Why Did The (Young) Pedestrian Cross the Road? To Talk on the Phone, Text and Watch Videos, Ford Survey Shows

• A new Ford survey shows that most smartphone users continue to use mobile phones or devices while crossing the road, nearly half talk on the phone, some even watch videos
• According to official data 85,525 pedestrians lost their lives on European roads between 2003 and 2013. Car crashes are the leading cause of death in 18 to 24-year-olds
• Survey of 10,000 Europeans found that 18 to 24-year-olds were most likely to use mobile devices or phones, talk on the phone, and listen to music while crossing streets
• Ford’s award-winning young driver programme Ford Driving Skills for Life is dedicated to training younger drivers and highlighting traffic safety risks
• Ford’s pedestrian detection technology is designed to detect people in the road ahead, or that could cross the vehicle’s path, and can apply brakes if driver does not respond
• Survey also showed most people felt safer knowing that autonomous vehicles, or vehicles equipped with semi-autonomous technologies, could help to prevent or mitigate an accident

COLOGNE, Germany, Oct. 29, 2015 – No sidewalk or hallway is safe from mishap in these days of smartphone entranced, text-happy pedestrians. More worrying, though, is that many people continue to use their phones and mobile devices even while crossing busy roads.

Ford commissioned a survey of 10,000 people across Europe to dimension the issue of distracted pedestrians crossing roads – including situations when there is no official crossing.* According to official data, more than 85,000 pedestrians lost their lives on European roads between 2003 and 2013. ** and car crashes are the leading cause of death in 18 to 24-year-olds. ***

Most smartphone users surveyed (57 per cent) admitted using their devices when crossing the road, even when there is no formal crossing, and nearly half (47 per cent) talk on the phone. Those aged 18-24 years old were most likely to have used mobile devices or phones (86 per cent), talked on the phone (68 per cent), listened to music (62 per cent), texted (34 per cent), and had an accident or near miss (22 per cent), while crossing the street.

Ford is highlighting the risks posed by pedestrians who are distracted as part of Ford Driving Skills for Life (DSFL) the award-winning novice driver programme that has provided training to more than half a million people globally through hands-on and online education since its launch in the U.S. 11 years ago. Brought to Europe in 2013, Ford has now introduced DSFL training in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Spain, Turkey, and the U.K., working together with leading safety organisations. Training also highlights the risks of drink-driving and using social media while driving.

“It’s one thing to walk along the pavement with headphones on listening to music, but stepping into a road while texting, playing a game or browsing online is extremely dangerous,” said Jim Graham, manager, Ford DSFL. “Our training makes students more aware of their surroundings both as a driver and a passenger, so hazards can be anticipated earlier.”

Overall, 32 per cent of pedestrians admitted listening to music, 14 per cent text, 9 per cent browse the internet, 7 per cent use social media, and 3 per cent play games or watch TV/videos while crossing roads. Most admitted the behaviour
was dangerous, and 60 per cent said they felt safer knowing that autonomous vehicles, or vehicles equipped with semi-autonomous technologies, could intervene to prevent or mitigate an accident if the driver did not respond to warnings.

Ford recently has introduced a new pedestrian detection technology that could assist the driver in reducing the severity of accidents or help drivers avoid them altogether. Pre-Collision Assist with Pedestrian Detection, now available for Galaxy, Mondeo, and S-MAX, can under certain conditions detect people in the road ahead, or who could cross the vehicle’s path, and can automatically apply the brakes if the driver does not respond to warnings.

The system processes information collected from a windshield-mounted camera, and radar located in the bumper, and checks it against a database of “pedestrian shapes” to distinguish people from typical roadside scenery and objects. While the new system may be especially helpful in unexpected situations, it does not replace the driver and has limitations including night-time, low and harsh lighting conditions, certain weather conditions, and vehicles moving in a different direction.

Of pedestrians in the 10 countries surveyed, Romanians were most likely to cross while using mobile devices or phones (83 per cent), followed by Italy (67 per cent) and Spain (65 per cent); with those in Romania also most likely to continue a phone call (79 per cent) and to listen to music (46 per cent). Those in Denmark are most likely to text (21 per cent); those in Italy to browse the internet (12 per cent), play games (5 per cent), and watch TV/video (4 per cent). Those in Turkey are most likely to use social media (10 per cent).

Official data obtained by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), Britain’s biggest independent road safety charity, reveals that 23 per cent of vehicle accidents involving a pedestrian injury in the U.K. in 2013 occurred in circumstances where the pedestrian failed to look properly, was careless or reckless, or in a hurry. ****

“Pedestrian fatalities are rising faster than any other group right now so it is vital that drivers are more sympathetic and aware of pedestrians when they make their journeys,” said Sarah Sillars, chief executive officer, IAM. “There is no need to blame any party when it comes to how to reduce the numbers of people killed and injured on our roads – all road users need to look out for each other and ensure we minimise the impact of our own and others’ unpredictable behaviour.”

For more information please visit: http://social.ford.co.uk/distraction/

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* Research carried out between 02 / 09 / 2015 and 13 / 09 / 2015. Sample: 10,022 adults who use a smart phone or portable device in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Turkey, and the U.K.


*** European Commission Road Accident Database


About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company, a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn, Mich., manufactures or distributes automobiles across six continents. With about 197,000 employees and 67 plants worldwide, the company’s automotive brands include Ford and Lincoln. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford and its products worldwide, please visit www.corporate.ford.com.
Ford of Europe

is responsible for producing, selling and servicing Ford brand vehicles in 50 individual markets and employs approximately 53,000 employees at its wholly owned facilities and approximately 68,000 people when joint ventures and unconsolidated businesses are included. In addition to Ford Motor Credit Company, Ford Europe operations include Ford Customer Service Division and 24 manufacturing facilities (16 wholly owned or consolidated joint venture facilities and 8 unconsolidated joint venture facilities). The first Ford cars were shipped to Europe in 1903 – the same year Ford Motor Company was founded. European production started in 1911.