

Don't drive distracted, wireless industry says, but safety advocates want more than talk

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Just after noon on March 29, a pickup truck crossed the center line of a rural road in South Texas and slammed into a church bus, killing 13 members of the First Baptist Church of New Braunfels. A police report said the 20-year-old pickup driver, who survived, had taken medication and was texting. In other words, he was on two drugs, not one.

It was a particularly gruesome toll for a single crash, but in recent years thousands have died on the nation's highways, mostly in ones and twos, as a result of drivers fiddling with their phones. Despite more crashworthy vehicles, in 2016 U.S. traffic deaths reached 40,000, the highest number in years, according to an estimate by the National Safety Council. Distraction from wireless devices is widely suspected to be a factor.

As previously reported by The New York Times, the case involved a driver who was texting on her Apple iPhone when she crashed her Dodge Ram into the rear of another vehicle and pushed it into oncoming traffic, where it was broadsided by a truck. A 7-year-old child was paralyzed and his grandmother and another woman were killed. Another case stemmed from the death of 5-year-old Moriah Modisette. She was killed by a driver who slammed into her parents' vehicle while using Apple's FaceTime video calling service.

For the complete report, block and paste (OR CLICK ON SECOND LINE OF LIST ITEM):

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