This app could save your teen driver’s life

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We’ve all seen it. You’re driving down the road and see someone driving erratically only to find that person is messing with the radio, yelling at their reprobate children, shaving, eating, or applying makeup. Distracted driving has taken on an entirely new meaning with the advent of texting.

Let me show you how serious it’s gotten.

In 2010, 3092 people were killed and 416,000 injured in crashes involving a distracted driver, according to distraction.gov, the U.S. government’s official distracted driving site. Texting creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

If you’re thinking, oh it only takes a minute to text, read on: receiving/sending a text takes an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, blind.

If you have teenagers, be prepared to be scared.

Eleven percent of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash and 40 percent of all American teens say they have been in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put people in danger.

While older drivers might be able to curb the urge to text while driving—I put the phone somewhere I can’t reach while driving like in a glove box or the back seat—sometimes younger drivers need a little help.

Designer Victoria Walker is able to think like a kid, mostly because, well, she IS a kid. At 11-years-old, Walker has designed an app that could save your kid’s life.

Walker developed the app, Rode Dog, with the help of David Frau, the creative director and designer at the interactive agency WLDG, as part of ATT’s “It Can Wait [1]” hackathon campaign.

Rode Dog works by allowing users to form groups of friends and family called—what else—packs. Each "pack member's" GPS coordinate is shared within the group. The app can then detect if the user is texting and driving at the same time, alerting the other pack members to this dangerous activity.

Once the other members are clued in, they can send "barking" sounds to the driver's phone. It's a friendly way of saying, 'hey, knock it off, it's not worth it and not just you on the road.' If you form a pack with your kids, you'll be able to track their texting habits and make sure they're not doing anything stupid.

So far, Walker has received $20,000 for furthering development of Rode Dog.

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