

Development of Texting

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Section One: Introduction

December 3, 1992 was when twenty two year old Neil Patworth sent out the first text message to the phone of Richard Jarvis saying “Merry Christmas” on his personal computer. (Wikipedia) Texting since 1992 has grown a lot. Texting is now between two mobile phones or devices with Wi-Fi compatibility. Texting is “an electronic message sent over a cellular network from one cell phone to another by typing words, often in shortened form...on the phone’s numeric or QWERTY keypad.” (Dictionary.com) A QWERTY keypad for texting is just a standard keyboard, and is mostly seen on phones with a sliding keyboard or the new iPhone.

Section Two: Background

Texting first became big in Europe and Asia because to send a short text message is cheaper than making a phone call, especially between countries. In the US, texting became big because of the 13-17 year age group sending on average about 1,742 texts a month. Phone carriers have taken great advantage over this by charging at least twenty cents a text message for someone whose plan does not cover texting or charging twenty dollars extra a month for unlimited texting to someone whose phone plan covers texting. (Reardon, 2009) Since the first text message, texting has evolved on mobile phones to see back and forth conversations on one screen, and group messages are available on phones now so more than two people can hold a conversation at one time.

Section Three: Potential Benefits

One of the biggest potential benefits of text messages is how quick you receive the message and how quickly you can respond. Some studies of positive benefits of text message can be seen in Doctor Adrian Aguilera’s study of sending his depressed patients

texts everyday with reminders to stay positive and use the skills taught to them in therapy; the outcome of the therapy was his patients felt more connected and cared about when they were receiving the text messages, and 75% of his patients wanted to continue receiving text messages once the study was over. (Percy, 2012) Another study showing the benefits of texting is showing that introverted teens feel "...more relief from IM conversations..." or text messages because they were able to convey their feelings when they may be too nervous to do in person. (Szalavitz, 2012) Although these studies show psychological benefits to texting, there are many basic benefits to texting such as the speed of text messaging, the low cost (if you have the correct phone plan), and the availability of texting large amounts of people.

Section Four: Legal and Ethical Issues

Although texting has many potential benefits, there are many legal and ethical issues that arise with texting such as when people are texting. "Currently, 39 states ban texting while driving. Research shows that the activity sharply increases the risk of a crash, even beyond the risk posed by someone driving with a .08 blood alcohol level, the legal limit in many states." (Rictel, 2012) Texting while driving is a huge problem because instead of paying attention to your surroundings while on the road you are paying attention to a conversation. According to the National Safety Council, "[t]wenty-eight percent of traffic accidents occur when people talk on their cellphones or send text messages while driving;" although 28% may seem like a small number, 28% means 1.4 million car accidents annually. (Halsey III, 2010) A second issue that texting has brought up is students texting during class, which leads to the student being distracted and not paying attention during the class or lecture. A worse problem than a student being

distracted during class is a student using their phone to cheat during an exam by texting the answers between students; “[m]ore than one third of teens with cellphones admit to having stored information on them to look at during a test or texting friends about answers.” (Miners, 2009) Another problem that is related to texting in school is students grammars decreasing by using short hand texting while writing an actual paper because they are used to using an “r” instead of are.

Section Five: Security Concerns

The only security concern for texting is who can see the text messages, and Mark Elliott, a spokesman for Sprint says, “We do keep them for about two weeks, but that’s just to make sure they get sent if the customer’s phone is turned off or out of the network. After that, even if not retrieved they’re gone. We don’t store them. We have no record of them. That’s standard policy in the industry.” (Anonymous, 2008) Although we may hear about scandals of politicians in relation to shifty deals through communication, these are from email or specialized messaging systems and not text messages because phone carriers do not want the hassle of keeping track of what may be millions of texts each month. Another social concern that parents may have with their children texting is what they are sending or what images they are sending. If parents would wish to control who and what their children send in a text message, they can pay the company Radar to monitor and check their text messages on an online database.

Section Six: Social Problems

One major social problem of texting is how people no longer interact with each other as much because we are not actually forming words to speak with other people. The problem is mostly seen in adolescents and teens because they have not developed all of

their communication skills yet. A recently interviewed 18 year old stated, “Someday, but certainly not now, I want to learn how to have a conversation;” this problem is not seen as much in older generations because the technology of texting was brought on after their communication skills had developed. (Kluger, 2012)

Section Seven: Further Required Research

Some further required research into texting would be to find more benefits that texting can have on the cell phone user. Examples of such research is receiving text messages to adhere sunscreen by The Center for Connected Health or the research on curbing intake on alcoholic beverages by having people who are drinking send in text messages whenever they are drinking and receiving text messages back on how to cut back on the amount they were consuming (Percy, 2012) Some other required research for the future would be how to fix minor glitches that some texting services may encounter or how to stop spam text messaging from going through.

Section Eight: Conclusion

Texting has evolved since the first text message “Merry Christmas” was sent to Richard Jarvis. Today we have texting help emotionally unstable conditions or helping introverts express their feelings, which they may otherwise hide. Finally, texting is an affordable and quick way to communicate between two or more people that before would more than a few minutes.

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