Miss Anderson

8/24/2009

5th period

Current Event Summary

*Driving Us to Distraction* written by Gilbert Cruz along with Kristi Oloffson was found in the August 24, 2009 edition of Time magazine. This article reiterates the fact that not only is texting and simply holding a phone dangerous but that hands-free technology may be just as unsafe. The authors of this article interviewed David Strayer, a psychology professor at the University of Utah, who has studied the effects of driving and cell phones for over ten years. Results from Mr. Strayer’s studies revealed that most people who talk on cell phones while driving do not utilize their peripheral vision much but simply stare straight ahead. In another study completed by Strayer, 50% of drivers using a hands-free phone missed their planned rest area stop. Both of these studies reinforce the fact that any cell phone use while driving is indeed dangerous. Steven Yantis, a professor of psychological and brain sciences at Johns Hopkins University explained that the reasoning for this is that when people focus on one specific sense, it decreases the capacity of other senses. As a result, people who are directing most of their attention to sound are concentrating less on anything visual. In order to combat these dangers, new services are coming out that will prohibit any incoming calls or texts while the individual is driving. One example is Aegis Mobility DriveAssist. This is a downloadable software that uses the cell phone’s GPS to determine if the vehicle is indeed moving and if so, records any incoming calls or texts and sends a message that the individual is driving. The ultimate goal of this and other services is to keep everyone on the road a little bit safer.

What is your opinion of these new technologies? Would you rather sacrifice safety for the ability to be on the phone while driving or vice versa, and why?