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New data from Cambridge Mobile Telematics shows distracted driving dangers

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Over half the crashes in the study had phone distraction on trip, but phones can make drivers better and roads safer

By Sandie Beauchamp | April 3, 2017 | Distracted Driving Awareness, Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., April 3, 2017 – Cambridge Mobile Telematics (CMT), the world’s leading smartphone-centric telematics provider, has announced its latest findings on distracted driving. Data from a study involving several hundreds of thousands of drivers shows that phone distraction occurred during 52 percent of trips that resulted in a crash.

CMT’s mobile apps measure driving behavior in six categories: phone use while driving, excessive speeding, braking, acceleration, cornering, and time of driving. These apps provide actionable information to drivers so they can understand and improve their driving behavior.

Distracted driving habits pose frequent threat

Key findings of the CMT study include:

- Distracted driving occurred during 52 percent of trips that resulted in a crash.
- On drives that involved a crash, the average duration of distraction was 135 seconds.
- Phone distraction lasts for two minutes or more on 20 percent of drives with distraction, and often occurs at high speeds: 29 percent at speeds exceeding 56 miles per hour.

Anti-phone laws are only marginally effective

The Insurance Information Institute has found that phone use while driving has increased steadily in recent years, especially among young drivers. The NSC reports that 11 teens die every day as a result of texting while driving. To combat this issue, 37 states ban all cell phone use by novice or teen drivers, and many states have enacted some anti-cellphone legislation. CMT's data shows that states with anti-cellphone laws have only slightly safer drivers than those that don't. The average duration of phone distraction per 100 miles of driving for three categories of states is:

- States with laws against *all* handheld use: 3.17 minutes
- States with laws against all handheld use for "under 18" drivers: 3.25 minutes
- States with *no* laws against any handheld use: 3.82 minutes

Collision claims frequency has also skyrocketed in the U.S. over the past several years, causing auto insurance companies to experience record losses in the billions of dollars. Although smartphones have contributed to this problem, CMT's work shows that the smartphone presents a new opportunity to accurately measure and reduce distracted driving at a low cost.

Changing course: How the smartphone can eliminate the distraction it has caused

"Distracted driving due to smartphone use is intuitively blamed for the increase in road crashes and claims," said Hari Balakrishnan, Chief Technology Officer of CMT. "What's less intuitive is that smartphones hold the solution to the problem they created. Drivers now have access to tools that analyze their driving and achieve real behavioral change through immediate and ongoing feedback."

Apps based on CMT's [DriveWell](#) solution automatically record phone sensor data when a drive is occurring. By analyzing this data after a drive, these apps provide feedback to drivers. They also use contests, leaderboards, achievement goals, and personalized driving tips.

The feedback and gamification in these apps engage users well and lead to dramatic improvements in driving behavior. Within only 30 days of use, phone distraction reduces by 35 percent (40 percent

customer growth rate, 34 percent reduction in claims, and 19 percent reduction in the severity of claims.

“This data makes it clear that distracted driving is one of the most urgent public safety problems facing our communities today,” said Balakrishnan. “With April being Distracted Driving Awareness Month, it’s important to take a critical look at how we can most effectively reduce the danger that drivers face. By harnessing the very technology that threatens driver safety, and using it to help drivers understand and improve their behavior, we’re making the world safer by the day.”

Visit cmtelematics.com/press for new infographics from CMT highlighting distractions that often occur before a crash and the ineffectiveness of phone bans.

To learn more about the complete telematics and behavioral analytics solution for the connected car world, visit cmtelematics.com/drivewell.

About Cambridge Mobile Telematics

Cambridge Mobile Telematics (CMT) makes roads and drivers safer around the world. Headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts and founded in 2010 by two MIT professors and experienced entrepreneurs, CMT pioneered smartphone-based telematics and behavioral analytics, including new approaches to usage and behavior-based insurance. CMT’s award-winning DriveWell program is now used in numerous successful safe-driving apps and programs in many countries around the globe, with a proven record of changing driver behavior: an average reduction of 35% in phone distraction, 20% in hard braking, and 20% in at-risk speeding, all within less than 30 days of drivers using the app. For more information, please visit cmtelematics.com and follow on Twitter [@cmtelematics](https://twitter.com/cmtelematics).

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by two MIT professors and experienced entrepreneurs, CMT pioneered telematics for behavior-based insurance (BBI) and deployed the first solution to provide both traditional vehicle-centric UBI and BBI.

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