

Business

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HIAWATHA BRAY

TECH LAB

Apps limit talking while you drive

When you're driving a car, there's not much difference between a pint of vodka and a cellphone. Either one is dangerous. Researchers at the University of Utah say that talking on a phone has the same effect on your driving skills as drinking. No wonder some states restrict cellphone use in cars; Massachusetts is thinking about a ban on sending text messages while driving.

The best solution is self-discipline — leave that phone alone. Not enough will-power? If you've got a smartphone, consider installing a software app that'll limit your use of the phone when you're on the road. I've been trying a couple of them: iZup, from Illume Software Inc. in Concord, and ZoomSafer, by ZoomSafer Inc. of Reston, Va.

There's no need to manually launch

these programs when you drive. Just install them, and they'll know you're in motion, thanks to the Global Positioning System chips that are found in virtually all smartphones.

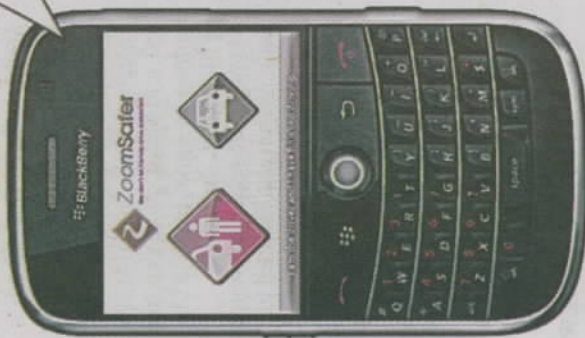
GPS can do far more than provide turn-by-turn driving directions. It can also measure the speed at which you're moving. There are cellphone apps that simply display how fast you're walking or driving. And there's an interesting program from Russia called CarSafety that can instantly detect a sudden deceleration — the kind that happens in a car crash. The phone immediately sends a text message to anybody you choose that includes your

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HANDS ON THE WHEEL

Read reviews of seven cellphone services intended to curb texting while driving. Go to www.boston.com/business.

Put down that phone!



iZup by Illume Software Inc. \$4.95 a month or \$49.95 a year for a single user; \$9.95 a month or \$79.95 a year for a five-phone family plan. Available at getizup.com.

Available for BlackBerry, Windows Mobile, or Google Android smartphones.

Bare bones safety software designed for younger drivers.

ZoomSafer by ZoomSafer Inc. \$2.99 a month or a one-time fee of \$25. Available at ZoomSafer.com.

Available for BlackBerry smartphones. Fancier features including audio notification, hands-free calling, and a way to unlock the phone while driving.

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