Cell Phones are harmful drugs.

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Cell phones exhibit all three of the symptoms that classify a harmful drug. Merriam Webster defines a “drug” as something and often an illegal substance that causes addiction, habituation, or a marked change in consciousness(Merriam-Webster).

Every day while walking to class I observe so many students mindlessly going through their day staring at their phone. It doesn't matter if you are in class, walking down the street, or even driving. It is very clear that people are addicted to their cell phones. We are constantly checking our phones, waiting for someone to message, email, call, or send a picture. All of our relationships can be accessed through our phones making them very addictive. This addiction pandemic is starting to take younger and younger generations. Whenever I see a kid younger than 10 with a cell phone it blows my mind that their parents let them have their own phone at that age. It seems as if our youth are beginning to receive phones at a younger age each year. There are even applications designed for babies to play with (not that I would ever feel comfortable letting my 2 year old play with my $600 dollar phone anyway), but it brings up a good point of what the next generation of addicts are going to be like.

Cell Phones cause habituation in a both a physical and psychological way that have many characteristics of that of a drug. Cell phones are physically habit forming by the constant checking of new messages or status updates from social networking websites. People often compulsively check their cell phones in anticipation of receiving something new.

There have also been many reports of a side effect known as a ghost ring, also known as phantom ring. Very similar to the impacts of meth where you feel like there are false bugs crawling in your skin, ghost ringing is when you think your phone vibrated or you thought you heard the ring when really it did not (Thizzaurus). Psychologically when users don’t have their phones with them they feel stranded and out of touch, which often results in discomfort and a strong yearn to view their phone again.

If you have ever spent time with a friend on his or her cell phone it’s pretty clear that they zone out of their surroundings and become unresponsive to both visual and audible stimuli and seem to be completely oblivious to your existence. This particular symptom of chronic cell phone use is often frustrating during face to face communication with a fellow acquaintance but has also been proven to be very deadly. Many people get so wrapped up in their phones they become careless to their surroundings. It can be very dangerous when it comes to walking across the street or around obstacles like a flight of stairs.

Researchers in Seattle Washington monitored 20 of the busiest intersections and released this data regarding pedestrians and cell phone use. One trend the researchers observed was that pedestrians who text while they were walking were 4 times less likely to check both directions before walking in to the street (Edgar Snyder & Associates). While Cell Phone use while walking can be considered dangerous the use of a cell phone while driving is completely insane. Using cell phones while driving has become illegal all throughout the nation due to the carelessness of some drivers. According to the HealthDay Poll from November 10-14 of 2011 concluded that 86% of adults out of 2800 admitted to using their phones while driving (Edgar Snyder & Associates). This study proves that these averages are far too high. The National Safety Councils Approximates at least 1.6 Million crashes were caused by using a cell phone in the car. The use of a cell phone while driving has been noted to be as dangerous and impairing as if the driver were drunk according to a research administered by University of Utah (Strayer, Drews and Crouch).

# Works Cited

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