention<sup>3</sup>.

A study of in-vehicle video footage estimated that 22% of crashes could be caused, at least in part, by driver distraction. It also showed that drivers who perform a secondary task at the wheel are two to three times more likely to crash<sup>4</sup>.

### Q1: Within the past year, have you driven while sending or reading a text or instant message?

More than half (55%) of 25–34 year old drivers questioned admitted they had sent or read a text message on their mobile, while behind the wheel of their car, in the last year. More than 40% of people in that age range admit they text and drive regularly.

Age Band	Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Yes, once a day or more	2%	8%	10%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Yes, several times a week	6%	12%	28%	6%	3%	2%	1%
Yes, once a week	2%	3%	4%	5%	1%	1%	0%
Yes, once a month	0%	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Yes, only once or twice	5%	7%	12%	9%	6%	2%	1%
No	85%	67%	45%	79%	88%	95%	97%

## ADVICE FOR DRIVERS

- It's never safe to actively use a mobile phone for any purpose while driving.
- Never be tempted to use your phone to either read or write any kind of text message.
- Smartphones and other handheld devices present further possible distractions – internet, email, social networking – don't use them.
- Never risk using any kind of app on a mobile phone that requires interaction when driving.
- If you have to use a phone as a sat nav, it must be fully secured, set up and programmed before you begin your journey; and if you need to look at the screen or change the settings, pull over somewhere safe to do so.

For more on driver distraction, see the Brake website: <http://www.brake.org.uk/rsw/15-facts-a-resources/facts/1131-distractionfacts>

### Q2: Within the past year, have you driven while using the internet, social media or other apps on your phone (not including using it as a sat-nav)?

Just under half of drivers (49%) aged 25–34 admitted they sometimes go online or use apps while driving. And almost a third of drivers in that age group said they do that several times a week at least.

Age Band	Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Yes, once a day or more	3%	4%	17%	2%	2%	0%	0%
Yes, several times a week	4%	12%	14%	6%	3%	0%	0%
Yes, once a week	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%	0.5%	0%
Yes, once a month	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Yes, only once or twice	3%	8%	16%	8%	0%	0.5%	0%
No	89%	72%	51%	82%	95%	98%	100%

## LOST LIVES

42-year-old mum of two **Zoe Carvin** was killed when a 26-year-old lorry driver ploughed into a queue of traffic because he was reading a text message. She was a teacher. Her husband

### Paul Carvin said:

"When Zoe died it wasn't as if she had cancer that couldn't be cured, it was because someone did something stupid. It was such a pointless death. Her death affected hundreds of lives. Two children have been brought up without a mother, 30 children lost their teacher, a driver has been jailed for three years; his life will never be the same either. My daughter recently got engaged and is planning a wedding without her mum. Family members have suffered with depression; it affects us every single day. I recently saw a young woman texting with two small children in the car, swerving all over the road, obviously not in control of her vehicle. If she knew what it would feel like for them to grow up without her, or for her to live without them, surely she wouldn't take that risk. Crashes like this devastate families. And they are entirely preventable."



## End notes

1. The Communications Market 2011, Ofcom, 2011
2. The effect of text messaging on driver behaviour: a simulator study, Transport Research Laboratory, 2008
3. Driver Distraction in Commercial Motor Vehicle Operations, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 2009
4. The impact of driver inattention on near-crash/crash risk, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2006