

Study: Teens not the worst text-driving culprits

June 18 2010, By RACHEL METZ , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- If you're about to warn your teenager about the dangers of texting or talking on the phone while driving, a new report suggests you look in the mirror first.

A study released Friday by The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project says adults and teenagers are equally likely to have texted while [driving](#). And adults are more likely to have chatted on their phones while driving.

The study found that 47 percent of adults who text reported sending or reading texts while behind the wheel. In a 2009 Pew study, a lower number - 34 percent - of 16- and 17-year-olds who send texts said that they did that while driving.

Because not everyone has a phone or sends texts, the report said the findings indicate that 27 percent of all U.S. adults have sent or read texts while driving and 26 percent of all U.S. 16- and 17-year-olds have done so.

The study also found that adults are much more likely to chat on their phones while driving: 75 percent of adults with mobile phones said they talked and drove. Fifty-two percent of teenagers with cell phones said they did so in last year's study.

That would translate into a finding that 61 percent of all U.S. adults talk on the phone while driving, while the 2009 study indicates that 43

percent of all 16- and 17-year-olds do likewise.

Mary Madden, a senior research specialist for Pew and the study's lead author, said that while many educational efforts that emphasize the dangers of distracted driving have targeted teens, the findings show a need to educate adults, too.

"I think all of us can identify with that temptation to stay connected during those idle moments in the car. ... The reality is, even if the car isn't moving, a delayed response to a green light or at a stop sign can still result in an accident," she said.

The Pew study didn't take into account that some drivers may be using handsfree devices such as Bluetooth headsets when they talk and drive, but Madden pointed out that simply having a conversation can be a distraction.

Even when not driving, adults are still engrossed in their phones: The study said that 17 percent of adults who have cell phones reported walking into other people or things because they were so busy using their phones to text or chat.

The survey used telephone interviews with 2,252 adults between April 29 and May 30. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.4 percentage points.

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