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Gender Differences in Text Messaging

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ABSTRACT

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Text messaging is a significant social phenomenon that merits investigation. Communications theories are well suited to this type of research because text messaging serves as both mediated communication and interpersonal communication. This kind of research can also contribute to a deeper understanding of communication differences between genders. The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether there are gender differences in the use of text messaging and, if so, what the differences are. Participants for the study were recruited via convenience sampling. The sample consisted of 27 participants ages 18–35; 14 were female and 13 were male. Data were collected from the participants via the focus group approach. Two of the groups consisted of females, and two of the groups consisted of males. Transcripts of the focus group sessions were analyzed using the constant comparative approach. This approach involves continually sorting through the data, comparing categories, and analyzing the resulting information. Areas of difference between the genders include selecting recipients, gathering information, seeking entertainment (trolling), ending relationships, arguing, seeking privacy and exclusion, using text shorthand and slang, remaining alert, and using text messaging for dating. These findings provide new insight in the areas of text messaging and gender studies.

Keywords: text messaging, gender, constant comparative approach, focus group

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"During the last decades we have seen the rise of a series of technologies that fundamentally change the way work is done, family life is coordinated, romancing is accomplished, schooling is survived" (Ling, 2007, p. 61). One of these technologies is text messaging. In Scotland, a 13-year-old girl submitted an essay written entirely in text shorthand: "My smmr hols wr CWOT. B4, we usd 2go2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr 3 :- kds FTF. ILNY, it's a gr8 plc." Translation: "My summer holidays were a complete waste of time. Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend, and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York, it's a great place" (Cramb, 2003, para. 8). The language of the essay changed the communication between teacher and student. As this example shows, text messaging has an effect outside of the medium of mobile phones and casual interpersonal communication.

The Influence of Text Messaging on the Way People Communicate

Text messaging is a significant social phenomenon. Statistics from a webinar hosted by Neustar indicate the following about text messaging in the United States:

- Approximately 203 million Americans (equaling 72% of wireless users in the country) pay for SMS (short message service) packages.

- Of wireless users 13 years old and older, 57% regularly use text messaging.

- Text message use in the United States increased 107% in 2009.

- Around 2.5 billion text messages are sent each day.

- More text messages than phone calls are sent per phone. The average for text messages used per month is 357, whereas the average number of phone calls is 204.

- In the second quarter of 2008, 15 million Americans used video on their cell phones.

- Approximately 138 million Americans have sent a text message in the past three months (203 million Americans have SMS packages; Andrews, 2009; Bentz, 2009)

Texting has been rising in popularity for a decade. In 2002, 80% of cell phone users in the United States were "talkers." By 2006, the number had dropped to 42%, while the number of texters had continued to increase. According to Plester and Wood (2009), 2007 was the first year that Americans sent more text messages than made mobile telephone calls.

The increasing use of text messaging is evident in findings from the Pew Research Center that indicate "91% of American adults own a cell phone and many use the devices for much more than phone calls" (Duggan, 2013, p. 1). Some of these uses include the following (Duggan, 2013):

- Send and receive text messages (81%)

- Access the Internet (60%)

- Send and receive e-mail (52%)

- Download apps (50%)

- Get directions, recommendations, and other location-based information (49%)

- Listen to music (48%)

- Participate in a video call or video chat (21%)

- Share their location

Because text messaging has a profound presence in modern society, "Understanding the social parameters of this communication medium is an important endeavor" (Harrison &

Gilmore, 2012, p. 513). Ruesch and Bateson (1951) stated that communication is "the social matrix of modern life." (p. 10). As such, communication media have become both more rapid and more convenient (Harrison & Gilmore, 2012). This phenomenon is especially evident in the platform of text messaging. Among texters, "e-mail from a PC is considered the new snail mail—something of a chore—whereas text can be used anywhere and can send an instant message to interact with other devices" (Fernando, 2007, p. 11). Skierkowski and Wood (2012) refer to both the technology and societal response as a "moving target" because its use and influence have changed swiftly (p. 744).

The prevalence of text messaging suggests that it has far-reaching effects. For example, text messaging has changed the dynamic of mobile phone use, and in turn, the mobile phone itself. The size and shape of mobile phones have changed to accommodate text messaging. Initially, mobile phones were designed to be more compact as technology advanced. However, as the popularity of texting has increased, the size of mobile phones has increased to accommodate a full QWERTY keyboard to ease the process of texting. As Skierkowski and Wood (2012) noted, "the development of mobile phones with full keyboards, touch screens, or advanced word formation programs has facilitated the process by which young people have embraced this technology as a hallmark of their generation" (p. 744). Technology has quickly developed and evolved to accommodate and encourage text messaging.

According Peters (1999) media have meaning independent of the messages they convey, and the mode of transfer affects the message. The medium can change the essence of the meaning of communication. The message changes by virtue of the objects' different meanings. Meaning "can dwell in things as well as people, in matter as well as minds" (Peters, 1999, pp. 116–117).

Thus, text messaging as a medium is changing the nature of communication. "This electrification of communication channels not only extends interpersonal communication by helping overcome limitations of time and space, but also alters the ways in which people interact with each other" (Kim, 2002, p. 3). These mediated communications offer new dimensions of interaction: "Online spaces are a replication and extension of physical spaces, but at the same time, they offer new technical and social dimensions not available in the physical world" (Noy, Raban, & Ravid, 2006, p. 176).

Linguistically, text messaging has changed communication. While some researchers claim that text messaging contributes to a broken language, other researchers posit that the language used for text messaging is one of maximum economy—a new sort of literacy tailored to the medium of SMS (Lin & Tong, 2007). Crystal (2008) pointed out "a new medium for language doesn't turn up very often, which is why the linguistic effects of electronic communications technology have attracted so much attention" (p. 80). According to Halliday (2003), "electronic text tends to lessen the distance between the spoken and written mode; it develops features and patterns of its own, part written part spoken and part perhaps unlike either" (p. 415).

Grinter and Eldrigde (2001) found that text messaging changes the way teenagers communicate. "For teenagers, text messaging fills a gap left by other communications media" (p. 235). The discreet nature of text messaging allows teens to communicate at times and places they previously could not, such as during movies at the theater. The terseness of the text messaging medium makes it possible to have short, blunt conversations without small talk. Grinter and Eldridge (2001) also posited that text messaging has a specialized language, which includes a multitude of abbreviations. Just a few letters can communicate an entire message. In their study,

Grinter and Eldridge (2001) counted 146 unique abbreviations the participants used in text messages.

Though Grinter and Eldridge (2001) focused on teenagers, their findings "may well extrapolate to adult use" (p. 230). The researchers proposed that adults might find the medium useful for the same reasons teenagers do, and even if some of today's adults do not adopt text messaging, future generations of adults will use this communication medium. Indeed, many members of the next generation of adults—today's youth—have already adopted text messaging. Most of the youth in Skierkowski and Wood's (2012) study "indicated that texting has become an integral aspect of their daily communicative behavior, and that among close peer networks, texting is the preferred means of contact" (p. 746).

The immediacy of text messaging is an important aspect of this communication method. As Ling (2007) explained, "Instead of saving up thoughts and insights until it is possible to sit down and have a good chat with a friend, we can send them to each other immediately" (p. 62). Text messaging can also "be used to ease the initial stages of . . . romance" because the interactions are more discreet, meaning they "need not be censured"; rather, they can be "candid discussions," unlike household telephone calls (p. 62). Texting is also a convenient tool to use at the end of a relationship, serving as a "useful if somewhat cowardly way to avoid direct real-time confrontations" (p. 63).

Communications Research

Communications theories are well suited to research on technology-assisted communication. Noy et al. (2006) explored computer-mediated communication using the endowment effect, the mere ownership effect, group information sharing, the social presence theory, the media richness theory, and social influence theories. Li (2007) investigated the

functional theory in relation to computer-mediated communication and group decision making. Antheunis, Schouten, Valkenburg, and Peter (2009) studied computer mediated communication in terms of uncertainty reduction theory and Walther's (1996) hyperpersonal communication theory. These theories can be applied to other types of mediated communication, such as text message exchanges.

Text message exchanges can also offer important insights into interpersonal communication. Lim and Yang (2006) examined public relations in the blogosphere: "Even though it is mediated, blog-mediated public relations can be considered as interpersonal" (p. 24). This conclusion implies that other kinds of mediated communication, such as text messaging, can also be considered interpersonal.

Text message research can also contribute to a deeper understanding of communication differences between genders. Research shows marked differences between men's and women's language, from vocabulary to grammar, and that the split in male and female language may occur at an early age (Ladegaard & Blese, 2003). Maltz and Borker's (1982) research indicates that interaction styles between genders are formed in early childhood and that women and men are members of different "sociolinguistic subcultures" (p. 200). Numerous studies confirm this conclusion, providing empirical evidence for gender-specific language use (Coates 1994, 1996; Holmes, 1995; Ogiermann, 2008; Tannen, 1994).

Swenson and Casmir (1998) examined culture, experience, gender, and the three variables' roles in interpreting emotion expressions. Since facial expressions are a salient part of face-to-face interaction, mediated communications present an interesting addition to interpersonal communication (Beek & Dubas, 2008). Antheunis et al. (2009) identified the need

for studies that "incorporate a more differentiated view on the concept of reduced nonverbal cues" (p. 21).

Pedersen and Macafee (2007) delved into gender differences in blogging, and Brown and Pardun (2004) examined gender differences in choosing television programming. Both sets of researchers found significant differences between genders.

Little research has been conducted on gender and text messaging. The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether gender differences exist in the use of text messaging and, if so, what the differences are. This research is largely exploratory in nature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Text Messaging as a Growing Trend

Text messaging has been a prevalent communication form in all parts of life for the majority of society. For example, popular culture reflects text message language. Avril Lavigne's hit song "Sk8r Boi" and Kelly Clarkson's "Since U Been Gone" both replicate the shorthand of text messaging. Many businesses use text messaging as a means of communicating with their clientele. Just as consumers can sign up to receive e-mails with updates, coupons, and other special deals, consumers now can opt to receive similar information through text messages.

School personnel are also using text messaging to communicate with their constituents. The principal at Cheam Common Junior School in Surrey, England, attempted to call a student's mother repeatedly to inform the mother that her 10-year-old child had been expelled. After several failed attempts to reach the mother via phone call, the principal decided to send a text message about the expulsion ("10-year-old pupil expelled by text," 2004).

Additionally, text messaging is used for medical purposes. Young people with Type 1 diabetes have found considerable success in text messaging each other. This system "offers a means of contact and support between clinic visits and aims to increase adherence with intensive insulin regimens and to improve clinical outcome" (Franklin, Waller, Pagliari, & Greene, 2003, p. 991). Wyber, Khashram, Donnell, and Meyer-Rochow (2013) studied text messaging between doctors in a New Zealand hospital. Communicating succinctly is of utmost importance in a hospital setting, and the doctors in this study perceived text messaging to be "convenient, fast, unobtrusive, and reliable" (p. 32). The doctors' positive attitudes toward text messaging suggest that using text messaging in medical settings will likely increase.

Global nature of text messaging. Text messaging is not just a U.S. phenomenon. Overseas Filipino workers also have found text messaging to be of use. "Of almost a million documented workers, 75% are women, many of whom leave their children behind to be cared for by husbands and the extended family" (Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 253). Text messaging provides a way for these women to mother their children from a distance.

Until fairly recently, text messaging in Kuwait was only available in English. Arabic characters were not included in this technology. Despite the limited alphabet, text messaging in Kuwait has become relatively popular, especially among the younger generation (Haggan, 2007). Haggan (2007) found that Kuwaitis send and receive text messages on a daily basis. Kuwaitis indicated that ease is the most common reason for text messaging (compared to phone calls).

Copresence. Regardless of physical location, a text message is expected to reach a particular person directly. This sense of copresence may contribute to the perception of virtual intimacy. The reciprocity of text messaging may be better understood as an extension of gift giving, which also contributes to a sense of intimacy (Lin & Tong, 2007). Skierkowski and Wood (2012) observed that text messaging allows individuals "to remain connected to their social network from virtually any place or situation where this technology is supported, especially under circumstances in which prior social norms or geographical impossibilities would have prevented individuals from calling one another" (p. 744).

Lin and Tong (2007) reported that text messaging allows college students in Hong Kong to be easily available to each other, thereby maintaining a sense of copresence. The Hong Kong students Lin and Tong studied noted that text messaging gives them a sense of closeness and intimacy without physical constraints. Friends separated by distance can maintain their relationships through text messaging, producing a sense of togetherness and intimacy. Also,

unlike IM, text messaging does not confine its users to sitting in front of a computer (Lin & Tong, 2007). Text messaging also allows these students to enlarge their social networks. The unobtrusive nature of text messaging encourages college students in Hong Kong to form new friendships in a controllable context. Additionally, these college students found text messaging to be a perfect place for emerging amorous feelings. Text messaging gave them added bravery in expressing these sentiments. The convenience and easy access of text messaging is also less intrusive than other direct methods of communication, such as calling on the phone. The nature of text messaging is compatible with multitasking, a practice that is common to college students (Lin & Tong, 2007).

Purposes of texting. In the United States, college students and young adults increasingly use text messaging as a means of navigating social relationships (Drouin & Landgraff, 2012). Harrison and Gilmore (2012) identified six main purposes for college students' texting (p. 515):

- Connection: using text messaging to maintain social ties

- Romance: using text messaging to communicate interest and affection to a current or intended romantic partner

- Escape: using text messaging to divert one's attention away from the people and situations in one's immediate environment

- Social breaches: using text messaging when in the presence of others with whom one has an explicit or implicit expectation to interact

- Maleficence: using text messaging with the intent of upsetting or provoking another

- Sexting: sending explicit, sexually themed text messages

Similarly, Conti-Ramsden, Durkin, and Simkin (2010) found several aspects of text messaging that are appealing to adolescents. These factors include convenience, affordability, control over the context of communication, speed of relating information, and autonomy from parental supervision (Conti-Ramsden et al., 2010).

      Texting versus other communication media. In a study by Lam (2012), participants were divided into groups and given a project on which to collaborate. One group used text messaging as a means of communication. The other group primarily used e-mail as a means of communication and did not use text messaging. In the group that used text messaging, the quantity of communication was 40% higher than in the group that didn't use text messaging. Members of the text messaging group indicated that they felt obligated to respond in a timely manner to a text message. They did not feel such an obligation when responding to email communications (Lam, 2012). Lam (2012) pointed out that text messaging is both synchronous and asynchronous—synchronous because the sender can reasonably assume the other party receives a text message right away, and asynchronous in that the receiver may have his or phone turned off, may chose to ignore the text, or may respond later.

      The text messaging group sent more questions and answers, presumably so they could work on their project. This interaction gave the text messaging group more time outside of face-to-face meetings to work on their project. The members of the text messaging group also felt more socially connected than did the members of the other group. The text messaging group also became more socially connected and engaged in communication not related to the project. According to Lam (2012), "If the goal is to quickly bond as a team, using text messaging may be quite beneficial" (p. 203).

Text language. According to Holtgraves and Paul (2013), the language in text messages is "linguistically simpler, more personal, and more affective" than language used in phone calls (p. 289). Thomas and McGee (2012) used the term *textese* to refer to the "the abbreviated language and slang used when sending text messages" (p. 20). Thomas and McGee noted that textese is not completely unique, nor unprecedented. Rather, "textese makes use of a number of text orthography features: logograms, pictograms, rebuses, and initialism (omitted letters and nonstandard spellings). However, none of these are new to our use of the written word" (p. 20).

Plester, Wood, and Bell (2008) and Thomas and McGee (2012) reported that individuals are able to "code switch" between different communication modes and media. Code switching "involves the ability to make transitions between different means of communication based on situational needs. . . . Students code switch daily when they switch from slang used in the hallway to language more appropriate or acceptable in the classroom" (Thomas & McGee, 2012, p. 20). Textese is becoming increasingly prevalent outside of text messaging; the previously described essay of a 13-year-old girl in Scotland is just one example.

Gender Differences in Communication

In all cultures, gender is a highly salient aspect of identity. Researchers have identified many gender-related differences, including linguistic differences. For example, researchers have identified the differences in the apologies of men and women. Research also indicates the same behavior is often interpreted differently depending on whether displayed by a man or a woman (Barrett, 2004).

Wouk (1999) studied gender differences by examining the use of pragmatic particles in speech. Pragmatic particles do not offer specific meaning; rather, they contribute to context. Of the many types of pragmatic articles, Wouk (1999) selected to study *ya*/*iya* and *kan* in the

Indonesian language. The researcher found that overall, men and women used the particles to the same extent, but there were a few differences. Men were more likely to use *ya* in drawing a conclusion, especially when the context was adversarial or critical. Men also used *kan* more in conversations where privilege was shared. Men were more likely than women to use *ya* responsively, while women were more likely to use *ya* in contexts of creating solidarity through building shared knowledge.

Ogierman (2008) studied gender-specific language use in two countries: Britain and Russia. Ogierman found more statistically significant differences between languages than between members of the same gender. The findings of this study support the conclusions of previous research: women put more effort into maintaining relationships than do men. The language tendencies of each gender are influenced by gender roles, as well as by societal change. Gender roles are more distinct in some cultures than in other cultures, meaning gender roles are more influential in some cultures than in other cultures (Ogierman, 2008).

Muchnik and Stavans (2009) compared narrative and linguistic styles of mothers and fathers when telling their children stories. The researchers observed a number of differences between the mothers and fathers, including in the quantity of talk, the use of linguistic features, questioning, discursive interaction, and narrative style. For example, mothers invested more effort, such as by using linguistic and emotional tools, to strengthen the interaction in storytelling. The gender differences appear to be driven by interactive and linguistic characteristics. Muchnik and Stavans (2009) found that communication style was affected more by the parents' genders than the children's genders, but the child's gender was reflected in the parents' styles. Fathers used more high register and pseudoscientific information with their sons

than with their daughters. The researchers found emotional elements in mother-daughter exchanges, but not in other circumstances.

Pederson and Macafee (2007) conducted research on gender differences related to blogging. Men and women in the study had similar satisfaction levels regarding blogging. However, women were more interested in blogging as a social activity, whereas men were more interested in information and opinion sharing. Women were more concerned with issues of privacy while blogging. Men tended to demonstrate more technical sophistication on their blogs (Pederson & Macafee, 2007).

The results of a study by Wyber et al. (2013) indicates that gender has a small role in the frequency of texting among doctors. Though the results were not statistically significant, researchers found that "male interns texted twice as often than [*sic*] their female counterparts" (p. 31). One of the reasons for the difference may be "that considerably more male doctors (59%) own PDAs than female doctors (38%)" (Wyber et al., 2013, p. 32).

Thomee, Eklöf, Gustafsson, Nilsson, and Hagberg (2007) studied the use of information and communication technology in relation to psychological symptoms in young adults. High use of these technologies was associated with prolonged stress and depression for women but not for men. Women who frequently used mobile phones and SMS messaging also developed "difficulties falling asleep" (p. 1312).

Baron and Ling (2011) studied the use of punctuation in the electronic communication of adolescents and college students. The researchers found that adolescent and college-aged females differed a great deal in their use of emoticons. Teenaged females used emoticons heavily, whereas college-aged females used emoticons in fewer than 1% of sentences. Baron and Ling also found that adolescent males "were comfortable ending their text messages when they had

gotten their point across," while adolescent females "felt it was important to soften their messages with concluding courtesy markers" (p. 62).

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Throughout history, researchers have been attracted to studying new media to discover what motivates individuals' media selections. Examples include Cantril and Allport (1935), who studied radio, and Wolfe and Fiske (1949), who studied comics. Researchers have investigated how to improve communication based on the gratifications that attract people to particular media (Ruggiero, 2000). According to the uses and gratifications theory, people use media to fulfill their social and psychological needs. Because of their different motivations and backgrounds, people often interpret the same information differently. In some cases, this leads to consumers using the same media to fill different needs. The purpose of the uses and gratifications approach is to understand the purposes of the receiver in choosing media, instead of focusing on the intent of the communicator (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

According to some researchers, the theory of "uses and gratifications has always provided a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communications medium: newspapers, radio and television, and now the Internet" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 3). There is some controversy as to the beginning of the uses and gratifications theory. According to Wimmer and Dominick (1994), uses and gratifications research began in 1940 when researchers were trying to find an explanation regarding why audiences were attracted to radio and newspapers. Schramm (1949) also contributed to the development of the uses and gratifications theory through presenting his immediate reward and delayed reward model of media gratification. Others have attributed the theory to Katz (1959) or to Dozier and Rice (Ruggiero, 2000).

In 1959 Katz outlined what could be considered the beginning of the uses and gratifications approach. Katz developed the outline in response to an article written by Berelson (1959), who claimed that communication research was dead. Katz argued that the study of mass communication as persuasion was dying but that the overall field of mass communications was not. Katz (1959) referenced several studies that supported his theory. One of these studies was conducted in 1949 by Berelson during a two-week newspaper strike. Berelson's (1965) intent was to identify what people missed about their newspaper. Most readers missed the information the most, though they did find other sources of news. Additionally, many readers cited escape, relaxation, entertainment, and social prestige as reasons they missed reading the newspaper (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

Katz (1959) also cited Riley and Riley's (1951) study on children's media use. The findings show that children well integrated into social groups used media as an idea source for group play, while children not well integrated used the same storylines for daydreaming. These findings illustrate one characteristic of uses and gratifications—different people can use the same media for different ends (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

Katz (1959) suggested that the focus of communication research needed to change from investigating the question "What do media do to people?" to the question "What do people do with the media?" Based on the perspective that an individual is "more influential than the media he or she consumes" (Baldwin, 2004, p. 217), and Katz (1959) formulated a research approach focused on the individual motivations of people when using media.

Early uses and gratifications research was purely descriptive and was missing the links between the gratifications and the "psychological or sociological origins of the needs satisfied" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 5). Katz and Foulkes (1962) studied conceptualized mass media use as an

escape, and Klapper (1963) investigated the importance of analyzing the consequences of media use (Ruggiero, 2000). Rosengren (1974) tried to redefine the study of uses and gratifications by linking the basic needs of people to their personal characteristics and social environment. He suggested that the problems and solutions that result from such circumstances include "different motives for gratification behavior that can come from using the media or other activities. Together media use or other behaviors produce gratification (or nongratification) that has an impact on the individual or society, thereby starting the process anew" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 6).

The theory continued to be refined by researchers such as Blumler (1979), who developed important categories for new-media research. Blumler listed primary origins of the media gratifications as "normative influences, socially distributed life changes, and the subjective reaction of the individual to the social situation" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 7). In response to Blumler's work, McLeod, Bybee, and Durall (1982) identified the need to distinguish between gratifications sought and gratifications received. McLeod et al. explained that because the concepts are different, different research approaches are required. Instead of a focus on the media or communication itself, Windahl (1981) emphasized that in uses and gratifications research, audiences were the focus (Ruggiero, 2000).

In the 1980s, researchers turned their attention to the notion of an active audience. Rubin (1984) asserted it is important to remember that audience activity is a variable concept. Other researchers likewise argued that the activity of the audience varies depending on individual activity levels and the frequency of media use, which may be affected by income status and the occurrence of stressful situations (Ruggiero, 2000).

Many researchers have pointed out that experiencing gratifications from using media can create addictive behaviors. Rubin and Windahl (1986) argued that when people "intentionally

seek out information or ritualistically use specific communication media," they can become addicted to that message (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 9). Tewksbury, Hals, and Bibart (2008) stated that "over time, people develop routines for choosing media and outlets such that they come to rely on them to satisfy chronic or recurring needs. These relationships can be relatively stable and predictive of media consumption behavior" (p. 257). These findings relate to Song et al.'s (2004) description of learning theory, which indicates that "active seeking of pleasurable gratifications by non-pathological users leads to habitual and addictive behavior through operant conditioning" (p. 385).

Traditional media. Herzog (1942–1943) conducted 100 interviews with daytime serial radio listeners. From this research, Herzog (1942-1943) identified five applications of the uses and gratifications theory (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Some of the listeners liked hearing about other people's troubles. These listeners said hearing about the characters' difficulties made them feel better about themselves. Hearing the characters' distress helped the listeners compensate for the problems they experienced in their own lives (Herzog, 1942–1943; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

Some listeners enjoyed identifying with the characters and their dilemmas. Herzog (1942–1943) speculated that in consequence, the listeners felt superior to those who had not experienced such strife (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Other listeners were gratified by emotional displays regarding the characters' situations. These listeners enjoyed the favorable situations of the characters and cried over their plights. For these listeners, emotional release was an important part of listening to daytime serials (Herzog, 1942–1943; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

Additionally, some listeners enjoyed wishful thinking. The dramas were more than just entertainment for these listeners; they gained satisfaction by vicariously living through the

characters (Herzog, 1942–1943; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Other listeners reported that daytime serials provided them with valuable advice. These listeners looked to the storylines for guidance in how to face similar conflicts in their lives. In this way, the listeners said, they prepared for the future (Herzog, 1942–1943; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

The first major research on the effects of television viewing was focused on the uses and gratifications of children. This research took the form of 11 studies conducted between 1958 and 1960 (Schramm et al., 1961). From the research, Schramm et al. (1961) distinguished three reasons why children watched television: entertainment, information, and social utility (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). The most apparent reason children watch television is entertainment. According to Schramm et al. (1961), children watch television to escape from reality and boredom. Watching television is also an opportunity for children to identify with adventurous, appealing characters (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

Most of the children in Schramm et al.'s (1961) research also said they learned from television programming. Girls reported learning about fashion, including how to style their hair, what clothes to wear, and the way to act. They also learned social responsibility—whether they should tip flight attendants. The boys in the study learned how men in big cities dressed. The boys also learned athletic techniques by watching professional athletes (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995; Schramm et al., 1961). Among teenagers in the study, television watching was a social event, providing an easy date activity and ideas for conversations. Teens who didn't watch specific programs were left out of discussions (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995; Schramm et al., 1961).

Internet. The Internet has allowed for many new types of media. One example is blogs, an active medium that has turned the traditional passive media experience upside down. As with other kinds of computer-mediated communication, blogs give people a form of communicating

that mixes media communication and personal communication (Sheldon, 2008). Bloggers are different from other kinds of online writers in that bloggers infuse into their writing a potent sense of their personalities, passions, and points of view (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004, p. 42). The interactive nature of blogs and other Internet communication media invites Internet users to participate in discussions, share ideas, and express support for other participants (DesRochers, 2007).

People use the Internet for various reasons and with different goals. Some people go online to find specific information, while other people just surf the Web. Even during electronic discussions, some people prefer being "lurkers," reading the comments but not contributing to the communication (Ruggiero, 2000).

Song et al (2004) identified two kinds of gratifications that people seek when using the Internet: process-oriented gratification and content gratification. Process-oriented gratification occurs when the gratifications are realized during the consumption. Content gratification occurs when mediated messages are used to gain knowledge and understanding. However, people do not simply go online to find the information that will fill the gaps in their knowledge; rather, people "they also look for information to fill a more general need for the new and unknown" (Tewksbury et al., 2008, p. 253).

According to Dicken-Garcia (1998), the Internet audience is defined mostly by common interests and informal communication instead of geographic space. Various researchers have asserted that people with high levels of anxiety in social situations and fear of face-to-face interaction are more likely to seek communication online. However, other researchers have not found evidence of such indicators and have suggested that Internet communication is an example

of the rich-gets-richer theory—people who are popular in real life become even more popular online (Sheldon, 2008).

Considerable criticism is associated with the uses and gratifications theory. These criticisms include confusing operations, lack of consistency (Stanford, 1983), expectations that people are free to choose the media they want to watch (White, 1994), lack of clarity among central concepts such as social and psychological backgrounds, and absence of accuracy in self-reporting. The newest problem for researchers studying aspects of the Internet is the "practical impossibility of probability sampling on the Internet" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 13).

Despite these issues, researchers still consider the uses and gratifications model a valid method of studying Internet communication as well as other new media (Ruggiero, 2000). Li (as cited in Ruggiero, 2000) stated that the main strength of the uses and gratifications theory is that it is suitable for studying "mediated communication situations via a single or multiple sets of psychological needs, psychological motives, communication channels, communication content, and psychological gratifications within a particular or cross-cultural context"(p. 27).

Multiple researchers have tried to accurately systemize the uses and gratifications categories. However, the categories vary depending on the studied medium and the goal of the research. The major categories, discussed first by Lasswell (1948) and then by Wright (1960) are "surveillance, correlation, entertainment, and cultural transmission (or socialization)" (Katz, 2001, p. 512). Other categories include the following:

> (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones. (Katz, 2001, p. 510)

Blumler and McQuail (1969) also identified categories of the uses and gratifications system. The researchers studied the 1964 election in Great Britain, using the uses and gratifications theory as the framework. The aim was "to find out why people watch or avoid party broadcasts; what uses they wish to make of them; and what their preferences are between alternative ways of presenting politicians on television" (Blumler & McQuail, 1969, pp. 10–11). The researchers also investigated viewers' purposes in following political content because previous research had shown that television programming did little to sway voter opinions. In analyzing the responses to the open-ended questions, Blumler and McQuail identified eight reasons Britons watch political broadcasts. Then the researchers examined these reasons in subsequent interviews. Based on the results, the researchers suggested the following categories (McQuail, Blumler, & Brown, 1972):

- Diversion: escape from routines and problems; emotional release

- Personal relationships: use of information in conversations; substitute for companionship

- Personal identity/individual psychology: value reinforcement and reassurance, self-understanding, and reality exploration

- Surveillance—information that might affect the individual or help him or her accomplish something

Katz, Gurevich, and Haas (1973) suggested that media connect or disconnect users. Katz et al. investigated the following:

Social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in

other activities), resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps . . .

unintended ones. (p. 20)

The researchers listed 35 needs of media users and organized the needs into five categories (Katz

et al., 1972, pp. 166–167):

- Cognitive needs: obtaining information and understanding

- Affective needs: experiencing emotional, aesthetic, and pleasurable events

- Personal integrative needs: strengthening stability, credibility, confidence, and status

- Social integrative needs: strengthening relationships with family, friends, and others

- Tension release needs: escaping and avoiding

Chapter 3: Research Method

Research Questions

Past research, as reflected in the literature above, has delved into several aspects of text messaging, including texting as a means of support (Franklin, Waller, Pagliari, & Greene, 2003), global text messaging (Haggan, 2007; Uy-Tioco, 2007), copresence through text messaging (Lin & Tong, 2007; Skierkowski & Wood, 2012), purposes of text messaging in young adults and adolescents (Conti-Ramsden et al., 2010; Drouin & Landgraff, 2012; Harrison & Gilmore, 2012), and language used in text messages (Holtgraves & Paul, 2013; Plester, Wood, & Bell, 2008; Thomas & McGee, 2012).

Previous research also shows that gender differences are pronounced between genders (Barrett, 2004; Wouk, 1999; Muchnik & Stavans, 2009; Ogierman, 2008). However, the intersection of these two bodies of research is largely unexplored. Wyber et al. (2007) found gender to have a small role in their study, but gender was not the main focus of that research. This points to further research on the subject of text messaging and gender.

The focus of the current study was to fill two important gaps in the literature:

- RQ1: Are there gender differences in text messaging?

- RQ2: If so, what are the differences?

Method

To answer the research questions, two variables were examined: gender and text messages. *Gender* refers to "the social constructions of masculinity and femininity" (Carter & Mendes, para. 3). *Text messaging* refers to the textual communication sent electronically between cell phones.

Data were collected through focus groups. Past research regarding text messaging has also used the focus group approach. Baron and Ling (2011) utilized the focus group approach to investigate text messaging use in teenagers. This approach was also used by Walsh, White, and Young (2009) in their study regarding text messaging in Australian youth. Thompson and Cupples (2008) also used the focus group approach to conduct research regarding text messaging and sociality.

The focus group approach is a qualitative method of gathering data that "takes advantage of structured interviewing techniques performed in a group setting" (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Hartman, 2004). The focus group approach involves encouraging discussion among the group members, "allowing in-depth elicitation of salient concepts from participants" as well as spontaneity of response (Hartman, 2004; Southwell, Blake, & Torres, 2004; Yin, 1993). The dynamic interaction between participants can provide the researcher with an opportunity to examine the underlying logic participants used in a given situation (Hartman, 2004; Lindlof, 1995).

Focus group research is common in a variety of fields, including marketing, public policy, strategic planning, and communication (Hartman, 2004; Myers, 2002; Rook, 2003). "Focus groups are particularly useful when . . . the everyday use of language and culture of particular groups is of interest" (Gibbs, 1997, para. 7). The everyday use of text messaging was of interest in this study, indicating that the focus group approach was appropriate for the study.

The researcher conducted four focus groups. Conducting multiple focus groups ensured a greater diversity in participants and perspectives. Each group contained 6–10 participants; two groups consisted of females only, and two groups consisted of males only. The literature

indicates that including 6–10 participants in each group creates a group dynamic conducive to constructive discussion (Fern, 1982; Hartman, 2004).

The focus group sessions were video recorded, and then the recordings were transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed using the constant comparative approach. According to Gül (2010), "In the simplest sense, the method includes demonstrating similarities and differences" (p. 146). This approach seemed especially appropriate given the research questions. Fram (2013) suggested there is "strength in using CCA [constant comparative analysis] to maintain the emic perspective (participant's view as insider)" (p. 1).

Boeije (2002) pointed out that "the literature does not make clear how one should 'go about' constant comparison" (p. 393). Boeije's research involved interviews that were analyzed using the following steps:

- Comparing data in a single interview

- Comparing data from different interviews in the same group

- Comparing data from interviews in different groups

- Comparing data from both members of a couple

- Comparing data from different couples

A similar process was used in the current study to code and analyze the data:

- Comparing data from members in single focus group

- Comparing data from the two focuses groups composed of the same gender

- Comparing data from the two genders

In completing these steps, the researcher continually sorted through the data, compared categories, and analyzed the resulting information, as Kolb (2012) suggested. Preliminary categories identified during the focus groups were examined in depth during the analysis process.

The researcher also reviewed the video recordings both for transcription purposes and to better understand the meanings of gestures, articulations, and tonality. The researcher reviewed the transcripts further and collapsed categories as the analysis process went deeper.

Participants

The participants for this study were recruited through convenience sampling males and females ages 18–35 in the Provo/Orem, Utah, area. To inform potential participants about the study, the researcher used face-to-face interactions, text messages, phone calls, and Facebook postings. All potential participants were informed that the topic of discussion was text messaging. It was assumed that all individuals who agreed to participate in the study engaged in text messaging as a means of communication. The researcher explained to potential participants what focus group research involves and outlined the details of participating in the study. The researcher also explained that the focus group sessions would be video recorded. Several participants expressed dismay about being filmed; however, at the promise of confidentiality, they consented to participate. Incentives for participating included cookies, pizza, and beverages.

Procedure

The focus groups sessions were conducted in the focus group room in the Brimhall building at Brigham Young University in Provo. Initially, four focus groups were conducted; however, the sound quality of the recordings was insufficient for transcription. Therefore, four more focus groups were conducted. These subsequent focus groups were video recorded and tape recorded. The quality of the video and audio recordings was sufficient for transcription. To ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions, the video and audio recordings were compared. The transcribed data from these four focus groups were the basis of the data analysis. (See the

appendix for the transcription of each session). Immediately prior to the focus group sessions, all participants completed a short demographic survey.

Two of the four focus groups consisted of female participants, and the other two groups consisted of male participants. Each focus group was assigned one of the following codes: 1F, 2F, 1M, and 2M. The letter *F* denotes a focus group composed of females. Conversely, the letter *M* denotes a focus group composed of males. The numerals *1* and *2* differentiate between groups of the same gender.

Data analysis in qualitative research typically "involves some analysis of words and actions collected from the study participants" (Hartman, 2004, p. 407). Hartman (2004) explained that qualitative content analysis is appropriate for analyzing and interpreting focus group data. In the current study, the data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis and the constant comparative approach. Content analysis "can expose hidden connections among concepts, reveal relationships among ideas that initially seem unconnected, and inform the decision-making processes associated with many technical communication practices" (Thayer, Evans, McBride, Queen, & Spyridakis, p. 267).

Chapter 4: Results

Demographic Information

Twenty-seven individuals participated in this study—14 females and 13 males. Seven males participated in the first focus group (1M), eight females participated in the second focus group (1F), six females participated in the third focus group (2F), and six males participated in the fourth focus group conducted (2M). The median age for all participants was 21. The median age for females was 21, and the median age for males was 22. The median age for 1M was 21; for 2M, 22.5; for 1F, 21; and for 2F, 22.

The majority of the participants (22 participants, 81.5%) reported their marital status as single, never married. Of those, 11 were female and 11 were male. The remaining five participants (21.7%) reported their marital status as married; two of these participants were male, and three were female. None of the participants reported their marital status as separated, divorced, or widowed.

Nine of the participants (33.3%) were full- or part-time students; four were female, and five were male. Fifteen of the participants, representing 55.6% of the sample, reported that they were employed at least part-time. Of those who were employed, nine were male and six were female. Four participants (14.8%) reported that they were both students and employed; of these participants, two were male and two were female. Five participants (18.5%), all female, reported that they were unemployed at the time of the study. Two participants (7.4%), one man and one female, reported that they were self-employed. Figure 1 shows the employment statuses of the participants by gender.
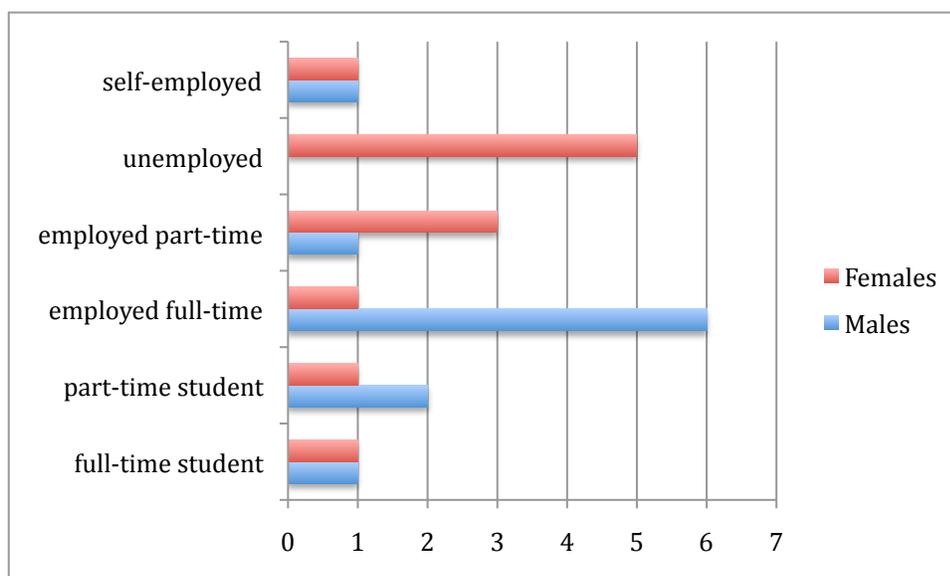
Figure 1. Employment by gender.

Eleven of the participants, representing 40.7% of the sample, reported their highest education level to be a high school diploma. Seven of these participants were male, and four were female. One participant, a male, reported having earned a technical-school diploma or certificate. Five participants (18.5%) reported they had attended some college. Of those, two were female and three were male. Seven participants (22.2%) reported having completed a college degree; six of these participants were female, and one was male. One participant (a female) reported attending some graduate school. Two participants (one male and one female) reported they had earned a graduate degree. Figure 2 shows the education levels of the participants by gender.
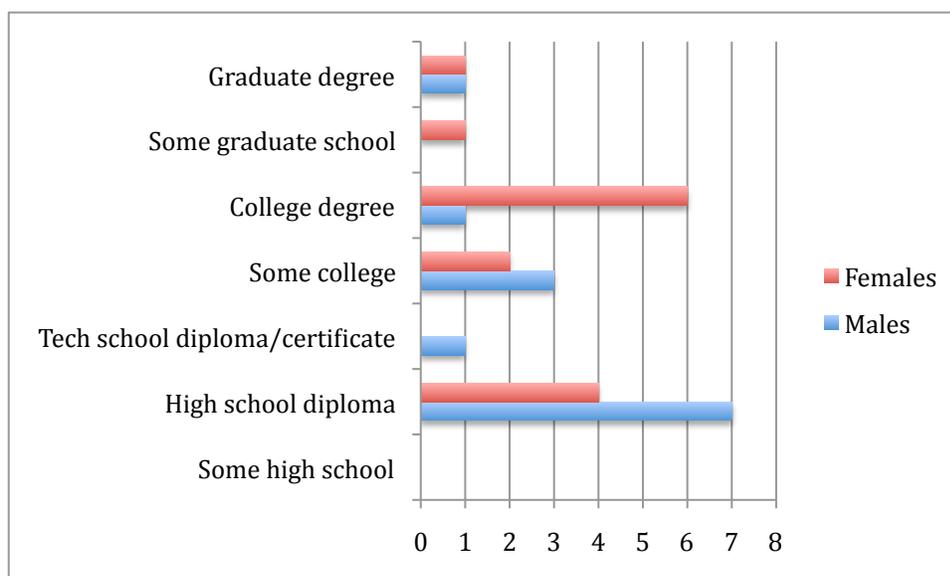
Figure 2. Education by gender.

Findings

The results of the data analysis indicate, in response to RQ1 (are there gender differences in text messaging?), that there are significant differences. However, results also indicate that there are almost as many similarities as differences between males and females in regard to text messaging. Both genders mentioned many of the same habits and opinions. In response to RQ2 (what are the differences?) differences are discussed below, followed by other findings including similarities.

Gender differences. This study found differences between genders in the following categories: recipients, information gathering, entertainment, ending relationships, arguing, privacy, text shorthand and slang, and staying awake. A table representing these differences is below (Table 1).

	Males	Females	Both
Recipients	Significant others		Friends and family
Information gathering	Services (e.g. ChaCha)		Questions between friends
Entertainment	Trolling		Texting to relieve boredom
Ending relationships	Do so via text messaging (in some cases)		Deemed inappropriate via text
Arguing	Prefer phone call or face-to-face to avoid misunderstanding	Prefer text messaging so as to moderate responses	
Privacy		Text to exclude others in present company	
Shorthand and slang	Strong opinions: Some prefer longhand, some prefer shorthand	Most prefer longhand	
Staying awake	Text to keep themselves awake	Text to keep others awake	
Dating	Did not mention a preference	Asking for a date is inappropriate via text message	

Table 1: Gender differences in text messaging

Recipients. Most participants of both genders mentioned that most often, they send text messages to family and friends, including spouses and boyfriends/girlfriends. Some participants also reported sending text messages to coworkers. One female participant noted she sometimes sends text messages to professors regarding schoolwork. One participant in each male focus group mentioned sending messages to an information service, namely, ChaCha and KGB (Knowledge Generation Bureau). One of these participants specified that he usually texts these services when he's not dating a girl, which is an interesting distinction. Female participants did not mention these or similar services.

Many male participants indicated they do not often send text messages to anyone unless they are engaged in a romantic relationship, in which case they frequently text their significant others. As one male participant succinctly stated, "It depends on if I'm in a relationship. If I'm

not, there's really nobody I talk to" (1M). Another participant said, "My wife is the only person I text. . . . But if my wife is with me, I text nobody. I don't even have my phone on me" (2M). Females did not specify whether their relationship status affected their text messaging habits. However, since female participants mentioned sending messages to friends, family members, coworkers, professors, and classmates, it seems reasonable to conclude that relationship status does not affect the female participants' text messaging habits.

Information gathering. Both male and female participants noted gathering information via text message, such as reminders for hair appointments, bank account notifications, bill notices, homework assignments, and contact information. As mentioned earlier, two male participants reported texting information services (ChaCha and KGB).

Participants of both genders also noted using text messages as grocery lists. One male participant said that text messages are useful in this regard because he can review the messages to ensure he has not forgotten any items. In contrast, one female participant mentioned that sometimes she would receive a text message containing grocery requests after she had left the store, and consequently she considered text messaging as a grocery shopping tool to be annoying.

Some participants mentioned texting questions: "If you heard about something, it's like, 'Hey, did you hear about what's going on with so-and-so,' kind of thing" (1M). Another question participants might send via text is "should I be concerned about this?" (1M). One participant stated, "If there's something I feel I want to know about, I'll ask. I'll text somebody questions."

Entertainment. In every focus group, participants mentioned texting to relieve boredom. Participants also indicated they often send text messages in what they deem to be "awkward situations," such as in elevators and waiting rooms (1F). One male participant noted that he

usually texts for "social entertainment" (2F). This interesting word choice implies that socializing is entertaining.

In focus group 1M, the topic of "trolling" came up. According to the website Know Your Meme, "Trolling is an Internet slang term used to describe any Internet user behavior that is meant to intentionally anger or frustrate someone else" ("Trolling," 2013, para. 1). Through irritating others, the troller obtains personal entertainment. Though trolling usually occurs via the Internet, one participant mentioned that he trolls via text message. For example, "I'll text my dad whenever I'm sitting next to him just to irritate him." The same participant stated that he uses the abbreviation *LOL* (laugh out loud) when he is "trolling somebody," not necessarily when he is, in fact, laughing out loud.

Ending relationships. Both genders agreed that ending a romantic relationship via text messaging is inappropriate but that text messaging is often used in this way. This topic inspired spirited conversation. In focus group 1M, one participant discussed the issue in terms of respect: "It's more respectful to do it yourself in person." This group also deemed it "definitely inappropriate" to ask another person to end the relationship via text. One participant called it "cowardly" to "say things they're too shy to say in person." In focus group 2F, one participant suggested that an individual's self-respect is at stake when ending a relationship: "That's something that needs to be handled through a phone call, I think, at the least. Have some dignity."

It is interesting to note that although both genders deem ending a romantic relationship via text message to be inappropriate, participants of both genders only mentioned males using text messaging in this way. Two female participants revealed that their ex-boyfriends had used text message to break up with the participants. One male participant discussed a male friend who

ended a relationship through a text message. This instance was unique, however, in that it included what the participant called a "text chain." The friend had asked his mother "to text his girlfriend that they were breaking up" (1M). The males in focus group 1M noted that breaking up via text is easier, but they still asserted the method is not appropriate.

Arguing. In both female focus groups, participants commented they would rather argue over text message than face-to-face or via phone. These participants noted that text messaging lacks the heat-of-the-moment impulses prevalent in face-to-face confrontations. One participant in focus group 2F said, "I'll get stupid sometimes if I'm just really livid at somebody." Female participants explained that when arguing via a text message, they avoid the possibility of a physical altercation. One member of focus group 2F shared that when text messaging, "You don't have to be super confrontational. Texting, I don't have to worry about you punching me in my face."

The members of focus groups 1F and 2F indicated that when they argue over text message, they are more likely to think through their responses. A member of focus group 1F explained that because text messaging allows her to consider her words, revise them if appropriate, or even decide to not respond at all, she can avoid arguments. This participant indicated that ignoring a text message is better than "saying mean things." Similarly, other female participants mentioned typing text messages without sending them, allowing the participants to retract heated messages. Likewise, participants indicated they could walk away from their phones if they did not want to argue. The participants said that the nature of text messaging allowed a degree of time delay, which helped them to stay levelheaded.

In contrast to the female participants, the male participants expressed a preference for arguing during a phone call. These participants indicated that tone of voice is an important factor

in tense conversations, and text messaging can create misunderstandings. For example, one person may include a joke in a text message, and the receiver may interpret the joke literally. The male participants indicated that such occurrences could be counterproductive in an argument. The male participants, in contrast to the female participants, did not express concern about speaking before thinking through their responses.

Privacy. Some female participants mentioned that text messaging provides more privacy than communicating via phone call, face-to-face, or via social media: One participant expressed this idea as follows: "I want to share this with you, but I don't want to put it on Facebook" (1F). Similarly, participants opined that when they are in a public location, they can include or exclude people from their conversations by sending text messages. One participant noted, "If [I] want to tell my friend something, and we're sitting in her living room, then we would text each other that thing instead of saying it out loud. We don't say it in front of her parents or whoever else is in the room" (1F). Another participant explained she has excluded people multiple times via text messaging. "I'm very rude, but only over text messaging. I would never go up to someone and say, 'Did you see what she was wearing? I mean, _really_?'" (1F). But the participant indicated that she would send the same phrase in a text message, since text messages are more discreet.

Text shorthand and slang. Participants of both genders indicated that abbreviations and text shorthand are often overused out of habit. Some male and female participants indicated they prefer proper grammar and spelling in text messages; males in particular asserted that text message shorthand is "destroying the English language" (1M). The problem, according to some participants, is that the slang often used in text messaging is seeping into other communication media. One participant noted, "See, some people will get used to texting like that, and then when they're actually writing an official document, they will put text language. I've seen this. I've

seen people do this, and it is sad" (1M). A male participant admitted that when he was applying to colleges, he would catch himself sending e-mails filled with text shorthand and the lack of punctuation often associated with text shorthand. Even in the context of a focus group, text message lingo was prevalent: "I love how you can say 'winky face,' and we all know what you are talking about" (2M).

Interestingly, many male participants also defended the use of diminutives and improper grammar, saying, "It's just texting" (1M). Especially when texting their peers, they use solecisms without a second thought:

> My thing is, people will try and tell me, "You don't use punctuation," and I'm like, "I'm not writing an essay, here. It's a stupid status. It's not formal. I don't care, you know? I got 30 seconds to get this out. This is what you get." I'm not out to impress anyone. I'm not like Benjamin Franklin, some incredible smart guy with a kite. (2M)

This participant blamed his physiology for errors: "I always misspell stuff horrible. If you see my Facebook statuses, they're horrible because I got pudgy fingers and this little touch screen phone. I always hit the wrong key." Other male participants opined that as long as the recipient understands the message, grammar and longhand are not necessary. These participants also noted that they do not often speak the way they text (e.g., omitting words and using elisions). Participants of both genders agreed they proofread more closely when sending text messages to members of the opposite gender.

A few participants of each gender indicated their preference for long form: "I definitely prefer to spell things out, and I think I have a little bit more respect for people who spell things out too" (1M). One female participant stated, "I don't get why people shorten words so much when it's not that hard to add one or two more letters," but then she mentioned that the character

limit on her phone often leads her to shorten words and sentences (2F). Yet another participant classified herself as a "whole-word texter" (2F). She specified she uses long form because of whom she chooses to communicate with: "I text a lot of people that if you don't give them whole words, they're just not going to talk to you again. They're going to think you're crazy" (2F).

It is perhaps a difference in itself that male participants had strong opinions regarding text shorthand and slang, even though these opinions were not universal amongst all male participants.

Staying awake. Female participants mentioned that they sometimes text other individuals to help the individuals stay awake. Conversely, some of the male participants noted that they send text messages to stay awake themselves.

Dating. One type of conversation that is best reserved for a medium other than text messaging is asking someone on a date. Participants in focus group 1F asserted, quite vehemently, that asking for a date via text is inappropriate. The participants explained that a call is more personal and "it takes guts" (1F). Female participants said they have turned down dates solely because the invitations came via text message and the senders would not ask for a date in person or over the phone. Other female participants said they have ignored such texts because date invitations should not come through this medium. Two participants indicated they have responded to such texts by telling the senders to call if they are serious about their date invitations: "I've also texted back and said if you really want to go out on a date with me, call me or catch me at school tomorrow or something" (1F). Though female participants disparaged date invitations via text, the participants did not disdain text messages containing invitations to "hang out." Male participants did not comment on the topic of text message invitations to date and hang out.

Other findings. In addition to gender differences, this study found similarities between the genders in regards to attitudes, habits, and general use of text messaging. These findings are discussed below.

Frequency. Several participants of both genders reported they send text messages "all the time," "all day," "multiple times a day," and "nonstop." One participant reported that he sends text messages "multiple times a minute," although this statement is likely an exaggeration. Some participants indicated they might send as many as 40 text messages a day (1F). For other participants, a "really, really good day" included 20 text messages (1M). A few participants mentioned that even when they try not to text, such as when at work, they usually end up sending text messages anyway (1M and 2M). Some participants mentioned they use text messaging less now than they did when in grade school and high school, when they "texted so much it was ridiculous" (2F). Other participants similarly stated they knew people in high school who texted often. A few participants of each gender said they did not text very often, such as less than once a day.

Participants had had varying preferences regarding the ideal time of day for texting. Some participants preferred mornings. As one participant mentioned, "I text more earlier because I like to talk more" (1M). However, more participants preferred afternoons, evenings, or nights. One participant suggested she does not text when busy or after going to bed, but she will send text messages at any other time (2F).

Another participant suggested that his texting habits were contingent upon others: "It depends on who's replying, but most of the time [I text] in the afternoon because that's when people are available to text back" (1M). This point was supported by another participant:

"Typically whenever I get a text message sent to me, I immediately respond. I don't often send a text to begin with" (2M).

  Convenience. Both genders discussed the convenience of text messaging: They can send text messages without stopping their current activities. One female participant explained she sends text messages when "I don't want to stop what I'm doing to actually talk to you on the phone" (1F). Participants noted that text messaging is a fast and easy way of conveying and obtaining information (1F). Participants particularly prefer text messages over phone calls when the information can be summed up in a single statement, such as "I'm going to be late" (1F).

  Text messaging was also referred to as a "more casual" method of communication, suited to letting someone know about an event and asking how a person is doing. The participants indicated they reserve phone calls for special occasions, such as birthdays, and when the topic of the conversation is particularly important. As one female participant explained, "If I really have to discuss something with someone, I'll call them so I can get their emotions and explain myself better, rather than text it all" (1F). In some instances, the participants deemed a phone call a last resort.

  Due to the casual nature of text messaging, the participants considered this communication medium to be appropriate in a wide variety of situations. As a member of focus group 1M explained, "Texting you can do with other people. You can't just be in a group of people, like right now, and just call someone up. Texting is more casual, so you can do it in more places at once." Similarly, neither sender nor the receiver must abruptly end the conversation if he or she is no longer in a setting where speaking aloud is appropriate.

  Participants also voiced their preference for flexibly timed responses. A member of focus group 2M stated, "You can get back to people when you want to. It's frustrating when they want

an answer immediately, but with text you can wait." Another participant explained her perspective as follows:

> Text messaging is something you do when you're busy but you still need to talk to somebody. So you do your stuff, get a text message, okay. You get to a point where you can stop, and you can reply back. Keep going. That's really the best time. If I'm sitting at home doing nothing, I'd rather just call them. (1F)

Some participants noted feeling less social pressure when text messaging than when involved in other forms of communication. In focus group 1M, one participant opined that text messaging is easier than face-to-face interaction. This participant stated that text messaging is "kind of an impartial thing because you're not forced to actually be there and interact with it. It's not so difficult." Others in that focus group agreed, saying they could "open up" better over text message by saying things they might be too shy to say in person. "Some people like to text things that they kind of don't want to say, but they do want to say. They just put 'laugh out loud' on it, so it doesn't seem as bad" (1M).

Participants also mentioned that text messaging is a useful tool when people are hard to understand over the phone. By substituting text messages, both parties can avoid background noise and other factors that might obscure a conversation. Sending text messages also avoids the obstacle of deciphering a particularly pronounced accent or slurred speech. Similarly, participants noted text messaging is a convenient tool when they need to communicate with people who talk a lot in person or over the phone. Text messaging encourages brevity in the conversation. Participants also mentioned the usefulness of sending "mass texts"—messages sent to numerous people at once to share a piece of information, usually about a social event. Further,

participants explained that when they text while watching their children, their children do not feel ignored in the way they might if their parents were having a phone conversation.

Socializing. Most participants agreed that they use text messaging for social purposes. Several participants opined that casual conversation is well suited to text messaging. As a member of focus group 1M explained, text messaging is "also a way to keep a very small, nonchalant little conversation going throughout the day. It doesn't even have to get anywhere. You're just in contact with someone, but you're talking to them the whole day." Participants seemed to find text messaging a convenient way to "check up on people" (1F), particularly because the participants can send quick texts while accomplishing other tasks. One female participant noted that if the text recipient indicates he or she is "doing really bad," then the participant would call the person on the phone (1F).

Establishing new relationships. Participants mentioned they use text messaging to establish new relationships. One benefit in this regard is avoiding awkward pauses. As one female participant noted:

> There's more awkward silences when you're on the phone or something. If you're texting, it's not awkward. You can just say, "Oh sorry. I had to take a shower in the last 30 minutes, and that's why I didn't answer." Not because you're like "What should I say?" (2F)

Similarly, a male participant shared the following: "Usually some guys text girls to get to know them. They can take time with their thoughts and what they want to say. They can think about it before they send it" (1M). Both genders indicated this communication medium is especially useful when initiating romantic relationships.

A few participants expressed that text messaging can be used as a mode of communication between individuals who have not previously met. According to one participant, text messaging can serve as an icebreaker for people who do not know each other but who need to relay information to one another, such as an invitation to an event. Another participant indicated that classmates can text each other about homework without needing to have a close relationship (2F).

Type of phone. Participants in focus group 1F suggested a person's phone can influence his or her preferences regarding texts and phone calls: "What you have to work with kind of affects how much you like your texting or don't like your texting, and I guess how dexterous your thumbs and brain are as to what your keyboard looks like" (2F).

Texting on smart phones is relatively easy. In contrast, texting on basic phones (which some participants called "dumb phones") is often more cumbersome, making it easier and quicker to call. Some basic phones have a full keyboard, which makes texting more manageable.

A male participant referenced the size of the buttons on his phone: "I do not like the small buttons for texting. You use your thumb all the time. It just takes a while for me" (2M). Other participants mentioned that the buttons on a basic phone can aid in text messaging: "I could text in my pocket. I had a phone with buttons. You can feel the *5* button, and you can go around" (2M). Other male participants mentioned similar opinions regarding basic phones. Most smart phones do not have physical buttons—offering only a touch screen—which means texting by feel is not an option on these devices.

One participant mentioned that because smart phones have more features (e.g., apps), she texts less often on her smart phone than she did on previous basic phones (2F). Similarly, other participants stated that in some cases, they are using text messaging less because they are using

Facebook instant messaging and Facebook messages more. One male participant opined "in these times, you got to have a smart phone. You got to be available when people want to call" (2M). He opined that without a smart phone, one might miss out on opportunities.

    Emoticons and emojis. Both female and male participants discussed the efficacy of emoticons and emojis. According to a participant in focus group 2M, emoticons and emojis are differentiated in the following way: "the emoticon is the one with literally a colon and a dash and a parenthesis. The emoji is the actual round little circle face." For example, an example of an emoji is ☺. Conversely, an example of an emoticon is :-). Both are considered smiley faces or simply "smileys." One participant opined, "Everybody texts them at least once" (2M). Another participant went as far as to say, "I'm a believer in the smiley face" (2F).

    Members of all groups said that sending emoticons and emojis is common, often to replace tone of voice because "it's hard to see emotions through text" (2F). Others supported this idea, saying that misunderstandings via text can cause fights and hurt feelings. When one female participant stated she preferred to call someone when she wanted to hear the person's tone of voice, another participant asserted with no hesitation, "That's what [emojis] are for" (1F).

    Participants stated that they frequently use emoticons and emojis when sending text messages to the opposite gender. One male participant said that emoticons and emojis are part of "full-on flirting." One participant in focus group 2F thought that sometimes others used smiley faces to "butter [her] up." She expressed distaste for this sort of communication, implying it was disingenuous. Members of focus group 2M said they dislike getting emojis when people are mad and when people overuse the symbols. One participant mentioned, "I think I use them ironically" (2F). Another participant expressed disbelief that people take emoticons and emojis seriously.

At least one male and one female expressed that they sometimes use emojis to communicate in place of words: "If I don't feel like typing it out, I just send an emoji. Sometimes we just communicate with straight emojis" (2F). These participants also pointed out that emojis include more than just faces: some emojis are small cartoon-like pictures of objects or animals. Another participant mentioned: "Those little emojis we're talking about, I send like 50 of 'em in one text message" (2M). Other participants said they use emojis to answer questions, such as, "What are you doing?" Instead of typing a response, these participants send an emoji that illustrates the activity, such as getting a haircut.

Some participants admitted that they use the symbols out of habit, not to communicate a particular message. Other participants expressed annoyance at people using emoticons and emojis in this way, feeling that the symbols are overused. Only two participants, one male and one female, said they did not use emoticons and emojis.

Texting the opposite sex. The majority of the participants in all focus groups agreed that their text messaging practices vary depending on whether the recipient is a member of the same gender or the opposite gender. When texting members of the opposite gender, the participants' use more smiley faces, engage in "full-on flirting," include more signals of laughter ("ha-ha" and "lol"), and are more careful proofreading. One male participant indicated that proofreading is important when one wants to seem smart, even if the recipient is "rock stupid" (2M). Other male participants qualified that they proofread only during the courting phase. Only two participants (one male and one female) indicated their text messaging practices remain the same regardless of the recipient's gender.

Reasons/situations not to text. Participants in all groups indicated that text messaging is not well suited to all conversations, such as lengthy exchanges, urgent or other important

conversations, a date invitation, and reconnaissance. Participants agreed that long conversations are better accomplished through other means of communication. Some participants defined a long conversation as one that requires more than five text messages; other participants stated the threshold is three text messages: "How about after the third text, you just call me? You'll know whether I got your text" (1F). A participant in focus group 2M said he does not like to read texts that are paragraphs long: "If it's long, call. I don't want to read a novel written by John Grisham over text" (2M).

Both male and female participants indicated that urgent and other important information should not be conveyed via text message. As one male participant explained, "If it's something important, call me; don't text me, and then wait 20 minutes to get me back. Let's just figure this out or whatever" (2M). Participants indicated that a phone call seems more urgent than a text. One can just ignore a text, but it's ruder to ignore a phone call (2M).

Participants also noted that text messages are not appropriate for reconnaissance efforts. Members of focus group 2F mentioned they do not use text messaging if they want to spy or detect a lie. Instead, they call so they can hear background noise and tone of voice: "I want to hear what your voice sounds like so I can tell whether you are lying to me" (2F). One participant opined that calling in such situations is a "parent thing." This participant said the following regarding her father:

He would call me at like two o'clock in the morning to listen to my background instead of texting me. Texting I can just say, "Yeah, I'm at home," but if he calls me and says "What's that noise?" I'm like, "Uh, it's a bunch of drunk kids laughing and listening to loud music. I'm at home. I swear it's a movie." (2F)

Others in the group agreed that texting is less than ideal when the intent is to spy on others.

Members of focus group 1M seemed to prefer phone calls somewhat more than most of the members in focus groups 1F and 2F. According to one male in focus group 1M, "I think there are more things that should be said in person. I don't think there is anything that should only be said in text." All males but one in focus group 2M preferred text messaging. The one exception said he is comfortable with both but prefers calling his wife rather than text messaging her.

In contrast to the opinions of most participants, one female participant opined the following:

> I think there's a lot of value in not only verbal communication but face-to-face communication. I think that's something that we're losing—that interaction, that ability to converse and to think on our feet and that wit that we used to have. Now we're used to being about to sit there for a second as we're texting. It's that delayed response. I think sometimes our conversations are lagging face-to-face because we're used to communicating electronically, where time delay is normal. (1F)

Text messaging etiquette and pet peeves. Participants of both genders indicated there are acceptable and unacceptable practices when conversing via text message. Some participants expressed strong attitudes toward the rules of conduct and their misuse. Both genders remarked that they often send a text message as a prelude to a phone call as a method of showing respect for others' schedules: "Texting before you call someone is pretty common courtesy" (1M). After the text message lead-in, the participants expect the other individual to answer the phone. Ignoring the call is considered rude:

> What gets me steamed, when I'm like, "Do you have a second? I want to talk," and they say "Sure, call me up." I call and they don't answer. That makes me angry. That makes

me want to take their phone and stomp on it. Be like, you don't deserve this. You're not using it right. (1M)

Though participants mentioned that texting while accomplishing other tasks is generally acceptable, one participant stated, "If you're texting and stuff is going on around you and you're just on your phone, that kind of pisses me off. Just be here in the moment" (1M). This opinion suggests there are nuances in terms of text messaging etiquette.

Some participants expressed annoyance regarding the content of text messages. Examples include forwarded texts, especially if they are split into multiple messages; signatures, such as random letters or a phrase that does not make sense; and messages that do not require a response, such as a message that lacks a direct question. Female participants opined that when they receive these kinds of text messages, they often ignore or do not reply to the texts. Some females admitted they ignore or do not reply to texts if they "don't want to talk about it" (1F).

Other annoyances relate to the nature of the medium, such as the feature that allows the sender to see whether the recipient has opened the text. This feature prevents individuals from pretending they did not receive a text message; the sender can see when he or she is being ignored. This feature allows more transparency than most participants would prefer. One participant stated the following about the privacy text messaging provides when this feature is not available:

That's one of the great things if someone sends you a text message, like they're asking you to do something, and you forget, you can just be like "Oh, I didn't get it." If you leave a voice mail, it's harder to believe you didn't get it. (2M)

With this feature turned on, "Nothing is private" (2F). Though one participant said this feature is helpful in her relationship with her father, most participants expressed irritation. One participant even stated, "This is why I hate technology" (2F).

Participants mentioned they would rather not carry on a text message conversation with certain people because of their texting habits. These people and habits include individuals who resend a message multiple times, people who text incessantly, people who reply with a single word or letter, individuals who take "forever" to respond (20–30 minutes), people who text the same message daily, those who send messages early in the morning or any other time the recipient is sleeping, individuals who text after being asked to stop, those who take a long time to write simple messages (typically "older people"), people who list long details in a single message, and people who have the wrong number but persist in texting.

Other persona non grata include a spouse's ex-girlfriend or boyfriend, a "trippy" ex-boyfriend, or an ex-girlfriend. One participant described another category: People who "kind of liked me and I didn't kind of like them back or maybe the other way around, and now it's just kind of awkward. People like that. It's kind of like, we lost contact for a reason" (2F). Several participants mentioned saving phone numbers for the express purpose of identifying individuals they want to avoid. Male and female participants noted marking these contacts as *DNR* (do not respond or do not reply).

A few participants voiced irritation with individuals who only send text messages to ask for favors, especially big favors: "There's some people that will text me, and I will just dread opening that text message because I know they're going to ask me to like walk barefoot to Zimbabwe for them or something" (2F). Participants opined that a phone call would be more polite.

Discussion

In this study, male participants indicated they text more often if they are in a relationship. Romantic relationships had an effect on males' texting habits, but females did not mention making any adjustments based on relationship status. Though none of the participants were asked whether they texted more or less frequently when they were in romantic relationships, it seems reasonable to conclude that females' habits are not affected by relationship status since they did not mention any effects.

It is interesting to note that while both males and females considered it impolite to end a relationship via text message, the participants only noted males who commit this faux pas. Again, females might end their relationships via text message, but since neither male or female participants mentioned females doing so, it may be concluded that the phenomenon is less common among females.

Males and females also differ in preferences regarding quarreling. Females prefer to argue via text message. The main reason for this preference is the ability to deliberate. Males did not mention this reason. Instead, they were concerned that text messages could be misinterpreted, which could lead to further arguing. Consequently, the male participants stated they prefer quarreling via phone calls.

Females in this study indicated they used text messaging to maintain privacy; text messaging prevents others from participating in the text conversations. Males did not mention using text messaging to exclude others.

Males in this study tended to have stronger opinions regarding text shorthand and slang. What is interesting about this finding is that the males' opinions opposed each other: Some males

defended text language, while others insisted the abbreviations and incorrect grammar in text messages are degrading society's language.

Another interesting finding regards using texts to keep people alert. Females text to keep others awake, while males text to keep themselves awake. The practices of some females and males may differ, but the participants in the study did not mention differing behaviors.

It is also interesting to note some of the discussions that arose in only one focus group. For example, in focus group 1F, participants discussed dating and text messaging. Though the participants in this group shared strong feelings on the topic, the topic was not mentioned in any other groups. Additionally, focus group 2F was the only group to discuss using text messaging to spy on others and to detect lies (both practices were considered inappropriate). In focus group 1M, participants conversed about trolling; this topic was not discussed in the other groups.

The results of this study contain some similarities to five of the six main purposes Harrison and Gilmore (2012) identified for college students' texting. The first purpose Harrison and Gilmore identified is staying connected. Participants in the current study agreed that they use text messaging for social purposes. The second purpose is romance. Participants in this study agreed that texting is helpful when beginning a new relationship, especially a romantic one. The third purpose is escaping the present. Participants in all groups indicated they text when they are bored. The fourth purpose Harrison and Gilmore reported is social breaches. Female participants in particular admitted they send messages in mixed company to keep their interactions private. The fifth purpose is maleficence. Male participants in one focus group addressed this purpose in terms of trolling.

The sixth purpose is sexting (Harrison & Gilmore, 2012). None of the participants in the current study mentioned sexting. Several factors may contribute to this situation. All of the

participants were living in the Provo/Orem at the time of the focus groups. It is reasonable to assume that a number of the participants were practicing members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a faith that discourages premarital sex and pornography. The researcher did not explicitly ask about sexting; rather, the focus group questions were broad and open ended. However, the researcher did ask participants about their interactions with the opposite gender, and sexting was not mentioned. It is possible some participants in the study use text messaging for sexting, but it is reasonable to conclude they do not use text messaging for this purpose.

McQuail et al. (1972) suggested the following uses and gratifications categories: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity or individual psychology, and surveillance. Both genders mentioned using text messaging as a diversion (texting when bored). Participants also indicated they use text messaging in their personal relationships. Personal identity or individual psychology is less clear; participants said little about this topic. Participants noted information gathering, which could be construed as surveillance. Because of these parallels, it appears that the uses and gratifications theory has a place in an electronically mediated world of communication.

While there are those who disagree with Marshall McLuhan's statement "the medium is the message," studies in communication suggest that the medium at least has influence over the message. This influence has been documented to extend as far as linguistic characters in Kuwait (Haggan, 2008), to insult and injury from school expulsion (10-year-old pupil expelled by text, 2004). In this study, participants opined that some conversations are suitable to a text message, while others are preferable via phone call or face-to-face interaction. In fact, some participants expressed that text messaging is more casual, and they reserve phone calls for special events or important conversations. This distinction implies that the medium carries some meaning.

Limitations

This research had a limited scope. The nature of focus group research is such that results cannot be generalized to a larger population. The possibility of generalization is also limited because the participants were recruited via convenience sampling. This study was based on self-reports discussed in focus groups. Members of these groups might have misrepresented themselves and their habits. Another possible problem with this method is recall bias. However, the participants were not asked to recall specific numbers or textual phrases; rather, the participants were asked to discuss attitudes and behaviors.

Future Research

Past research has compared email communications to text messaging (Lam, 2012), but future research might address text messaging versus phone calls, since participants in this study mentioned distinct differences between the two.

Another avenue for future research might include "trolling." This topic was unique to one male focus group, but perhaps this form of entertainment is more prevalent than this study might suggest.

Also of interest might be the gender of those who end relationships via text message. In this study, participants were not asked if they ended relationships via text message, but a few participants mentioned knowing those who had done so. Participants mentioned only males committing this act. Again, participants were not asked explicitly if they engaged in this behavior, but it seems that this conduct is more common amongst males. Future research might shed some light on whether or not this conclusion holds true for a larger audience.

Females in this study preferred to argue via text while males preferred another means, such as face-to-face interaction or a phone call. Another potential avenue for research might be

argument between genders. If one party prefers text and another prefers a phone call, how do they resolve the conflict? Further research could hold the answer.

Conclusion

This research presents new findings in the areas of text messaging and gender studies. Areas of difference between genders in regard to text messaging include selecting recipients, gathering information, seeking entertainment (trolling), ending relationships, arguing, seeking privacy and exclusion, using text shorthand and slang, remaining alert, and using text messaging for dating.

The majority of Americans send and receive text messages, which means that this research has a significant impact. While the genders have a lot in common, knowing the differences can aid the average person in everyday pursuits of communication. For example, a male intending to ask a female on a date would do better to call or ask in person rather than ask via text. Both genders, however, might have success in cultivating new relationships through text messaging. Understanding the communication differences between the genders can lead to improved interpersonal relationships.

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Appendix

The following are transcripts for the focus groups conducted for this thesis. Transcripts appear in their entirety. Participants in each group are numbered for ease of identification and to maintain confidentiality, as promised to participants in exchange for participation. Transcripts are labeled 1M, 1F, 2F and 2M. Groups consisting of all females are labeled with an F. Conversely, groups consisting of all males are labeled with the letter M. Numerals denote the order in which the focus groups were conducted.

Focus Group 1M

RESEARCHER: How often do you usually send text messages?

PARTICIPANT 4: (laughter)

RESEARCHER: Every day? Several times a day?

PARTICIPANT 7: Every day.

PARTICIPANT 4: All the time.

PARTICIPANT 2: All day long.

PARTICIPANT 6: Nonstop.

PARTICIPANT 5: Uh-huh.

PARTICIPANT 4: I try not to when I'm at work, but (shrugs).

PARTICIPANT 3: It depends on if I'm in a relationship. If I'm not, there's really nobody I talk to.

PARTICIPANT 2: That's true, too. If I'm not in a relationship, it's not important.

PARTICIPANT 7: It's true if you're not in a relationship.

PARTICIPANT 3: Some people, like [PARTICIPANT 7] here, text 24/7!

PARTICIPANT 6: Every time I see you, you're texting somebody, [PARTICIPANT 7].

PARTICIPANT 3: She said she's not going to record our names, [PARTICIPANT 7]!

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 4: He is the only one with his phone out now, too.

PARTICIPANT 3: He's texting right now.

PARTICIPANT 7: I've got service, too.

RESEARCHER: Is there a particular time of day when you are more likely to send text messages?

PARTICIPANT 4: Morning to night.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 7: Morning to night.

PARTICIPANT 3: Afternoons.

PARTICIPANT 4: Usually nighttime, right before bed.

PARTICIPANT 2: I text more earlier because I like to talk more.

PARTICIPANT 6: More in the evening.

PARTICIPANT 7: Early morning time.

PARTICIPANT 5: It depends on who's replying, but most of the time in the afternoon because

that's when people are available to text back.

PARTICIPANT 4: Nobody ever replies to me (laughs).

RESEARCHER: Who do you usually send text messages to?

PARTICIPANT 2: Friends.

PARTICIPANT 6: Girlfriend (points to PARTICIPANT 7).

PARTICIPANT 7: Yeah, girlfriend.

PARTICIPANT 3: Mostly friends.

PARTICIPANT 4: Friends.

PARTICIPANT 5: Friends.

PARTICIPANT 3: If I'm working, sometimes.

PARTICIPANT 5: My mom.

PARTICIPANT 4: I'll text my dad whenever I'm sitting next to him just to irritate him.

PARTICIPANT 6: My dad will text me just to see if I'm awake.

PARTICIPANT 3: It depends on the day. If it's like, right before you to go do something, most of the time you have to figure stuff out. Although most of the time I like to call because text doesn't always translate somehow. Not everybody answers.

RESEARCHER: So I heard friends, girlfriend, and parents? Anyone else?

PARTICIPANT 3: (points to PARTICIPANT 7) He's the only one that has a girlfriend right now. I feel sorry for him.

PARTICIPANT 4: Like you're one to talk.

PARTICIPANT 3: I'm just saying.

PARTICIPANT 2: This is a bachelor pad.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yes! This is it!

RESEARCHER: Is there anyone that you don't like to text?

PARTICIPANT 4: (laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: My mom.

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't like to text older people.

RESEARCHER: Who would you classify as older?

PARTICIPANT 4: When it takes them, like, 30 minutes to send a message saying "Hi."

PARTICIPANT 2: Long details in just one message.

PARTICIPANT 3: People that don't know how to carry a conversation.

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh my word, yes.

PARTICIPANT 3: When you ask a question, they just send one word answers. Especially if they're the ones that *start* the conversation. They're like, "Hi." So you say, "Hey, how's it going?" "Good."

PARTICIPANT 4: (laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: "What are you doing?" "Nothing."

PARTICIPANT 3: Exactly!

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 4: I get that all the time. It irritates the snot out of me!

PARTICIPANT 2: I was just thinking that, too.

PARTICIPANT 7: I hate texting people who, I don't know how they got my number.

PARTICIPANT 6: (laughter)

PARTICIPANT 3: So don't text those people. (Addressing PARTICIPANT 1) What about you? Who do you usually text?

PARTICIPANT 1: My mom. It's only brief. I only text briefly. I am the type of person that only says one word, too.

PARTICIPANT 4: I hate texting people like you.

(laughter)

PARTICIPANT 4: I love you, though, man.

PARTICIPANT 2: I text to be social, you know what I mean? You need to be more social, man.

PARTICIPANT 4: Really.

PARTICIPANT 5: That's one thing. Some people don't have a lot to say over text message, but you get more out of them over the phone or in person.

PARTICIPANT 2: That's true too.

PARTICIPANT 3: Text messaging is something you do when you're busy, but you still need to talk to somebody. So you do your stuff, get a text message, okay. You get to a point where you can stop, and you can reply back. Keep going. That's really the best time. If I'm sitting at home doing nothing, I'd rather just call them.

PARTICIPANT 5: I agree.

PARTICIPANT 7: You have to be careful of somebody else's schedule because you don't know what they're doing, so texting is really the obvious thing to do.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, they're busy too. If neither of us are busy, why not just call and talk? Or just meet up somewhere?

PARTICIPANT 4: It's also a way to keep a very small, nonchalant little conversation going throughout the day. It doesn't even have to get anywhere. You're just in contact with someone, but you're talking to them the whole day.

PARTICIPANT 3: You can have an hour conversation that lasts all day.

PARTICIPANT 5: It's true.

PARTICIPANT 3: You will never run out of anything to say. For at least a week.

PARTICIPANT 2: That's like when you first meet somebody, though. After that week, it's just downhill from there.

PARTICIPANT 4: I've still got three or four sentences I can text, so I can use them throughout the day. Of course, then it gets really, really weird.

PARTICIPANT 7: That's when it gets fun.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: Throw in a little weirdness.

PARTICIPANT 2: I like texting new people. I don't like texting the same people all the time.

PARTICIPANT 4: Who are those people?

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 4: "I'm tired of this friend!" (motions as if throwing something) "I'm texting a new friend."

PARTICIPANT 3: It's just an easy way to establish a new relationship.

PARTICIPANT 2: It is.

PARTICIPANT 3: I'm much more likely to text somebody, especially if it's somebody of the opposite sex, just because I really don't care about the opposite sex.

(Laughter)

RESEARCHER: Do you ever text just because you are bored?

PARTICIPANT 2: It is. Very much so.

PARTICIPANT 4: Just today, I drove three hours for a job interview.

PARTICIPANT 3: You were texting and driving? Is that what you're trying to say?

PARTICIPANT 4: No, no. I got there an hour and 15 minutes early. I just started texting, and that whole hour and everything flew right by.

PARTICIPANT 2: I been going without a cell phone for a while, and man, it is hard. You can't just pull out your phone and get on the Internet or text people.

PARTICIPANT 5: That's true. If you are by yourself and you're waiting to get something done, I would text some random person. Like, "Hey, what's up? How's it going? What are you up to?"

PARTICIPANT 2: Facebook.

PARTICIPANT 6: I save a couple people as "bored" in my contact list: bored number one, bored number 2.

PARTICIPANT 4: So you're one of those.

PARTICIPANT 6: It's only been like one or two people.

PARTICIPANT 3: You know, you get like five people like that, and you just pick a random one, you have no idea where a response it coming from.

PARTICIPANT 6: One day I'll text number one. If it's Tuesday, I'll go with number two. That works.

PARTICIPANT 4: I like giving certain nicknames to people. Later on, people will steal your phone and look through your contacts. They try and figure out who's who.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 4: Like, did I get a "DNR"? Who is Ladasha?

PARTICIPANT 2: You don't want the wrong person to see it though, you know?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, and then they'd call it. Their phone goes off. "Hey, wait a minute!"

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 3: "What? Why is this?"

PARTICIPANT 6: "Why am I your DNR?"

RESEARCHER: Do you ever text to keep up with information? Or to exchange information?

PARTICIPANT 4: Every now and then I'll text ChaCha.

PARTICIPANT 2: What kind of information? Like current events?

PARTICIPANT 3: No.

PARTICIPANT 2: Or gossip?

PARTICIPANT 3: No. Not really.

PARTICIPANT 4: No. It's more like, um,

PARTICIPANT 3: "Hey, what's up?"

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah. It accomplishes all of that.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: If you mean do you text people just to ask questions, I would say absolutely. Like, all the time. Like if you heard about something, it's like, "Hey, did you hear about what's going on with so-and-so," kind of thing.

PARTICIPANT 3: Or like, "Should I be concerned about this?"

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't ever text stuff like that. I probably should. I don't know.

PARTICIPANT 7: If there's something I feel I want to know about, I'll ask. I'll text somebody questions. If it's something I really don't care about, you just don't ask.

PARTICIPANT 5: That's true, too. Sometimes you hear something, and it's like, oh just whatever. If it's important, then you want to find out.

RESEARCHER: Are there some conversations that are better suited to text messaging?

PARTICIPANT 4: Let me just say, some things, it's just hard to say face to face. Or it's hard to say talking over the phone, but you can easily text because it's kind of an impartial thing because you're not forced to actually be there and interact with it. It's not so difficult. It's hard for me to give specific examples.

PARTICIPANT 2: Usually some guys text girls to get to know them. They can take time with their thoughts and what they want to say. They can think about it before they send it.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. You can type it out and reread it.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: You know, like, "That's not a good thing to say."

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 4: "That makes me sound creepy."

PARTICIPANT 7: Sometimes you can open up better in a text than on the phone or in person.

PARTICIPANT 3: And there are conversations that you definitely would rather have. It would make it simpler. Like if you're going to break up with somebody. It's like, I really don't want to deal with this, but you do it anyways. So you don't text somebody that. Well, I don't.

RESEARCHER: Are there some conversations that aren't appropriate for text messaging?

PARTICIPANT 2: The break up conversation is really not appropriate for text messaging, but it's the easier way.

PARTICIPANT 4: It's definitely not appropriate when it's your mom texting them telling you that you told your mom to text them to break up with them.

PARTICIPANT 3: Oh ho! The text chain.

PARTICIPANT 4: That seriously happened to one of my friends. He told his mom to text his girlfriend that they were breaking up.

PARTICIPANT 5: Wow.

PARTICIPANT 3: I mean, it's more respectful to do it yourself in person.

PARTICIPANT 2: Some people like to text things that they kind of don't want to say, but they do want to say. They just put "laugh out loud" on it, so it doesn't seem as bad.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: So that way some people can say things they're too shy to say in person.

PARTICIPANT 4: That's pretty cowardly.

PARTICIPANT 3: I think there are times when "laugh out loud" is overused.

PARTICIPANT 2: It is overused. It's like the way to end sentence, now.

PARTICIPANT 3: If I put "laugh out loud," I'm like "ha, ha, ha, ha!" (throws head back and laughs loudly). If I'm just smiling, I just put a smiley.

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't even think about it anymore. I just use it. I put "laugh out loud" all the time. It's just a habit now.

PARTICIPANT 6: I think a lot of people just put it there as a habit. Not really because they're like, "Oh, ha, ha, ha."

PARTICIPANT 4: I do it more when I'm trolling somebody.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 4: "You mad bro? Lol!" (pronounced lawl).

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah, how you've got to do it. Do you just put a U for you?

PARTICIPANT 4: Nah, I spell it out because I'm an intelligent human being.

PARTICIPANT 6: Well, you said you were trolling.

PARTICIPANT 4: Okay, I'm an intelligent human being who likes to troll.

RESEARCHER: So you don't like using abbreviations?

PARTICIPANT 4: It's destroying the English language.

PARTICIPANT 6: Make sure you are grammatically correct when you text.

PARTICIPANT 2: Why? Seriously, though. It's a text message. As long as you can read it, it doesn't have to be grammatically correct. It's just texting. You know what I mean?

PARTICIPANT 4: See, some people will get used to texting like that, and then when they're actually writing an official document, they will put text language. I've seen this. I've seen people do this, and it is sad.

PARTICIPANT 2: If I text like an adult, I'm more correct. If I'm texting, like you (addressing PARTICIPANT 4), not so much. You know what I mean?

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: If I'm texting one of my peers.

PARTICIPANT 5: I definitely prefer to spell things out, and I think I have a little bit more respect for people who spell things out too. I understand why they do that. Back in the day when they had a flip phones and the nine number keyboard, then everybody would use the abbreviations.

PARTICIPANT 3: But if you have the—

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah, if you have the full keyboard, you can just bust it out really quick.

PARTICIPANT 6: (removes flip phone from his pocket)

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah! A flip phone!

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 4: I have this really stupid crap phone. It only has like 160 characters that I can text at a time, so that affects how I text.

PARTICIPANT 2: With an iPhone, it's so easy to get it out.

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah. It even has spell check.

PARTICIPANT 7: And autocorrect.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: Autocorrect fails.

PARTICIPANT 4: Those are the funniest things ever.

PARTICIPANT 3: One thing useful about texting without is that you can get the whole thing out of the way at first. Like, "Yeah, I suck at spelling." You can't avoid it.

PARTICIPANT 2: I think it's worse if you just misspell it. You spell like one word right.

PARTICIPANT 3: That one word. I just got to get it right!

PARTICIPANT 2: Or like, not trying to text directly, and then messing up.

PARTICIPANT 6: You try hard, and you fail.

PARTICIPANT 4: I'll tell you about an autocorrect fail my friend had. He was texting. He said, "I need a new cushion for my couch," is what he texted. And I'm sitting right next to him. He's saying this out loud, and he sends it. He looks at the message he was sent, and he's like "*What?*" He just sees the person sent this weird face thing, like what did you just say? He looked at what he had sent, and it said, "I need to nuke Russia for my couch." For the next couple days, he was so angry at his phone.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 4: I say be watching.

(Laughter)

RESEARCHER: Is there anything you do differently when texting members of the opposite gender?

PARTICIPANT 2: I do. I do always.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes.

RESEARCHER: In what ways?

PARTICIPANT 3: Lots of smiley faces. Full-on flirting. I don't flirt with guys.

PARTICIPANT 5: Absolutely more smiley faces, and I'm not a "lol" kind of guy. I'm more of a "ha-ha" kind of guy, and I just throw that in there. Like, I think a "ha-ha" sounds good right here. Over here I'll put a "ha-ha."

PARTICIPANT 3: Because "ha-ha" is like, "Come now, it's funny." Lol is like (throws head back and laughs).

PARTICIPANT 5: Exactly.

PARTICIPANT 4: You've got the people that do the "ha-ha" and lol at the same time.

PARTICIPANT 6: Or rolling on the floor laughing.

RESEARCHER: You mentioned smiley faces. Do you only use those when texting the opposite gender?

PARTICIPANT 3: I really only use them when I'm giving a joke to somebody, or when I say something that I think is funny.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, that is good. I do that. I've added some with shades before, too. A smiley face with like, sunglasses on.

PARTICIPANT 3: Like, "I'm cool."

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 6: I barely use faces, but if I do, it's usually with the opposite sex.

PARTICIPANT 7: Yes.

PARTICIPANT 2: I send the pictures, too.

PARTICIPANT 4: Nowadays, instead of sending pictures, you're sending memes now.

PARTICIPANT 5: I probably use those too much, but I don't use just a smiley face. I do the dots with the P, like sticking my tongue out. Usually after I insult someone or tell a sarcastic joke, I'll do the wink with the tongue. Or if you do something really dumb, you do the D face (thumbs up gesture, wide smile).

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: I use those all the time.

PARTICIPANT 6: What about the X with the D? I do that one a lot.

RESEARCHER: Any other comments about text messaging?

PARTICIPANT 6: Don't text and drive. It's bad.

PARTICIPANT 3: Unless you're good at it.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 4: I'll be honest. A couple times I have because I've memorized where the buttons are, so I don't even look at the phone while I'm doing it, and I don't mess up because I know exactly how many times I need to press each button. It's like that muscle memory. I'm used to it.

PARTICIPANT 3: You can't do that with these touch screens.

PARTICIPANT 4: I guess you can be like, "Siri, send text message." (pause) What about memes? People send memes in picture messages, and it'll have, like, these memes.

PARTICIPANT 6: Like troll face. "You mad, bro?" and you send them a troll face.

PARTICIPANT 3: My phone doesn't get pictures.

PARTICIPANT 4: Mine doesn't either, really.

PARTICIPANT 3: I can take pictures and send them.

PARTICIPANT 6: I get pictures, but the problem is that I have a flip phone, so I can't really tell what it is.

PARTICIPANT 2: You need to get an iPhone.

PARTICIPANT 3: My thing is I don't want to get a phone that's smarter than me.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know, man. In these times, you got to have a smart phone. You got to be available when people want to call.

PARTICIPANT 3: But they don't want to call. They want to text.

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know, man. You going to lose some opportunities.

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: One thing we were talking about earlier, I think there are more things that should be said in person. I don't think there is anything that should only be said in text. I think that most things that need a place to be said should be in person, but a lot of things can be said in text.

Texting is more of a really casual thing. If I was going to tell somebody something really important, I'd rather call them.

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah, sometimes if I have to tell somebody something really important, I'm like, "Hey, I've got to tell you something really important," but I'll text them that.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah. You'll text them that you need to talk on the phone.

PARTICIPANT 4: Like, "I need to call you. Can you talk, or can you meet somewhere?"

PARTICIPANT 5: Texting before you call someone is pretty common courtesy.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. Because like we said earlier, people could be busy, and they'll respond when they can. So you text, "Hey, are you busy?"

RESEARCHER: That brings another question to mind. What if you are texting someone, and then you call, but that person doesn't answer?

PARTICIPANT 2: That makes me kind of like irritated.

PARTICIPANT 4: That makes me so mad. I throw my phone when that stuff happens. I get so mad.

PARTICIPANT 5: It depends on how—

PARTICIPANT 2: Especially if it's my brother. It makes me even madder.

PARTICIPANT 4: (addressing PARTICIPANT 2) Does it just make you steamed?

PARTICIPANT 2: Like, man, you're just ignoring me. I know you see me calling.

PARTICIPANT 3: I do it all the time.

PARTICIPANT 2: When somebody sends you to voice-mail, and you know they sent you to voice-mail. Mm. I hate that.

PARTICIPANT 7: If I'm busy I won't answer. Also if I'm talking to somebody else in person, and I'm texting another person, and they try to call me, then I'll wait to talk to that person.

PARTICIPANT 5: Like [PARTICIPANT 7]'s saying, texting you can do with other people. You can't just be in a group of people, like right now, and just call someone up. Texting is more casual, so you can do it in more places at once.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, but at the same time, do you consider it rude texting at the table?

PARTICIPANT 5: Well, yeah, that's rude, but I'm saying like, if you're walking through the mall or something.

PARTICIPANT 3: If you're texting and stuff is going on around you and you're just on your phone, that kind of pisses me off. Just be here in the moment.

PARTICIPANT 4: What gets me steamed, when I'm like, "Do you have a second? I want to talk," and they say "Sure, call me up." I call and they don't answer. That makes me angry. That makes me want to take their phone and stomp on it. Be like, you don't deserve this. You're not using it right.

RESEARCHER: Any other comments?

(heads shaking)

RESEARCHER: Well, thank you for coming and participating.

Focus Group 1F

RESEARCHER: How often do you usually send text messages, would you say?

PARTICIPANT 1: Every day. All the time.

PARTICIPANT 2: (head nodding) A lot.

PARTICIPANT 3: At least every day.

PARTICIPANT 2: When I'm bored.

PARTICIPANT 4: It's my life.

PARTICIPANT 5: I don't text hardly at all.

RESEARCHER: Would you say once a week? Twice a week?

PARTICIPANT 5: I do text, hm, every other day. It really depends on what I'm doing. I live in the middle of nowhere. Nothing is happening in my life, so there's no real need to text. People don't text me. Guilt trip, y'all.

PARTICIPANT 2: Are you sure? I have your number. I think I text.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah, but like a whole day, two days, three days go by without getting a single text. My parents text me to come down for family prayer. That's the most frequent text.

PARTICIPANT 6: I would rather get a text message than a phone call half of the time because I don't want to stop what I'm doing to actually talk to you on the phone. I would just rather you tell me what you want over text, and then I can respond.

PARTICIPANT 5: She looks at me meaningfully because I call her.

PARTICIPANT 2: Sometimes I don't like text because I can't tell exactly what someone is thinking or hear the different tones in their voice.

PARTICIPANT 1: Emojis.

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know what that means.

RESEARCHER: Those little faces?

PARTICIPANT 1: Mmm-hmm. That's what they're for.

PARTICIPANT 2: But not everyone uses those.

PARTICIPANT 7: Yeah, I don't use them, personally. I might put a smiley face every so often.

PARTICIPANT 5: You get the smiley face and the frowny face and the wink and that's it. That's my language of emojis.

PARTICIPANT 3: If I really have to discuss something with someone, I'll call them so I can get their emotions and explain myself better, rather than text it all.

RESEARCHER: Is there a particular time of day when you are more likely to send text messages?

PARTICIPANT 1: At night.

PARTICIPANT 2: At night.

PARTICIPANT 3: In the evening.

PARTICIPANT 1: After school and work.

PARTICIPANT 7: I do mornings. I have to communicate with everybody where I'm going. That's why, that's what I use it for.

RESEARCHER: Are there times when you are less likely to text?

PARTICIPANT 1: When I'm sleeping.

PARTICIPANT 2: (gestures to PARTICIPANT 1) Sleeping.

PARTICIPANT 1: If it's not urgent, I will not text back.

PARTICIPANT 6: When I'm at work.

PARTICIPANT 2: At work.

PARTICIPANT 3: I don't text people back if they don't ask me a question. If they say, "Have a good day," I'm not really going to text them back.

RESEARCHER: Are there any other text messages that don't require a response?

PARTICIPANT 8: When people say hi I don't text back. Lazy, I guess.

PARTICIPANT 5: Well, that explains a whole lot.

(laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: I have a lot of actual conversations over text, especially with my family. My cousins and stuff. Finding the end of the conversation is sometimes difficult because you're both sending smiley faces back and forth. It's like, when are we going to be done?

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: Who is going to stop texting first?

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah.

RESEARCHER: What kind of people to you usually text? You mentioned family. What about friends or coworkers or anyone else?

PARTICIPANT 7: I text my coworkers. That is how we communicate at our work. We text message. My boss texted me today and asked me if I could come in tomorrow.

PARTICIPANT 2: Family.

PARTICIPANT 3: Family.

PARTICIPANT 8: Family.

PARTICIPANT 6: At school, classmates.

PARTICIPANT 1: (nods) Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: I like to text people when I need to get same message out to a lot of people. That's mainly what I use it for. I'll send it to like, ten people, all at once, and wait for the flood of replies.

RESEARCHER: What kind of information do you relay in those texts?

PARTICIPANT 5: It's usually this is what's going on, if you want to come along. This is where we're meeting. Just informational things, not necessarily conversation.

RESEARCHER: Do the rest of you use texting in that way?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yes.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes. The mass text.

PARTICIPANT 6: (nods)

RESEARCHER: Are there people you don't like to text?

PARTICIPANT 5: Those that can't spell.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 3: (nods)

PARTICIPANT 2: (nods)

PARTICIPANT 7: They only text back one word. Or one little letter.

PARTICIPANT 5: I hate that!

PARTICIPANT 7: I hate it when that happens.

PARTICIPANT 6: K.

PARTICIPANT 7: They'll just put "K" all the time. I have a friend who does that. It just kills me.

PARTICIPANT 1: People who take forever to reply back.

RESEARCHER: How long is forever?

PARTICIPANT 1: Longer than, uh, 20 or 30 minutes. Especially if it's something important that you're telling this person. By that time, I usually call them.

PARTICIPANT 5: I'm one of those people. If I don't want to talk about it, I just don't reply.

PARTICIPANT 6: If I don't want to respond to somebody. If I ignore their phone call, and they finally text me what they want, and I still don't want to talk to them. I just keep ignoring texts.

PARTICIPANT 5: You're passive aggressive. Okay.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah. (laughs)

PARTICIPANT 3: People that text you every day the same message. I don't reply back to those, or the people that text you incessantly, or at five in the morning.

RESEARCHER: Are there some conversations that are better suited to text messaging?

PARTICIPANT 1: Texting is more casual every day conversation: "Hey how ya doin'?" or "What's going on?" Calling is more for "Hey, happy birthday!" or letting people know about an event that's going on if they don't reply to a text message.

RESEARCHER: So a phone call is a last resort?

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: It is. It is, but it shouldn't be.

PARTICIPANT 6. I would say that the person that I text the most is probably my cousin, and it's mostly random stuff. I'll be in Walmart, and I saw a lobster phone case. I took a picture of it, and I sent it to her, and then we talked about nothing. But we just send random pictures and stuff like that. Like, "I want to share this with you, but I don't want to put it on Facebook."

RESEARCHER: So you can keep your conversation private?

PARTICIPANT 6: Right. We do it because it's funny, or I know that she'll like it, or something she'll find interesting. Conversations are sometimes held, sometimes not.

PARTICIPANT 2: I text to check up on people. I might have a thought about them throughout the day. I'm like, man, how are they doing? And while I'm doing other things, I'll just shoot them a quick text. Just to see how they are. If they're doing really bad, just (pantomimes talking on telephone). "Hey, what's up?"

PARTICIPANT 5: For me, it's a lot of information. Like just sending a text picture. A lot of times I do shopping for businesses with my work. I do a lot of event decorations and things, so they want to see the product. It lessens my returns. A lot of times, I'll shoot them pictures of things. I'll say, "Hey, this is the price. This is option A, B, or C." I use that form of communication just to lessen my work, I guess. Just convenience.

PARTICIPANT 6: It's just a matter of convenience, really. Instead of you having to be on the phone, you might be in a room full of people, and you don't want to be in a conversation, but you're having a conversation, but nobody else knows that you're having a conversation. Well, no one knows what your conversation is because you're on text, and you're not talking loudly.

PARTICIPANT 5: That and when you only have one thing to say. You can tell your mom, "Hey, I'm going to be late," or "I'm going to stop by your work." The one statement things. That's what I mainly use it for. If it takes more than five texts, I'm going to call you. It takes way too much work to text, and then so much time. I'd rather just call you and get it over with in 30 seconds rather than drag it out 30 minutes.

PARTICIPANT 6: It also might depend on the type of phone that you have.

PARTICIPANT 5: Dumb phone! Don't look at me.

PARTICIPANT 6: I've noticed that once you have that smart phone, and you get used to doing everything on your phone, for me at least. I do everything on my phone: e-mail, Google, everything is on my phone. It's like a mini laptop, so it's just a natural extension.

RESEARCHER: Do the rest of you have smart phones? Do you feel that way, too?

PARTICIPANT 3: I don't.

PARTICIPANT 2: (shakes head) Not me.

PARTICIPANT 4: (shakes head) Nope.

PARTICIPANT 6: Does anyone in here have a smart phone besides me?

PARTICIPANT 1: I do.

PARTICIPANT 6: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 3: My phone slides out, so it has the full keyboard, but if you had to do the T9, like back in the day, that would take forever.

PARTICIPANT 2: I still have it. It's not that bad. It's really not, except it doesn't like English words that much.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: I know. It's weird.

PARTICIPANT 5: What language does it like?

PARTICIPANT 2: I feel maybe more Asian-ish. Maybe Chinese, Japanese, Korean. Whichever.

PARTICIPANT 3: Like I said before, if it is a big conversation, or I really need to discuss something, it's easier just to call.

RESEARCHER: What would be a big conversation?

PARTICIPANT 3: Like if I wanted to ask somebody's opinion on something. If you wanted somebody's opinion, you want to hear them. They could say, "Oh yeah, sure, that's great," when they don't really mean it. I just want to hear their emotions, their tone of voice because they can say something in text and mean something totally different. Sometimes when I send a text to somebody, I think "Oh man, I wonder how they took that." I meant it in a friendly way, but I don't know if they read it in a different way.

PARTICIPANT 6: (gesturing toward PARTICIPANT 3) Just going off of that, I agree with you. The bigger conversations are better to have in person, but I've noticed, at least with my parents, I'm less likely to fight with them if it's over text because I'll type it all out, and then go, "That's kind of mean." So I delete the whole thing and usually end up just saying "K" or ignoring the message. That's better than saying mean things.

PARTICIPANT 5: You can take it back.

PARTICIPANT 6: Right, you can take it back. You can think about it. It gives you time. It's not just coming out of your mouth while you're on the phone yelling at each other. I think fighting might be better to have over text.

PARTICIPANT 5: If you're quick, you can cancel send.

RESEARCHER: Someone mentioned texting when you're bored. Do you ever text to entertain yourself?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes.

RESEARCHER: In what kind of situations?

PARTICIPANT 5: Awkward ones.

PARTICIPANT 6: Waiting rooms.

PARTICIPANT 5: Elevators.

PARTICIPANT 2: Sometimes, when I'm really, really scared. If it's really late at night, like midnight or something, I'll shoot a text to my friends on the west coast. Like, (pantomime typing a text message) "Hey, how's life going? Tell me a good story. I'm scared."

PARTICIPANT 5: You can do that with the east coast folks, too. Like early in the morning. The east coast is awake.

PARTICIPANT 2: That's true.

PARTICIPANT 5: Some of the best conversations I've had is when I couldn't fall asleep or I woke up way too early. It's like five o'clock my time, but it's seven o'clock in Georgia. Best time to talk to my mom, apparently, is five a.m. my time.

RESEARCHER: Is there information you reserve for text conversations?

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes and no. Unless you are really vigilant about deleting it, it can be seen by other people. At the same time, if want to tell my friend something, and we're sitting in her living room, then we would text each other that thing instead of saying it out loud. We don't say it in front of her parents or whoever else is in the room.

PARTICIPANT 5: So you do it to exclude other people.

PARTICIPANT 6: (laughs) Well, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: I have done this multiple times. You'll be at a party or at someone else's house hanging out, and you see someone. It's like, "Why is this person here? What is going on?" And I'm very rude, but only over text messaging. I would never go up to someone and say, "Did you see what she was wearing? I mean, *really*?"

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: I use it to do stuff discreetly.

PARTICIPANT 6: (nods) Yep.

PARTICIPANT 4: I don't get any of this because I don't text.

RESEARCHER: Do you ever text?

PARTICIPANT 4: No. I've never texted.

PARTICIPANT 1: Why?

PARTICIPANT 5: I'll give you my phone so you can do one.

PARTICIPANT 1: Why, though?

PARTICIPANT 4: Because my plan didn't have texting, and I didn't want to pay extra for it.

PARTICIPANT 1: If your plan did have texting, would you text?

PARTICIPANT 4: Probably not. I like just saying what I want to say without having to play tag team.

RESEARCHER: Do you think there are some messages you miss because you don't text?

PARTICIPANT 4: Yes. When people text me I can't open it, so I usually call whoever it is.

PARTICIPANT 2: I was just thinking about how there are certain people I just don't like to call because I don't understand them on the phone.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yes!

PARTICIPANT 2: I understand them face-to-face or while texting.

PARTICIPANT 1: Or they talk too much.

PARTICIPANT 2: Or they talk too much. You're right.

PARTICIPANT 1: You called them for one thing, and they go off on this whole other story about how this and this happened.

PARTICIPANT 6: Text is the faster way to get information. Unless they don't text you back. In which case it's really (rolls eyes).

PARTICIPANT 5: I think there's a lot of value in not only verbal communication but face-to-face communication. I think that's something that we're losing—that interaction, that ability to converse and to think on our feet and that wit that we used to have. Now we're used to being about to sit there for a second as we're texting. It's that delayed response. I think sometimes our conversations are lagging face-to-face because we're used to communicating electronically, where time delay is normal.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: I agree with that.

RESEARCHER: Are there any conversations you would deem inappropriate over text message?

PARTICIPANT 1: Mm-hm.

PARTICIPANT 5: Huh. Break up.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 7: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: Asking out.

PARTICIPANT 8: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

RESEARCHER: Why?

PARTICIPANT 3: Just because it takes guts to call someone and talk to them, so I think if you call rather than text, it shows that A) you really care about them and want to speak to them or B) you still care about them but you want to, I don't know how to say it.

PARTICIPANT 1: It's more personal.

PARTICIPANT 3: It's the more proper, personal way.

PARTICIPANT 2: It's character building. We're losing that in our young folks these days!

PARTICIPANT 5: How old are you?

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: Really, how old are you?

PARTICIPANT 2: We'll ask later.

PARTICIPANT 1: She's 25.

PARTICIPANT 7: You don't look 25.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yes! I am young looking!

RESEARCHER: When someone texts you in one of those situations, what do you do?

PARTICIPANT 1: I've said no to a date because he asked over text.

RESEARCHER: Did you say no solely because he texted you?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yes. I've also texted back and said if you really want to go out on a date with me, call me or catch me at school tomorrow or something.

PARTICIPANT 3: Either say no or don't reply at all.

PARTICIPANT 5: I think I would reply something more like, "Call me when you have concrete plans or when you really want to go out." I hate it when they say, "Hey want to go out on Saturday night?" And you're like "Okay, what time? What are we doing?"

PARTICIPANT 7: Give me all the information.

PARTICIPANT 5: Eh. Plan it. I don't like this, "So what are you doing?" The vague, pin you in a corner, guilt you on a date stuff. I hate when people just ask me, "Hey what are you doing Friday night?" Wouldn't you like to know!

PARTICIPANT 6: If they were to say "Will you go out with me six o'clock, Friday night, to this place—"

PARTICIPANT 5: In a text?

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah. Give you the entire thing.

PARTICIPANT 5: That person doesn't know me. I don't do the whole conversation in text!

PARTICIPANT 6: But if he just were to give you the full information: "Would you go out to this place at six o'clock on Friday with me," would you say yes? Or would you say call me or whatever?

PARTICIPANT 5: I would check to see if I had a missed call from that person first. If I had a missed call, then I would probably call them back and say yes, or I'd call them and be like, "What is this that you're talking about?" Try to force him to say it.

PARTICIPANT 6: (nods) Okay.

PARTICIPANT 5: If he still wouldn't say it, I'd be like "No. I've got to wash my hair."

PARTICIPANT 6: Organize my sock drawer.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah. There's a lot of messy ones.

PARTICIPANT 1: I guess it just depends on who it is.

PARTICIPANT 5: If you're really not interested in them (shrugs).

PARTICIPANT 6: What if it was a guy that you knew? Like a guy from FHE. I mean if you *knew* him.

PARTICIPANT 1: Depends on who it is.

PARTICIPANT 7: It depends on the person and how well you knew them.

PARTICIPANT 6: Let's say it was a close person. Would you say yes over text?

PARTICIPANT 5: If like [PARTICIPANT 7] asked me out over text. Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 6: Okay. I would text her, (gesturing to PARTICIPANT 5) "Let's go see a movie on Friday." I wouldn't call her to say let's go see a movie on Friday. I would text you that. And you say yes. So there's a difference, I guess.

PARTICIPANT 2: Hanging out. That's a hang out.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, that's not a date.

RESEARCHER: So how about you? Would knowing the person make a difference?

PARTICIPANT 6: I don't know. I think it would make a difference, but I've never been in that situation before, so I'm not sure.

PARTICIPANT 3: I think the first date should always be either a call or in person.

RESEARCHER: Is there anyone else that would just ignore the text?

PARTICIPANT 1: I would.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 7: If he was a creeper.

PARTICIPANT 5: One of those people you have in your contacts just so you know to ignore them.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: Or pretend you don't know them. Like, "Who is this?"

PARTICIPANT 5: But you really don't want to know who it is. I'd just ignore them.

RESEARCHER: When you are texting someone of the opposite gender, are there things you do differently?

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: More smiley faces. More winkies. More emojis!

PARTICIPANT 6: More spell check.

PARTICIPANT 3: More proofreading.

PARTICIPANT 5: She's an English major.

PARTICIPANT 6: Doesn't matter.

PARTICIPANT 3: And it does depend on the guy. If it's a guy you're just friends with, it doesn't really matter. But if it's somebody you can potentially go further with, I would spend a little more time on a text: make sure it sounded just right, all the words were spelled right, add a smiley face or a winky face.

PARTICIPANT 2: I'm doing things wrong!

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: I just treat them like my girlfriends. Boyfriends. Girlfriends. Same.

RESEARCHER: Are there any other rules of etiquette when it comes to texting? Or anything that bothers you?

PARTICIPANT 5: Forward junk.

PARTICIPANT 1: I haven't gotten one of those in years.

PARTICIPANT 6: I remember the time when everybody was forwarding the chain—

PARTICIPANT 5: Waste of time. Mine is a dumb phone, so it chops into multiple texts, so it's just all over the place. Or when you write a book to me and ask a bajillion questions. I'm like, "Call me." This is not cool.

PARTICIPANT 3: Or when somebody has their little signature at the bottom of the text, and you don't know what it is or what it means or anything.

PARTICIPANT 7: That's true.

PARTICIPANT 3: That kind of bugs me.

PARTICIPANT 7: It has their initial or their boyfriend's initials. It's weird.

PARTICIPANT 1: It also is good because I've gotten text messages from missionaries asking,

"Hey, I heard you know this person, where are they at?" And then it says "The Missionaries" on

the bottom.

PARTICIPANT 3: I mean like, those are good because you know what it is. But if it's some random

letters, some random saying at the end of their text, I don't really know who it is or what they

mean.

PARTICIPANT 6: Those are usually the things that get chopped off into a second message. It's just

like, really? I just waited for your signature that means nothing?

RESEARCHER: Can you give me an example of a signature that you don't like?

PARTICIPANT 3: I could, but I think everyone knows this person.

PARTICIPANT 2: That's okay! Go for it!

PARTICIPANT 6: Do it.

PARTICIPANT 3: Okay. Let me get it out. (Removes phone from pocket).

PARTICIPANT 6: I know someone who uses their e-mail address as their signature. That is just

really annoying because it is really long, and that's what comes in last.

PARTICIPANT 3: All right. So their signature is (reading from phone) R-O-R-R-I-M-E-G-A-M-I

(throws hands in the air). The one before that was "Italy is where my future's at."

PARTICIPANT 6: Oh! I know who that is!

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: I didn't until this moment.

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't know who it is.

RESEARCHER: Do any of you use signatures?

(Heads shaking)

PARTICIPANT 5: I do. It's my initials, but my initials are H.W. At college, it's really fun because I would just laugh at people. When they see my initials, they think "homework." It's the abbreviation for homework. They'd be like, "What are you talking about, homework?" I'd be like, "I'm H.W." It's such a good laughing point to get them to de-stress and stuff. You know, at college everyone's stressed out.

RESEARCHER: Anyone else? Any other comments about text messaging?

PARTICIPANT 6: I'm glad it exists.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes.

RESEARCHER: All right. Thank you for coming and participating.

Focus Group 2F

RESEARCHER: How often do you usually send text messages?

PARTICIPANT 1: All the time, every day.

PARTICIPANT 2: Pretty much. We have screamers in my house, so a lot.

PARTICIPANT 5: Depending on the day. During school a lot, and when I get home it's nap time, so not for a while after that. I would say a max of maybe 40 texts a day.

PARTICIPANT 3: Oh my goodness. I don't text nearly that much. I'm not a technology person.

PARTICIPANT 5: Nowhere over 40. Sometimes it's only like five times a day. It depends.

PARTICIPANT 1: It depends what's going on, that's true. But if Reuben's working, and he happens to be somewhere that he can text, a lot more than if he's somewhere where he can't text. If he's, like, in the prison for his job, he can't take a phone there.

PARTICIPANT 4: I know for us, I don't know about you. I'm not calling y'all old, but I know y'all, I don't know if you had texting—

PARTICIPANT 2: I'm 28. I'm not that old.

PARTICIPANT 4: I don't know if y'all had texting when you were in school. Like cell phones at school.

PARTICIPANT 2: I wasn't allowed to have a phone in school. I also walked everywhere, but I'm from California.

PARTICIPANT 4: I would say that I was texting more when I was in school, like grade school, than I do now. We like saw each like every day, and texted people, but you saw 'em, so why text them? (laughter).

PARTICIPANT 2: I would say that high schoolers probably text more. Rebecca's texting has kind of eased off now that she's graduated from high school, so now it's not quite so much. But like you said a lot, if I'm in a conversation with somebody, my mom does it. She's in the old category. She does it when she's talking to my brother because he's in the army, so he can text more often, like if he's on a break or something. He can text more often than he can pick up a phone and have a conversation. So then if he has to drop it and go back to work, it can just kind of sit there and wait for the answer. It's not like you gotta go "Okay, gotta go, bye." Sometimes he has times where he has to stay up for 72 hours watches, and he has to watch this room, and it's the ammo room. So he'll sit and he'll text all night to stay awake. And so, that would be when we use it the most for people that are not there.

PARTICIPANT 1: When my husband has to work a double, and he has a chance to text, it comes in handy. You can talk to somebody and keep awake.

PARTICIPANT 4: I think college people text.

PARTICIPANT 5: I go to school, and depending on my professor, some of them are okay with it and some of them are not. If they're okay with it, and it's a class I hate, I will text the whole time. (Pantomime writing a text message) "45 minutes till I get out of here!"

PARTICIPANT 4: Depending on what college you go to, too. If you go to like a smaller college or if you go to like, I don't know, one with sororities and fraternities and stuff like that, you might text more.

PARTICIPANT 2: Depends on who you are and how many friends you have.

PARTICIPANT 5: I would much rather call somebody, especially if I'm in a rush.

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: Like, "Hey, I need some information right now." I cannot stand when people don't reply. I text a lot, but I would rather call. I'll text if it's like a casual conversation, but if it's an emergency, I'd rather talk on the phone any day. But I do agree with what we were talking about earlier. I texted *so* much in high school!

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: I texted so much it was ridiculous.

PARTICIPANT 3: I didn't text a lot. (Addressing PARTICIPANT 4) Your question was reasonable because for a long time I had a Link. Do y'all remember Link? It's hilarious if you ever see one with one anymore, but I had a Link for forever. When I finally got a cell phone, I didn't have text. I started texting in college. And now I can only count on my—actually, I just started texting when I was already married, and I still wasn't texting 'cause I wasn't very into it. I finally got it because I thought it would be convenient. But I can only count on one hand how many times I text a day. I'm just not, like technology is just, I'd rather talk to somebody on the phone, even if it's casual because you can get just so much more in with people. I can.

PARTICIPANT 1: Maybe this is ironic, but since we switched to smart phones, we text less. There's more things to do on your phone.

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: I get on Facebook and play games a lot in class instead of texting people. But, like I said, if it's a really boring class, I'm like let's text someone. See how he's doing. Just to have something to do at all times. When I run out of lives, I text people.

PARTICIPANT 4: I'd say now, I text a little bit, but not as much as I did in school. Instant message, like on on Facebook, I use that a lot. I feel like I do that more. It's on my phone.

PARTICIPANT 5: I know. Like, I have unlimited texting, but I'm instant messaging on Facebook, using data to I.M. people instead of texting them (shakes head).

PARTICIPANT 1: Because that's the smart alternative there (laughs).

PARTICIPANT 5: I don't know why. I'm just on Facebook I.M.ing when I could be texting. I can think of maybe four people that I just text. Everybody else, is just like "Are you coming to this focus group?" And I'm like, oh yeah. [PARTICIPANT 1] texts. But just four people I can think of that I text on the regular. Everybody else it just like, "hey can you do this," or whatever.

PARTICIPANT 2: That's what I use it for. I have a group at church, and I use it as reminders to tell the text kids' parents. They'll announce it on Sunday, but from Sunday to Wednesday, if you're anything like me, you're not gonna remember. So on Tuesday night, I'm texting. (Pantomime typing text message) "Don't forget, tomorrow night." I don't necessarily want a reply to that one. I just want you to know.

PARTICIPANT 5: Tony texts me to remind me of hair appointments. Unless it's texts like that, there's only like four people in my phone that I really have a lot of texts, that I really text a lot. The others are just like two or three text messages every now and then.

PARTICIPANT 4: How about this, though. This is the question that gets me. I text, when I do text, I text like actual sentences, and I get back like two letters.

PARTICIPANT 5: It's funny 'cause like old people think, they think kids text like that, but if you ever text your dad or mom, I don't understand what they are saying. I'm like, you're gonna have to call me.

PARTICIPANT 2: I had to ask my daughter what she meant! She had four words! We were on the iPad, and she was in the writing thing, and she put like four letters. Some were close together and some were spaced apart. And I was like "What does that mean?" She said, "Oh, I love you lots!" and I'm like, hmm. It was only a couple more letters to add the whole word. I am a whole-word texter, but I text a lot of people that if you don't give them whole words, they're just not going to talk to you again. They're going to think you're crazy.

PARTICIPANT 1: I abbreviate certain words. If it's easy, but sometimes it's not that much easier.

PARTICIPANT 3: If I have the space, I like to type in actual sentences. I don't get why people shorten words so much when it's not that hard to add one or two more letters. I try to make my sentences make sense, but recently I got a new phone that doesn't let me just continue on so it'll be two messages. It makes me stop. So I've been having to figure out how I can shorten my words. Sometimes I'll even leave no spaces, just so I can make it all fit in one message.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, this is not a smart phone, as you can see. I really hate it, but I'm dealing with it right now.

PARTICIPANT 5: Gotta watch that character count.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, been there, done that.

RESEARCHER: We talked about this a little bit, but is there a time of day that you are more likely or less likely to text?

PARTICIPANT 5: Mornings for me, because I am in school. That's when I do most of my texting. Whenever it hits about 1 o'clock to 2 o'clock, I'll be driving home, so I don't text. I don't drive and text. I turn my phone off. I hate it when people try to text me or call me when I'm driving. It annoys me so bad, so no texting during those times. From about 8 o'clock till about twelve is when I do most of my texting because I am in school. I'll text people, "Hey, I'll meet you at the gazebo," or "Want to get lunch?" When I get home, and I work, I talk to people on the computer. At that time, I'm normally hanging out with the people I would be texting. Late at night, once everybody goes home, I'm talking to people through text. So early morning and late at night. Not when I'm asleep or busy.

PARTICIPANT 4: That's what I say: in the mornings and in the evenings. I go to work like midmorning, but I might send a text in the afternoon or evening when I'm off work. Sometimes I text during work, but—

PARTICIPANT 5: I have a wonderful job where I can text at my job, so I tear it up there too.

PARTICIPANT 4: I can't text and make sandwiches as the same time (laughs).

PARTICIPANT 1: Where I work that is how, a lot of times, my boss will communicate with me, especially if we're in different places at different times. She'll say "Hey, I need this, this, and this done." When she gets a break, she just texts.

PARTICIPANT 4: Now, I know your boss.

PARTICIPANT 2: Sometimes that's better, though, because if you want me to get eight things, please give me a list. After two, I'm not going to remember.

PARTICIPANT 5: I'm using my phone for business stuff throughout the day. There's a girl in my class that texted me, "Can you send me the homework or the pages that we have to read?" That one girl, I never talk to her, but she'll text me just for that reason, and it's normally at nighttime. I might send a few texts throughout the day, but it might be business stuff. Usually nighttime texting is conversations.

PARTICIPANT 2: I do it between the hours from three to eight when my kids are home and awake because they're noisy. My mom was trying to talk to my brother on the phone one time, and I have a set of twins. They were in the back seat screaming, and I said "Mom, tell him you want to text him. Just tell him you want to text him. If you want to keep talking, just text. You can hear him. He can hear you. No screaming in the background." That is probably when I do it. If somebody between three to eight, I'm more likely to text them and talk to them, just because there's no interference. My husband, he's hard of hearing, so if I try to call him between those hours and the kids are making any noise whatsoever, he can't hear it. That's one of the reasons we got our phone with text—because he's hard of hearing. Not that he uses it. I use it more than he does, which makes absolutely no sense. He'll call me and he'll say "I can't understand what you're saying," and I'm just banging my head against the wall going "Text me! Text me!" As long as you can read the words I write, which sometimes I'm not a great speller. Sometimes the phone does crazy things.

PARTICIPANT 5: Autocorrect.

PARTICIPANT 2: No, autocorrect does awesome things.

PARTICIPANT 5: I tried to say "for sure" one time, and it corrected it to "diagonal." I don't know. It was weird. Autocorrect can either help or harm. It's one or the other.

PARTICIPANT 2: I disabled mine, and every once in a while it'll start acting up. I'll get the options at the bottom, and I'll try and touch them, but sometimes out of nowhere, like my daughter's name is Noe, and it changed it to something else. I was like, wait a minute. I typed that right. That's what I wanted it to say, so I had to go back, and I had to do that twice one time.

PARTICIPANT 1: [addressing PARTICIPANT 3] Sometimes when I type Joah's name, it changes it to Josh, and I'm like "No!"

PARTICIPANT 3: Oops.

PARTICIPANT 1: Not that I text his name often, but I was talking to Reuben one day. I was like hey, we're having dinner at [PARTICIPANT 3] and Joah's, but it said [PARTICIPANT 3] and Josh's. I was like, I'm sorry.

PARTICIPANT 2: Texting fail.

PARTICIPANT 1: I know his name. I didn't forget. I promise.

PARTICIPANT 2: It's worse when you send it, and then you look at it and you go "oh, that's not what it was supposed to say," so you have to hurry up and type it back again.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah. You have to put a little asterisk symbol at the end to indicate misspelled or that was not correct. That's what I do. Since I don't use my phone very much, I only text in the morning if it's something that I need to know from someone that has to do with the rest of the day. I'll go ahead and find out in the morning, but most of the time I guess I have to say that I text in the afternoon when it's just about random things. I don't work. I'm a stay-at-home mom. It's always maybe something like my mom's asking me to pick up my brother from school or something. It's kind of erratic with mine.

PARTICIPANT 1: What [PARTICIPANT 2] said also, a lot of when Peyton, Peyton does not like phones. She likes phones, but she doesn't like when you're talking on the phone because she's not getting attention. So texting is very convenient when needing to accomplish a conversation, and your child is like "What's that?" And tries to grab it.

PARTICIPANT 3: It is pretty convenient when you have children.

RESEARCHER: Who do you usually text?

PARTICIPANT 5: If I am starting to talk to somebody, like a new relationship, like romantically, I feel like I text all the time.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: I feel like that's the one exception, I'd say. If I'm talking to somebody, like my boyfriend, I'm always texting. Always. My dad texts me a lot. He prefers to call me, but sometimes I'm like "Don't," so he texts me a lot. I text at least two of my closest friends a few times most every day. I text Nate all the time. He actually got on my nerves texting me so much. I was just like "I don't want to text right now. I'm trying to take a nap." I'd say my very, very, my two or three closest friends and my dad, who is also my boss, and relationship people. Like people I'm dating.

PARTICIPANT 1: (counting on fingers) Husband, boss, my mom slash babysitter situation, and maybe one or two friends because I don't have friends.

PARTICIPANT 4: I don't have friends, either. That's sad because I feel like I used to have a lot of friends. Now I feel lame.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: I know!

PARTICIPANT 5: We're turning this focus group into a support group.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: We're all going through out minds going "Man, you know what? We're right there with her." I was sitting there thinking, "People I text. Okay." (Addressing PARTICIPANT 1) I didn't even know that your mom texted. I had to teach my mom to text.

PARTICIPANT 6: We had to teach my mom to text.

PARTICIPANT 2: She called me, and then she texted me, and I was like "Oh, she can text. Okay." Angie texts really well. I would say I probably text family, and I have one long distance friend that I text. It used to be we texted a lot, but now we Facebook message, so we don't text as much. And then, occasionally reminders for church, but that's it. Except the fun one where they tell you your bill is due. That's one I receive that I don't have to reply, but I think that's it as far as who I text.

PARTICIPANT 3: I'm the same as her pretty much. I only text family, like handful of family members are the only people that I text. Every now and then, funny enough, actually yesterday or today was the first time I texted my best friend from high school in like forever. I just asked her randomly "what's up?" but other than that, it's only my mom and my husband and my sister who lives in Utah.

PARTICIPANT 1: I'll say for my friends, I go in spurts. I'll talk to one person for a week constantly, and then it'll be four months before I hear from them again. It's just like, oh yeah. That was fun.

PARTICIPANT 4: Or you'll be sitting at the hair salon and see someone.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, and then I think about that person, and you start texting.

PARTICIPANT 5: I just have two really good friends and a boyfriend. Those are really the ones I text a super lot. I mean, I text my family and stuff. But occasionally I'll have people from school

that I don't actually hang out with or even like, but it's like, "Let's talk about school stuff real quick, so I know what I'm supposed to be doing since I text in class." Stuff like that, really. It goes from business to personal.

PARTICIPANT 3: I was like that in college: every now and then exchange numbers with some people in class.

PARTICIPANT 5: It helps.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, and text them for what do we do because I didn't make it to class or whatever. Now I go through my contact list every now and then, and I think "Megan? Megan who? Oh yeah. We had class together. I can delete her" (laughs). I don't even know her anymore.

PARTICIPANT 5: Sometimes my professors will give you their numbers and you can text them, or they'll text you to say class was cancelled.

PARTICIPANT 3: That's really nice of them. My professors never did that.

PARTICIPANT 6: Mine either.

PARTICIPANT 5: I have some pretty cool professors. I'm a pretty hardcore teacher's pet, so they're always like "We'll just text [PARTICIPANT 5] and let her know." But like I said, mostly just people I'm really close to. Occasionally I'll text people that I just haven't talked to in a long time. Normally it's strictly those three friends, dad, and school stuff.

RESEARCHER: Are there people who you purposely don't text?

PARTICIPANT 5: Yes.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes!

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: I hit ignore, ignore, ignore. I have people in my contacts as "don't text this person" or "don't call this person."

PARTICIPANT 1: (nods and points to PARTICIPANT 5) I have a few that are named "do not reply." I don't know which one is who, but I'm not gonna reply.

PARTICIPANT 2: Those people you wish didn't have your number. You don't know how they—

PARTICIPANT 1: How they got it!

PARTICIPANT 2: Sometimes, like my brother, I know how he got it.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: Most of the time it's like—

PARTICIPANT 5: There's some people that will text me, and I will just dread opening that text message because I know they're going to ask me to like walk barefoot to Zimbabwe for them or something.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: It's going to be something stupid. You know those people that have iPhones? They can text other people with iPhones and see if you've read the text?

PARTICIPANT 3: What?!

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah. Mine does.

PARTICIPANT 3: I didn't know that!

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah. If you open it, it says read this at this time. I'm like, "They're gonna know I'm ignoring them."

PARTICIPANT 3: This is why I hate technology.

PARTICIPANT 1: That is too much information.

PARTICIPANT 5: You can turn it off so it doesn't do that.

PARTICIPANT 3: I really hate technology these days.

PARTICIPANT 5: Nothing is private.

PARTICIPANT 3: I know! Golly! You can't even get on Facebook without everybody finding out your phone number. Somebody found out my phone number from Facebook, and I was like, "I didn't put my phone number on there, did I?"

PARTICIPANT 2: You probably did and didn't realize you didn't lock it. I had to go through and lock a bunch of stuff. I friended somebody, they may or may not actually know who I am because I don't have a picture of me on there. On my cover, I have a picture of me, but the little face thingy—

PARTICIPANT 1: Profile.

PARTICIPANT 2: It's a Tweety bird picture (laughs). It's been on there for like ever. Unless you were to scroll down, you'd have no idea who I am. I took off all of my where I am and stuff because they keep changing the privacy policy. That's one thing that I don't like. The iPhone thing? That would be the first thing that I disengage. I don't want anybody to know when I read their text.

PARTICIPANT 5: I personally, I like it because of my dad, specifically my dad. If I'm at a party or out with somebody, or I'm just driving and I can't text him back, he'll send me texts "Are you all right? Where are you? Are you okay?" blah, blah, blah. It shows up that I read his text. So he's okay. It's like "She's alive! She's just not texting me back." I like that kind of stuff. There are some people that I just don't, I would rather not text. Either I open this, and they know I'm ignoring them, or that notification will be there burning in purgatory, and I have to look at it. I can't stand having notifications on my phone, so I have to read it.

PARTICIPANT 2: You can't just clear yours before you read them?

PARTICIPANT 5: I don't think I've ever tried.

PARTICIPANT 2: I can do that on mine. Especially when my mother texts me.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: Clear! I didn't see that.

PARTICIPANT 5: Sometimes my grandma will have somebody text, and I'm like, "I know this is you, grandma. You're using another number, but I know it's you!"

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: There's some people that, well, for the most part I'm pretty good about telling people I don't want to talk to them anymore. I'm pretty good at doing that, but there are some people that just keep on bothering me. If they do that, it's just like (clap), delete their number. I have had the same phone number since I was 12. I got my first phone when I was 12.

PARTICIPANT 4: Me too.

PARTICIPANT 5: I've had the same number since I was 12, and I have not changed it. People always kill me. If you had my number at one time, you *have* my number still. It's never been any different. I probably will have it for the rest of my life.

PARTICIPANT 4: Mine is my mom. I know that's bad to say that. And Blaine's mom. My mom, she has her days. She's a very special person. I'll get it and be like, "Ugh, mom."

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah, I know. I dread getting texts from my dad.

PARTICIPANT 3: I probably shouldn't say anything, because everybody—except you two [gesturing to PARTICIPANT 4 and PARTICIPANT 5]—know my mother, but at the same time—

PARTICIPANT 4: I know your mom.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: We all know your mom. She does hair.

PARTICIPANT 2: My mother's that way, but I have to read it. If she were to text me now it's probably about my kids because I'm here, and she's got all my kids right now, bless her heart. Sometimes if I think it could be my mom, maybe I should open it.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: So I'll open it. If it's my mom, I'll answer it. If it's not my mom, then I just didn't get it. "You texted me?" (facial expression of disbelief).

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: I love that face. It says it all.

PARTICIPANT 6: I know.

RESEARCHER: You all seem to have at least one person from whom you don't want to send or receive text messaging.

(Heads nodding)

RESEARCHER: Why?

PARTICIPANT 1: A very specific one, one that did not die for like a year, is one of my husband's ex-girlfriends. She was convinced that I was a home wrecker. I was like, "dude, you broke up like a year before I even met him. How did you get my number? This is creepy." She is still saved in my phone as "do not reply" in all caps.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah, or like trippy ex-boyfriends.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: Or people that kind of liked me and I didn't kind of like them back or maybe the other way around, and now it's just kind of awkward. People like that. It's kind of like, we lost contact for a reason. Things like that. Or people asking for really super big favors when I'm really busy. Stuff like that.

PARTICIPANT 3: My sister had problems with ex-boyfriends. She said a couple of times things got weird between texts with her and this one particular boyfriend. She said that was kind of uncomfortable. For me, the couple people, not saying it's my mom, but the reason why I wouldn't answer their texts is usually because the only time they ever text me is if they need something.

PARTICIPANT 5: The favor thing.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: That is one of my number one things, is if you want a favor. That's the not only one. I have people that I won't say, they don't call me anymore because I quit answering because that's the only time they would talk to me. Now, if I saw them face-to-face, they would talk to me, but if they picked up the phone, it was always "can you do?" or "do you have?" and that makes me crazy. And then my brother, I just ignore him because he's my brother. He's really annoying. It takes a really special person to put up with him. We haven't found that person yet.

PARTICIPANT 5: There is a woman that will text me. I used to babysit for her. One time she asked me to babysit these three kids that are all babies for two hours. I don't really like children, but I said okay. They like me, I just don't really like them. If nobody spits on me, I'm good. I went to go babysit for her for two hours, and she came back eight hours later. I had been stuck there with three babies for eight hours. I don't have a kid. I don't have to take care of these children for eight hours. I don't know what they need. Then she paid me 20 dollars for it.

PARTICIPANT 4: What?!

PARTICIPANT 3: What?!

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah. Right? Every time something came up, just something little, like grocery shopping for 15 minutes, she would call me and want me to babysit for her. I have so many excuses on deck for why I don't answer her or text her back. It's ridiculous.

PARTICIPANT 3: Anyone who texts me, you know, I don't mind people asking me for a favor if it's through text at all, but particular people who text me all the time, just saying the need this or can you do this favor or whatever, it kind of gets on my nerves. I just feel like it's more polite if you're going to ask somebody, just to call them instead. I don't mind if it's every now and then, especially if it's people that I don't always associate with. If it's someone that I'm close to, and the only time they ever contact me is through a text because they need something, I'm just like, come on. When's it going to end?

PARTICIPANT 6: I hate that new relationship thing.

PARTICIPANT 3: (nodding)

PARTICIPANT 1: How awkward.

PARTICIPANT 6: When somebody just gets your number. This guy got my number, and he texted me 20 times in 20 hours. By the way, like seven or eight of those hours I was sleeping.

PARTICIPANT 2: Awkward!

PARTICIPANT 1: And how many times did you reply? Like five?

PARTICIPANT 6: Like four. I stopped when it got weird.

PARTICIPANT 4: I've gotten abusive text messages. Not like "I'm gonna beat you down," but with words. My mom was going through a time, and she would text me just all this weird stuff. How I'm terrible, and "how dare you," and "I'm lying here on my death bed," and "I'm jealous," or "you didn't come see me." Just stuff like that.

PARTICIPANT 5: Parents that say something and then put like four dots between every dramatic thing that they say. "I really loved you." Dot, dot, dot, dot. "I can't believe you betrayed me like that." Dot, dot, dot, dot. "You are no child of mine." Dot, dot, dot, dot. That makes it really dramatic.

PARTICIPANT 3: It's funny how we're all sitting here talking about how, mostly admitting that mostly the annoying people turn out to be our parents, when you'd think that, or you wonder if they're all in a room doing the same thing. You wonder if they're saying, "My children. They only text me when they need something." I mean, parents don't realize that when they start getting into texting and doing the same thing that younger people are doing, they are just as bad about it. I know plenty of adults who are way older than me, my parents included, that just text all the time, nonstop, about the most unimportant things. Then they want to spout out this stuff about "This generation! All they want to do is text!" I'm like, "Well, once you got into it, that's all you do."

PARTICIPANT 5: My dad has his phone glued to his ear all the time. "Hey, I'm on business. There's a difference." I'm like, "You're talking to my mom!"

(Laughter)

RESEARCHER: You brought up that there are some conversations that are better suited to a phone call. Are there conversations you shouldn't have over text message?

PARTICIPANT 5: Have you ever been broken up with through a text message?

PARTICIPANT 4: Oh yeah!

PARTICIPANT 5: That's something that needs to be handled through a phone call, I think, at the least. Have some dignity.

PARTICIPANT 3: That happened to me in high school. He broke up with me in a text message.

PARTICIPANT 5: That sucks.

PARTICIPANT 3: He texted me first, and then he called me.

PARTICIPANT 5: It was on my birthday, by the way.

PARTICIPANT 1: I remember that! And now you're dating him again!

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah, now I'm dating him again.

PARTICIPANT 4: When people give me directions, which you did good (addressing PARTICIPANT 1), but when people try to give me directions, or they try to give me a grocery list or something, and then you left, and then they ask you to get something else. I'm like, "Ugh. I'm already gone." Stuff like that. What bothers me the most because I don't have a lot of money is "Hey, can you pick this up?" If it's once in a while it's okay, but if it's every day, ugh. I get so mad at myself because I actually do it.

PARTICIPANT 1: Aw.

PARTICIPANT 5: My dad texted me on the way here. He was like "Go get me food." I was like, "No. I'm not doing that. I'm going to a focus group for an hour."

PARTICIPANT 1: Other conversations are like, anything about my kid that's important. Like, "Oh, her face just turned blue." I'm like "No!" That exact thing hasn't happened, but there have been certain occasions when certain people have texted something I considered important.

PARTICIPANT 4: Would it kill you to just pick up the phone and call me?

PARTICIPANT 5: Emergency stuff. You'd better call me.

PARTICIPANT 1: (nodding) Call me. I need to know now.

PARTICIPANT 3: Anything that's going to turn out to be a long conversation I don't want in a text. I'm not having a conversation through text. I actually like it if people give me directions, or if they give me times for things, or a list. I like that in a text because I can go back and look at it.

PARTICIPANT 2: That's what I like.

PARTICIPANT 3: I'm liable to forget what someone told me. If it's just a quick question that someone's asking, and you don't really want to bother with a phone call, I don't mind that in a text. But if I get someone that starts talking to me about, "I had such a hard day the other day," and it ends up being three texts long, I'm like, "Please just call me. I got things to do."

PARTICIPANT 4: Especially if you don't have an iPhone, it's hard to see emotions through text.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes, and sometimes you misunderstand things from both ends. I'll misunderstand someone, or they misunderstand me, and sometimes I have literally out loud been like "Oh! I hate phones!"

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 3: Because I had gotten to a point where I was fighting with somebody through text. Not always fighting, but sometimes there will be tension, and they start getting sarcastic. I'm like, wait a minute. Did they just misunderstand what I said?

PARTICIPANT 5: Like arguments. If I'm arguing with my mom, I prefer text. I prefer text arguing because it gives me time to calm down.

PARTICIPANT 1: She's got a point.

PARTICIPANT 5: If I'm angry in person, I just say stuff. It doesn't matter. It's not even relevant, like "Ah! I hate cows!" Just things like that. I'll get stupid sometimes if I'm just really livid at somebody. If I'm texting, and I'm fighting or arguing, I just set the phone down and say, "Let's think about this."

PARTICIPANT 1: Yes. You can just set it down and leave for a little bit.

PARTICIPANT 5: You don't have to be super confrontational. Texting, I don't have to worry about you punching me in my face.

PARTICIPANT 4: Or you can just text it, but just delete it before you hit send.

PARTICIPANT 1: That's true!

PARTICIPANT 4: You don't send it because that would be bad. That's what would end up happening to me.

PARTICIPANT 1: I've so done that! Just (pantomime typing text message with angry facial expression).

PARTICIPANT 5: Sometimes it's just a habit to click send. I would have to write it on paper instead of texting it out. I would definitely hit send.

RESEARCHER: Are there other situations that are better suited to text messaging?

PARTICIPANT 5: Awkward situations like new relationships. I'd rather talk a little bit through text messaging because if you're getting to know them, and you're in person, it's so much easier think about it before sending it. It doesn't have to be romantic, just a new friend or something. When you're in person, everybody is awkward and stuttering and all that.

PARTICIPANT 1: There's more awkward silences when you're on the phone or something. If you're texting, it's not awkward. You can just say, "Oh sorry. I had to take a shower in the last 30 minutes, and that's why I didn't answer." Not because you're like "What should I say?"

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: Texting is kind of a good icebreaker between people who don't know each other, especially when one is inviting the other to an event or something. You get their number from someone, and you need to invite them, like for baby showers or lingerie parties or anything like that. I've done that before for a friend. I didn't know her friends, but I needed to invite them because I was the host. I asked my friend for her friends' numbers, and I asked her which ones have text message. I would just text them instead of call because I didn't really know them.

When we didn't have text messaging, I would've had to call them, but we have it. It's convenient for things like that because they don't feel all weird talking to me on the phone because they don't know me, and I'm asking them to this lingerie party or bachelorette party or whatever.

PARTICIPANT 1: Also, people that you know are busy. Sometimes [PARTICIPANT 3] has her son all day, and I don't know what their schedule is, and I just have a quick question. I don't want to bother their day.

PARTICIPANT 3: It's also convenient for you to be able to get in contact with someone when you don't want to mess up their day anyhow. You don't know if they're in the middle of class. You don't know if their phone will go off. I did that with my sister when I didn't know when her classes are. It's how I initiate phone calls is through text asking if they can talk.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: There's some people that I don't want to text because I want to hear their voice. I want to know if they're lying.

PARTICIPANT 3: (laughs)

PARTICIPANT 2: Hey! There is somebody in my family, okay. She will Facebook message me, and I'm not sure whether she's lying, whether she's doing something to instigate a fight, so I want to hear your voice. Most people have a hard time lying when they speak, and they have to think about it. I get tired of reading between the lines. "Could she mean this? Or this?"

PARTICIPANT 3: That's a good point.

PARTICIPANT 2: "What will be the outcome? How will she take what I text back?"

PARTICIPANT 3: (laughs)

PARTICIPANT 2: I know texting gives you time to think about it, but when you're sitting there for 20 minutes trying to figure out how to reply because you're not sure what the tone is? She's not

dramatic, like dot, dot, dot or all caps. I did have to teach a few people that when you type all in caps, you are yelling at me. You know that, right? Please don't yell at me. But there are some people that don't text me, don't Facebook message me, I want to hear what your voice sounds like so I can tell whether you are lying to me.

PARTICIPANT 5: I feel like that's a parent thing. I feel like dad would rather text me. I moved out of my dad's house and rented a house up where I go to school at. I lived up there, so I'd be partying on the weekends and stuff. I'd go out to parties or go out with friends at two o'clock in the morning. Or I'd be at Walmart at three in the morning doing stuff. He would get really mad. "You don't need to be out partying. You should be studying." He would call me at like two o'clock in the morning to listen to my background instead of texting me. Texting I can just say, "Yeah, I'm at home," but if he calls me and says "What's that noise?" I'm like, "Uh, it's a bunch of drunk kids laughing and listening to loud music. I'm at home. I swear it's a movie."

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: So anyway, my dad would call me and hardcore listen to my background. Sometimes it really would be a movie, and I'm like "Dad, I don't know what you're tripping for. I'll send you a picture of what I'm doing." He can hear me in my car. "What are you doing in your car?" He would do it to keep tabs on me. He'll text me all day long if he knows where I'm at. He'll text me while I'm in school. He'll text me when he knows I'm at work. But when it comes to late at night or early in the morning, when he knows I could be partying or out somewhere or lying to him, he will call me just to hear.

PARTICIPANT 3: I guess when you're spying calling somebody is better than texting. You can hear the background noise, what's going on. I definitely know if I ever call my husband at work,

or if he calls me from work, I can hear typing because he works in an office. I've never thought about it that way.

PARTICIPANT 5: My friends, though, they will try to mess with me. We'll all be at my house, and I really was just sitting there playing Apples to Apples or something. No big deal. My dad would call, and they would just kind of lean over when I was on the phone with dad like, "Hey, do you got anymore drugs?"

PARTICIPANT 1: (laughs)

PARTICIPANT 5: My dad would hear it, and I'd be like, "Chill out, ya'll! You're going to get me in serious trouble or something."

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: Honestly, I think it's a parent thing. My dad, anyways, spying. "I want to know what you're up to." They want to hear your background.

PARTICIPANT 1: Meanwhile, when I'm at work I'd rather text people. I just don't have time to talk, and it so loud where I work. If any of you have ever been inside, there are blow dryers and loud laughter all the time. If I'm on the phone, it's like, "Okay, I can't hear you."

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, that's my house.

PARTICIPANT 1: I answer phones for a living, basically. I have to go to the back to hear anything. Texting is just ten times easier.

RESEARCHER: What about those little smileys? Do you use them? Do you think they're helpful?

PARTICIPANT 1: (nodding) I'm a believer in the smiley face.

PARTICIPANT 5: Emojis on your iPhone or whatever, they're not just faces. You can have animals, pants, pictures of apples. You have everything automatically set on there, so you can use whatever. I think I use them ironically.

PARTICIPANT 1: That's true.

PARTICIPANT 5: I never really mean it. I guess if I'm super happy I'll send a really cheesin' face or a heart or something, but sometimes I'll just be like "What up, Nate?" and send him a picture of a lizard.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: It doesn't really mean anything, but I send it.

PARTICIPANT 2: See, you've got the built in cheat sheet. I'm going, "Okay, I can be happy. I can be sad. I can wink at them. What are the rest of those?" I need a cheat sheet to stick on the back of my phone. "I feel, that one!" And type it in.

PARTICIPANT 5: Or like, "What are you doing?" There's an emoji of a girl getting her hair cut, so I just send that. If I don't feel like typing it out, I just send an emoji. Sometimes we just communicate with straight emojis.

PARTICIPANT 1: I just do the old colon, parenthesis.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, that's me. I don't have any, my phone's not fancy. It's a Straight Talk phone that I bought from Walmart because I'm not a technology person, so I don't have any of those. Every now and then I do the colon and parenthesis for a smiley face or a sad face. It's usually like, I really mean it. I feel like sometimes I get those from other people, I feel through the text that they don't really mean it. They just put it out of habit.

PARTICIPANT 1: I so do that.

PARTICIPANT 3: I always think, what a kid.

PARTICIPANT 1: I'm like, "Hey, what are you doing?" Smiley face!

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: It's just like, it is kind of habit.

PARTICIPANT 3: Sometimes I feel like, from specific people that I text and they text me, sometimes I feel like they put that there trying to reassure me. For example, if it is a smiley face, trying to reassure me that they're happy, but they're actually not. Do you get what I'm saying?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: That seems kind of paranoid, I guess. Usually it's from my mom.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 3: Me and my mom, if there was tension the day before because of something, the next day, if she's got something to text me, she'll be like "Okay! See you later! Smiley face!" I read that, and I'm thinking to myself, "She's just putting that there to butter me up right now."

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah (laughs).

PARTICIPANT 3: I feel like that, that sometimes people do that.

PARTICIPANT 5: Maybe this is completely just me, but if you do it, that's totally cool. It's a pet peeve to me when people put noses for their emoji. It bothers me. They put colon, *dash*, parenthesis. I'm like, quit! It's not supposed to have a nose. The original smiley face doesn't have a nose. Do not put a nose. It bothers me so bad. I like to give them eyebrows, though, like a little angry face with the V brows. I love the eyebrows.

PARTICIPANT 2: That's why I've got to have the cheat sheet. I don't know how to do the eyebrows. The one thing I hate, though, is if I use them, and it goes through, and you still have the semicolon and the parenthesis, it doesn't turn it into a face. It's like, really? What was the point? They have to look at it sideways going, "What is that one supposed to be?"

RESEARCHER: You brought up habits. What about the L-O-L habit?

PARTICIPANT 3: It is *way* over used with some people I know.

PARTICIPANT 1: You know what? I was one of those people that I was against it. If I was going to (air quotes) "laugh" while texting, I would say "ha, ha" because that got so annoying. And then, I don't know what happened to me because that just died, and I say both now, but it crept into my life.

PARTICIPANT 5: It is a very rare occasion for me to put L-O-L. I would rather "ha, ha." L-O-L? I did that when I was in like, the fourth grade.

PARTICIPANT 1: (laughs)

PARTICIPANT 5: And X-D. Did anybody else use X-D?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 5: I feel like that was a big thing. Most people don't know what that is.

PARTICIPANT 3: I don't know what that means, but I have been sent that before. Please, tell me what it is!

PARTICIPANT 5: You ever seen South Park? They're like (facial expression with closed eyes and open-mouthed smile). They close their eyes like (same facial expression).

PARTICIPANT 1: It's that face (gestures to PARTICIPANT 5).

PARTICIPANT 5: It's that face.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes, I know what you're talking about. I finally get it!

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: It's like the X are they eyes squinting or whatever. I used that a lot! Like a lot, lot, when I was in like, eighth grade. I used that and L-O-L so much! Now if I text someone, and it's supposed to be funny, we just know it's funny. We don't laugh through our texts.

PARTICIPANT 1: If it's somebody that I'm not sure they're going to get it, that's when I'm usually like "ha, ha, ha," or if they say something really funny. I'll be like, "That was hilarious."

PARTICIPANT 5: I do that. Like "L-M-A-O. Oh my God, oh my god. Ha, ha, ha, ha." I really over exaggerate it.

PARTICIPANT 3: I'm the same way as you. The only time I ever put L-O-L or "ha, ha, ha" is one, because I actually mean it, or I literally laughed out loud. Or two, it's because I may be sending a text to somebody that might not realize that what I'm saying is sarcastic, so I have to put the "ha, ha" at the end or the L-O-L, just to reassure them. "Okay, that was a joke."

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. "Just to be sure you caught that. I'm kidding."

PARTICIPANT 5: I might use an emoji to show that I'm laughing, I guess.

RESEARCHER: I'm almost out of time on this tape. Do you have any other comments about text messaging?

PARTICIPANT 1: I think that texting is still more popular amongst younger people. However, it is very handy. I would not get rid of it now.

PARTICIPANT 3: I'm the same way. I didn't text for forever. I only started texting maybe about two years ago. I think I texted a little bit in high school because I remember my ex-boyfriend texting me to break up with me, and then he called me and broke up with me over the phone. But I like to text only because it comes in handy. I would rather have conversations over the phone just because I feel like texting is taking over the world. I feel like the way you really connect with people is to actually hear their voices and stuff, but it comes in handy for different things. I got this new phone, like I said, from Walmart, and we switched to Straight Talk. Ever since then, I don't know why, I tried to fix it in my settings, it won't. It's just my phone. My phone will not alert me when I get calls or texts or anything. Lately it's been driving me insane because I have people, especially family, text me all the time, and I don't even realize it because it doesn't alert me. There've been arguments in my family over that. I'm just like, "What in the world, people?"

PARTICIPANT 2: How about after the third text, you just call me? You'll know whether I got your text.

PARTICIPANT 3: So I realize, after I've had this phone that doesn't alert me to texts, I realize how much texting has really put itself into my life. Sometimes I get so mad. I should just have never even gotten text. It took me years to get it. Other times I'm like, "I've got to figure out a way to get alerts on my phone because my life is a mess right now! People are angry at me that I don't answer their text message!"

PARTICIPANT 5: I feel like I could probably do without it. It's convenient. It's good to have, but I feel like, it's just crazy to me. From the time I got my phone when I was 12 to graduation in high school, dad had to get one of those massive unlimited texting plans because I just texted all the time. Now he'll do the really cheap, so many texts a month plans because I don't text that much anymore. It's just, it's weird. I don't know why I texted so much in high school. I don't know what I texted. I don't remember texting anybody specific. I feel like I have the same amount of friends that I had in high school that I have now. I think the thing is, I'm free more of my day. I'm not stuck in high school from eight to three everyday. During those times where I would have been stuck in school texting people in other classes, I'm actually hanging out with the people I would text. I feel like it's become a little bit less relevant in my life.

PARTICIPANT 3: That's an interesting take or perspective or whatever you want to call it. It's making me think how much I hated high school. You saying that you texted more in high school, maybe it's just because you were stuck there from eight to three. That word "stuck" makes me think, maybe kids are just blowing up their phones with text because school is terrible. That was random. I'm sorry. Maybe it's just because I was a school hater that I think that.

PARTICIPANT 5: That's why I texted so much in high school. I was like, Kim's not in this class, so let me text her. But now I hang out with Nate and Cody a lot. I can actually hang out with the people that I would be texting during the time of me being at school or whatever.

PARTICIPANT 4: I think if I didn't have text, even though I don't really text now, I'd be like "Uh. Why don't I have it?"

PARTICIPANT 1: I really feel like as much as I'm bashing on texting, I probably would really go nuts without it. It's so nice. I do love it.

PARTICIPANT 4: It's cool. You're just lame if you don't have it.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: I just wish we used it for the reason we got it. My husband is hard of hearing, and we got it so that people wouldn't call him, they would text him. I got so tired of "Here, talk to my wife," or he'll hand me off to somebody at work. It's a good thing I don't call about personal things because I totally don't want it going through them. Whereas I can text him whatever I wanted. We can both read. As long as I spell the words reasonably right, and I can find it in my autocorrect options so I know it's right, we can communicate, but we don't use it for that. I text other people more often than I text my husband. He'll call me, and I'll still be like, "Just text me." His big thing is, I have a slider because I need a full keyboard. His doesn't slide. His is like hers (gestures to PARTICIPANT 5's iPhone). He'll try to text like this (holding phone portrait orientation), instead of like this (landscape orientation). I tell him to flip it sideways, so he has a bigger keyboard. As long as you remember the question, you can answer it quicker that way. I've gotten really fast at it, actually. Just practice.

(Laughing)

PARTICIPANT 2: I know that for texting, if I did not have this slider and a full keyboard, I don't actually like this one because I have to remember to push the alternator button to get all the little blue things, whereas on my last phone I had all the numbers across the top. The other day I had it on autolock. I realized I was texting your mom (turns toward PARTICIPANT 6), and I was like, "Oh my gosh! She's going to think I'm saying a bad word!" Delete, delete, delete. Oops. I was putting in a time, and it was a series of numbers, and then I went to hit the letters, but I was still typing symbols. With my last phone with the numbers across the top, I didn't have to do that. Sometimes it's the keyboard. What you have to work with kind of affects how much you like your texting or don't like your texting, and I guess how dexterous your thumbs and brain are as to what your keyboard looks like.

PARTICIPANT 3: Maybe as adults because we have more things going on in our lives when we get older, we have children, we're in our jobs or going to college, we're just more free in a way than high school students.

PARTICIPANT 5: In high school you seriously could not, you snuck to use your phone. There's no teacher in high school that is okay with you using your phone.

PARTICIPANT 3: Maybe in the way, because high schoolers are stuck in class all day, texting makes them feel free, like they're able to get out of that.

PARTICIPANT 5: I have professors that on our syllabus are like, "Look, I don't care if you text, but if you fail the class it's your problem," so I'll text during class. I might eventually listen, but then I go back to playing Jewel Mania. But I definitely feel that I could survive in a pager world. (Laughter)

 PARTICIPANT 5: I feel like I could deal with a pager because I feel having the commitment of texting and phone calls, my dad abuses it. He's like "I could talk to [PARTICIPANT 5] all the

time!" No. If I had a pager, you'd just be able to send me an alert, and I'll just call you back when I get to it.

PARTICIPANT 2: That was really the text precursor: pagers.

PARTICIPANT 5: Everybody gets on my case so bad, like "You are the *worst* texter-backer I have ever met in my life." (Addressing PARTICIPANT 1) You texted me at, what? Like eight o'clock this morning? I'm supposed to be up, getting read for school. I rolled over and I was like, [PARTICIPANT 1] texted me. Then I'll go back to my home screen and go back to bed, and then the notification isn't there when I'm actually awake, so I forget that that text ever even happened. That happens *so* much.

PARTICIPANT 2: I'll do that.

PARTICIPANT 5: Or if I'm in a another room and I hear my phone go off, I'm in no rush to get it. Dad will call me *in class*, and he won't know my schedule or something, and he'll call me twice. I know I can't answer it, and I just think he'll text me in a little bit, and I'll tell him. So I'll have two missed calls, and then he'll text me "I'm calling the FBI right now! Where are you?" I'm like, "I'm in class! Calm down!" I'm so thankful for text messages. I would be so embarrassed if the police came looking for me one day.

PARTICIPANT 1: They would with your dad.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: He's crazy. It's a good thing you have to be missing for like, 24 hours before they can do anything. Eventually I'll get back to you. Sometimes he'll text me, or I'll try calling him, and he's calling me, so both of the lines are busy. I'll just send you a text message so he'll stop calling me. It helps handle confusion, but I feel like if I didn't have text messages, I'd be okay. It would be one less thing that I'm dealing with right now.

PARTICIPANT 2: I just have to wake up more because my brother, he was working overnight, and he'd come in the house to get something. He texted me like three times, "I hope I didn't wake you up." I said, "I don't wake up for texts. You'd better call me if you want me to wake up." It's been proven. They have called me. My husband runs a wrecker service. They have called me, and I have answered on autopilot and reached over and shook my husband to wake him up. In the morning, he'll tell me "We got like two last night. Don't you remember?" I look through my phone, and it's like "Oh yeah. You're right. We did get two." But I don't remember! I just answered the phone, but if you text me, it just pings. The alarm going off or the phone ringing is all that is going to wake me.

PARTICIPANT 5: I set my phone to "do not disturb" before I go to bed. The only thing it'll alert me on is my alarm clock, not a text or a phone call or any kind of calendar alert. It all shows up, it just doesn't alert me for it. All it does is goes off or my alarm. That's all I really need in life. (Ran out of tape)

Focus Group 2M

RESEARCHER: How often do you usually text?

PARTICIPANT 2: Every day.

PARTICIPANT 3: Multiple times a day.

PARTICIPANT 4: Every day. Multiple times a day. Multiple times a minute.

PARTICIPANT 6: My wife is the only person I text, unless I'm texting [PARTICIPANT 1] or something, which is rare. But if my wife is with me, I text nobody. I don't even have my phone on me.

PARTICIPANT 5: As needed.

PARTICIPANT 2: Pretty willy-nilly about when I use it. Sometimes I'll be like "Yeah!" and other times I'm like "No."

PARTICIPANT 6: Sometimes he types random numbers in his phone, then texts to see if he can get a response.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

RESEARCHER: Is there a time of day that you are more likely or less likely to text?

PARTICIPANT 5: Noon to evening.

PARTICIPANT 4: Any time of day.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, that's you.

PARTICIPANT 1: Just typically whenever I get a text message sent to me, I immediately respond. I don't often send a text to begin with. I mean, I do sometimes. I don't really have a time, though. I guess it just doesn't really matter. The good thing about text messaging probably would be that you can send a text message to someone, whether it's early or it's late because it's not going to wake them up. It dings one time or whatever. If you call late or call early, you might be afraid to wake somebody up or whatever, you know. It's convenient for that reason.

PARTICIPANT 2: Usually for me, I'm not a morning person. Don't talk to me in the morning. Well, for the most part, unless you are saying good morning. "Good morning!" That's cool.

RESEARCHER: What about the rest of the day?

PARTICIPANT 2: The afternoon is a nice little area, and then I take a break, then at nighttime. I'm very active at night. I'm nocturnal.

PARTICIPANT 5: I text from around noon until some time in the evening. I text as needed, usually whenever I receive a message. Sometimes to give a message if I'm not sure if they, well if I left a message on their voice-mail and you just want to get the message through.

PARTICIPANT 3: Just depending on what I'm doing. If I'm at work, I try to stay off the phone, but if somebody needs something. If I'm in school, it just depends on what's going on. I don't just text to conversate [sic] a whole lot.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah, that's me.

PARTICIPANT 6: I probably text more in the evening. I can't have my cell phone at work, so from like three to eleven most nights you can't get to me. But I prefer texting over calling because I don't talk on the phone. I'd rather send a text, and you get back with me when you can. It's cool. It's all right. But I prefer texting to talking on the phone.

RESEARCHER: Does anybody else share that opinion?

PARTICIPANT 2: (no hesitation) Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 4 : Yeah.

RESEARCHER: Why?

PARTICIPANT 2: Because I'll get back to you. I don't know. It's like "I'm doing something. Leave me alone." You know, it's frustrating.

PARTICIPANT 1: There's a generational gap. I think I'm on the brink of it. When I was growing up, I didn't have a cell phone, and there wasn't a lot of people who had cell phones. So I didn't text. You know, we called when we had to do something. So I don't mind talking on the phone, and I don't mind texting. If you go to business school and you learn etiquette, you learn that if you get a text, you know, return a text. But if you get an e-mail, return an e-mail. If you get a phone call, and somebody leaves you a voice-mail, call them back, don't text them. It's proper etiquette. I kind of follow that, so I don't mind talking on the phone. But text, I see the real convenience of it. But it's funny, because I see people older than me, they call, and the people younger than me, they text. So I'm right in the middle of it, you know.

RESEARCHER: Are there some conversations that are better suited to a text message or a phone call?

PARTICIPANT 2: Probably.

PARTICIPANT 6: If you are arguing, it's best to do it on the phone because in a text you can't get tone of voice or sarcasm. Or when you're joking.

PARTICIPANT 2: People take you literally.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah, don't do that. Emoticons these days help, but usually it's not good if you're joking. They don't get the sarcasm in your tone or anything.

PARTICIPANT 5: One of the few times I think texting is usable is when you're at the store, and they ask you for extra items. Sometimes it's best to be able to look over the list. They text you, and it's better than trying to remember everything.

RESEARCHER: Are there conversations you shouldn't have over text message?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 4: Anything you know you don't want anyone else to see.

PARTICIPANT 2: I won't take a poop on the phone. I'm just saying.

PARTICIPANT 3: If it's important, then call me.

PARTICIPANT 6: (addressing PARTICIPANT 2) Wait a minute, are you pooping directly on the phone?

PARTICIPANT 2: No like talking on the phone while pooping.

PARTICIPANT 6: Well good.

PARTICIPANT 1: Okay. Thanks for the clarification.

PARTICIPANT 6: When people call me, like bill collectors or whatever, and I'm like (pantomime talking on telephone) "Yeah, I'm on the toilet right now, but go ahead please. My only private time in my day, and you ruined it."

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 3: If it's something important, call me; don't text me, and then wait 20 minutes to get me back. Let's just figure this out or whatever.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah, if it's urgent it's best to call someone. If they look at a text message, immediately in your mind you think it's not urgent. But if someone's calling you, in your mind it's like "well, they might need to talk to me." A text message, you can just push view later, and it's done with. But it's harder it hit ignore. Ignore seems a little ruder.

RESEARCHER: What kinds of people do you usually text? Friends? Family? Coworkers? Someone else?

PARTICIPANT 5: Family. Home teacher. Mainly family.

PARTICIPANT 6: KGB, the Knowledge Generation Bureau thing. It's like, you know, you text it and ask weird questions.

PARTICIPANT 2: You're retarded.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah, but you learn a whole bunch of facts. Usually when I'm not dating a girl.

PARTICIPANT 1: Did you say KGB? (incredulous expression)

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah. Knowledge Generation Bureau or whatever it is.

PARTICIPANT 1: I thought you were talking about the actual KGB. You don't want them texting you. They've got control over you. No more calls for [PARTICIPANT 6].

PARTICIPANT 4: Family. Friends.

PARTICIPANT 3: Family, friends. Anybody, really.

PARTICIPANT 2: The opposite sex. And [PARTICIPANT 4].

PARTICIPANT 6: Today I texted a stranger.

PARTICIPANT 5: Well, in order to text a person, you have to have their number. I mean, you're not going to text a stranger.

RESEARCHER: Sure, but do you text coworkers more often than you text friends? Or do you text family the most?

PARTICIPANT 4: Coworkers. It might not be important, but I want them to know about it, when I work for them.

PARTICIPANT 2: You never call me.

PARTICIPANT 5: That is just so true.

RESEARCHER: Are there any other situations that are better suited to text?

PARTICIPANT 1: When you're trying to get a telephone number from someone else. If you just get a text, you can click on it and dial it from there. You don't even have to put it in. So that's definitely more convenient to get someone's contact info.

PARTICIPANT 2: I've also done this at a store or something. (Pantomime talking on telephone) "What are you talking about?!" If you're trying to find something for somebody, you just take a picture of it and you send it. (Pantomime typing on cell phone) "Is this what you're talking about?"

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah. I do that. So much easier.

PARTICIPANT 6: In these times, the way texting works if you have a bank account, they can text you notifications. I got a text the other day that I needed to call because it was the little the secure place about a transaction, you know. I ordered something the other day that people, they don't really order. It's a personal thing, but they called to make sure it was me, and they asked

me a bunch of security questions. Nothing inappropriate. It was one of those specials, like a video order.

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't want to know.

PARTICIPANT 6: It was a diet pill! It's diet medicine.

PARTICIPANT 2: Nah. I'm sure. I don't want to know any more.

RESEARCHER: So you like texting messaging for information? Is that right?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: (nods)

RESEARCHER: What about social purposes?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yes.

PARTICIPANT 5: Some, yes. Most often not.

PARTICIPANT 2: Work and social entertainment.

PARTICIPANT 5: I think about it as mostly social.

RESEARCHER: You mentioned entertainment.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yes.

RESEARCHER: So do you text when you're bored? When you need something to do?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yes and yes.

PARTICIPANT 5: Text jokes.

PARTICIPANT 4: If you're trying not to fall asleep, you text someone.

PARTICIPANT 3: Or look at something on YouTube.

PARTICIPANT 1: I feel like I'm on the other side of the generational gap there. I use it for relaying information, getting information. I don't use it for social purposes very often. I have other things that interest me besides text messaging.

PARTICIPANT 2: How often do you text your wife? Every day?

PARTICIPANT 5: That could count as social.

PARTICIPANT 1: No, not everyday.

PARTICIPANT 2: You brute! You brute!

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, I work every day, and I call her multiple times a day. And I see her

everyday.

PARTICIPANT 6: When you speak to the wife everyday you don't want to text her every minute of

every day. When you get a break, it's nice to have a break sometimes.

PARTICIPANT 1: I hope your wife doesn't see this.

PARTICIPANT 6: (addressing RESEARCHER) Don't show my wife. I love my wife. I love her to

death. I love talking to her. I love being with her.

RESEARCHER: Are there people you would rather not text?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yes.

PARTICIPANT 6: The real KGB.

(Laughter)

RESEARCHER: Why?

PARTICIPANT 2: Because that, that's suspect.

PARTICIPANT 6: There are some people that…like I have a friend, that if you text him, he won't

stop texting.

PARTICIPANT 3: (nods) Yeah. They just won't shut up.

PARTICIPANT 2: Annoyance. Ex-girlfriends.

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah. My question is to each one of you that texts for entertainment or for social purposes. You do that to other people. So you're probably thinking, "Why is this other guy not texting me back? I'm just trying to text him."

PARTICIPANT 3: You can usually tell when somebody is getting aggravated. They'll get real sharp with it.

PARTICIPANT 2: You got limitations. You can't sit there and time it. Like, okay, it's been about 30 seconds or a minute. I got to send another one. (Pantomime typing text message) "You still alive? You okay over there?"

PARTICIPANT 3: I hate it when they resend. Like they don't get a response, so they keep sending the same message.

PARTICIPANT 6: It's like, "Why do you do that?" It's like my phone doesn't automatically delete a text you sent three minutes ago.

PARTICIPANT 3: These newer phones, they've got it now where you can see if the message has been read. So it's like, "I know you read my text message, so why didn't you answer?"

PARTICIPANT 6: That's one of the great things if someone sends you a text message, like they're asking you to do something, and you forget, you can just be like "Oh, I didn't get it." If you leave a voice mail, it's harder to believe you didn't get it.

PARTICIPANT 5: I have a question. What would count as social texting? Would it be to pick someone up? To get something from the library?

PARTICIPANT 2: No, no.

PARTICIPANT 5: In that case, I do not do much social texting. I have your [addressing PARTICIPANT 2] old cell phone, and occasionally I get these weird texts from people. (Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: What kind?

PARTICIPANT 2: What kind of weird texts? I'm curious.

PARTICIPANT 5: All right. (pauses)

PARTICIPANT 2: No, I don't want to know. Don't say it.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: I'm trying to remember.

PARTICIPANT 2: No, no, don't say anything.

PARTICIPANT 5: Okay, "How do you use a Ouija board?"

PARTICIPANT 2: What?!

PARTICIPANT 3: A Ouji board?

PARTICIPANT 5: One of those weird boards with all the alphabet on it.

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh.

PARTICIPANT 5: Ah, "What does my boyfriend think of me?"

PARTICIPANT 2: Ha, I don't know. Tell 'em that: I don't know.

PARTICIPANT 5: "Did you see this on this website?"

PARTICIPANT 1: But do you reply to those text messages? That's the real question.

PARTICIPANT 5: Usually I just delete them. Let's see, I text "quit bugging me,"

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: Or "how should I know?"

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: Just text them "wrong person."

PARTICIPANT 5: It's doesn't stop them.

PARTICIPANT 3: Text "stop."

PARTICIPANT 6: Sometimes I'll text a friend, it happened the other day I was texting an old friend, and this person was like "Who are you?" I was like, yeah, I got a wrong number.

PARTICIPANT 4: The same person keeps texting me. They're like "Jameel! When we gonna hook up? Jameel! Dude!"

PARTICIPANT 2: Jameel! (laughs)

PARTICIPANT 6: Have you ever texted somebody you haven't texted in a while? Don't put anything personal on there. Just say "Hey, this is so-and-so."

PARTICIPANT 1: I sent [PARTICIPANT 6] a text just a few weeks back, and he replied to me thinking he was sending a text to his wife. He called me baby. And I was like "Oh no, [PARTICIPANT 6], I didn't know you felt that way."

PARTICIPANT 6: You never texted me back, bro. I thought I replied to a text to my wife and one to his, but I just send the one to my wife, that was actually to him. I looked back, and I was like why didn't it send? My wife hadn't texted me back, either. I looked, and I was like I hadn't send anything to her, it was sent to him. I was like, ah man.

PARTICIPANT 1: It must run in you guys family or something.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah, my wife told me that story (laughter). I miss your face (more laughter).

PARTICIPANT 1: Your dad texted me one time. He texted me, and it said, "I miss your face." That was all it said, thank goodness. I replied to him, and I said, "I miss yours too. I'll see you later tonight at church" (laughs).

(Laughter)

RESEARCHER: So there are some people you don't like to text because they won't stop texting, right?

PARTICIPANT 6: Yep.

PARTICIPANT 2: Uh-huh

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah.

RESEARCHER: Is there anything else that bothers you when texting?

PARTICIPANT 6: So much slang. Like these little three letter things: like O-G-O-D-C-O-P-D-F-S-T-A-T or whatever.

PARTICIPANT 4: People using numbers for letters.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, I hate that! It drives me nuts!

PARTICIPANT 5: I can't even understand that.

PARTICIPANT 1: (laughs)

PARTICIPANT 2: What?

PARTICIPANT 1: Nothing. Just you guys.

PARTICIPANT 2: You know poo nanny? [sic]

PARTICIPANT 4: Yes! It took me two hours to read her message one time.

PARTICIPANT 2: It doesn't take me that long, but I just hate it. You just stand there, going *why*?

PARTICIPANT 3: I don't like it when people text in paragraphs. Don't send me a long text message.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah, if it's long, call. I don't want to read a novel written by John Grisham over text.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: I don't understand any of the lingo that's used. I've a good feeling that there's not as many people laughing out loud or "lol"ing (pronounced lulling).

PARTICIPANT 6: Except the lol cats. Those are hilarious. The lol cats. I love 'em.

PARTICIPANT 3: They got emojis now. The little faces.

PARTICIPANT 1: They're like the smiles and winks and stuff.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, and they've got kisses and stuff. I put those on my texts.

PARTICIPANT 6: When you've got a Windows phone, mine just comes with it. You can just hit a little smiley face. There's a bunch of them. You can flip through, and like there's symbols. Like airplanes and—

PARTICIPANT 1: One with tears coming down, but it's smiling.

PARTICIPANT 2: It's smiling!

PARTICIPANT 6: There's one, it looks like poo.

PARTICIPANT 1: It looks like poo?

PARTICIPANT 6: It looks like poo.

PARTICIPANT 1: And it's smiling?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: It's smiling!

PARTICIPANT 6: No, no, mine's not smiling.

PARTICIPANT 2: Mine smiles. It's like, "I'm happy to see you."

PARTICIPANT 3: Those little emojis we're talking about, I send like 50 of 'em in one text message.

PARTICIPANT 6: I love it because when my wife will text me like, "what are you doing?" and I'll just send that one. She's like, "Ew, that's gross."

PARTICIPANT 1: Wow. Just wow. I mean, I probably have that. I have a smart phone, but I've never looked for those to be able to answer a text that way.

RESEARCHER: So there are abbreviations you don't like. Are there any abbreviations you use?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yes.

PARTICIPANT 3: L-O-L. J-K.

PARTICIPANT 2: J-K.

PARTICIPANT 6: I-D-K and O-T-W normally for on the way. I-D-C for I don't care. My sister texts me "Can you believe what so-and-so said?" I-D-C.

PARTICIPANT 4: G-T-G.

PARTICIPANT 3: Got to go.

PARTICIPANT 6: T-T-Y-L. Like, "hey babe, I'm going to work. T-T-Y-L."

PARTICIPANT 3: I just say bye.

PARTICIPANT 2: Deuces!

PARTICIPANT 3: Just bye. Don't text me back.

PARTICIPANT 6: When you text someone and say "Okay," and then they text you back "Okay," what's the point? Usually okay is the end of it. Are you okay with me being okay about that? I don't understand.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: The only good response to end a text message is 10-4. You know they received it. You know it's over. That's the easiest way.

PARTICIPANT 6: (laughs)

RESEARCHER: You said that people usually aren't laughing out loud?

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, I mean, you're just sitting there lying to me. You know what I mean? I thought we were friends.

PARTICIPANT 5: One I don't like is O-M-G.

PARTICIPANT 1: Right. That can be offensive.

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh my gosh!

PARTICIPANT 6: I say oh my goodness. O-M-G-D-N-S. Oh my goodness.

PARTICIPANT 5: Yeah, I like that.

PARTICIPANT 2: You're retarded.

PARTICIPANT 5: What?

(Laughter)

RESEARCHER: You brought up smiley faces and emojis earlier. How many of you use those?

PARTICIPANT 3: Sometimes.

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't use them that much.

PARTICIPANT 1: I couldn't lay my hand on the bible and say I've never used one, but it does not come to my memory that I have ever texted a smiley face.

PARTICIPANT 3: Everybody texts them at least once.

PARTICIPANT 6: (addressing PARTICIPANT 1) I think you've texted me a winky face before. I don't know.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: I know haven't done that. I can definitely lay my hand on a bible and say I've never texted anyone a winky face.

PARTICIPANT 2: I love how you can say "winky face," and we all know what you are talking about.

PARTICIPANT 6: What's crazy is that my car will read text messages to me when I get them. When somebody sends a winky face, my car knows it's a winky face. My car's like "All right, see you later. Winky face!" (laughs) And I'm like what?! How did you know that? You're a

computer (laughs). It's crazy. I figured it would be like "semicolon, half of an apostrophe," you know?

RESEARCHER: Are there situations where you think the smileys and emojis help get your point across?

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh, people take them seriously?! (incredulous facial expression)

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah. Some people.

PARTICIPANT 1: What?

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: Some people say "I'm mad, mad face." If you're seriously mad, why would you—

PARTICIPANT 1: Yeah, no. You cannot take a little round, red face and be "I'm mad. I'm fixing to send this." Nobody in the world can be serious when they say that.

PARTICIPANT 4: If I get mad at somebody for saying something, I just put "dot, dot, dot, dot." Send.

PARTICIPANT 3: If I get mad at somebody, I just go (pantomime typing text message) dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, and send.

PARTICIPANT 1: Man, I gotta catch up.

PARTICIPANT 3: If you're on the emoji list, you send the little devil face.

RESEARCHER: Do you ever dislike it when other people use emojis?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, when they're angry.

PARTICIPANT 4: When they over use them.

PARTICIPANT 6: Sometimes you get a message, and it's like four emojis. It's like "I was happy, then I got sad, then I got kind of mad, then I was okay again, then I was like whatever." I think that's the one with the straight mouth, whatever.

PARTICIPANT 1: Would someone please spell emojis?

PARTICIPANT 3: Couldn't tell you.

PARTICIPANT 2: I don't want to.

PARTICIPANT 1: What does that even mean? Is that a real word? "Emoji"?

PARTICIPANT 2: Actually I could spell it.

PARTICIPANT 6: I've heard it called an emoticon.

PARTICIPANT 3: I think the difference is this: the emoticon is the one with literally a colon and a dash and a parenthesis. The emoji is the actual round little circle face.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, the little face.

RESEARCHER: So people who don't have smart phones send emoticons?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 1: I think I'm going to take a picture of my face smiling send it as an emoji.

PARTICIPANT 6: You should do this, too (angry facial expression) when you're mad. (Pantomime typing text message) "I'm so mad at you right now!" Like, "Baby, I want chicken," but she's already making pork chops. Send her (angry facial expression).

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: Oh my. I'm really going to.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: That's pretty hilarious.

PARTICIPANT 6: It's a genius idea.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: That's a good one.

RESEARCHER: Is there anything you do differently when you're texting someone of the opposite gender?

 PARTICIPANT 3: Winky face.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: I text three people, four people of the opposite sex: my wife, my mother, my mother-in-law, my sister, and you (addressing RESEARCHER). Five. Wait, I don't have your number. Four people. And [PARTICIPANT 2]. Five. I'm just kidding, man.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 2: You never text me.

PARTICIPANT 6: I never text you? That's your response? You should say, "I'm not the opposite sex."

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh dang.

PARTICIPANT 6: So yeah, I don't text many people. Back when I was dating, I would text someone, and you would proofread, like make sure there's no spelling errors.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, for real.

PARTICIPANT 6: If the chick you were talking to was kind of high class or smart, you'd make sure your punctuation was correct and everything. Make sure it sounds good.

PARTICIPANT 1: Something about that: If you refer to her as a "chick," she was not high class.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: Good point.

PARTICIPANT 2: Touché.

PARTICIPANT 6: I would never say like, when a girl texts you, like "Hey, what up, chick."

PARTICIPANT 3: I text 'em "Hey, boo."

RESEARCHER: Do any of the rest of you agree with the comment about grammar?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 2: I mean, like yeah. If they're somebody that you like. Even if you like them a little bit more, they could still be rock stupid, but you still want to seem smart.

PARTICIPANT 1: (laughs)

PARTICIPANT 2: What?

PARTICIPANT 1: Even with your emojis and your L-O-Ls and whatever, whenever you are texting someone of the opposite sex, do you then not use that and write out the whole word? Like, Y-O-U and do you say, "I'm laughing out loudly"?

PARTICIPANT 2: No, no.

PARTICIPANT 1: Then you're not checking for grammar.

PARTICIPANT 2: No, not like that.

PARTICIPANT 4: At first, I don't use it, but then I just do whatever.

PARTICIPANT 3: I still use L-O-L and all that. I just type it and send it.

PARTICIPANT 1: I like this guy. He knows what's going on. He doesn't change for women.

PARTICIPANT 6: When I got to a certain age, I didn't change for women, either. But,

PARTICIPANT 2: But?

PARTICIPANT 6: I always misspell stuff horrible. If you see my Facebook statuses, they're horrible because I got pudgy fingers and this little touch screen phone. I always hit the wrong

key. And my wife is like, why don't you just repost? And I'm like "ain't nobody got time for that!" You know?

(Laughter)

RESEARCHER: So, for girls you will proofread, but not for anybody else?

PARTICIPANT 4: Only for a certain time. I get lazy.

PARTICIPANT 2: Well, it's only for like a limited time. And after that, it's just like, "Well, I put a J in there," but send it anyway.

PARTICIPANT 6: When you're in the courting phase.

PARTICIPANT 3: If they don't understand what I'm saying, they'll text back with a question mark.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 3: And we'll figure it out from there.

PARTICIPANT 4: There was one girl. She always made fun of my spelling. She was one of them that spelled everything out. "Your spelling's horrible!" "Just has a T in it." I was like, well, it's a text. It's okay. Instead of putting J-U-S-T, I would just put J-U-S.

PARTICIPANT 6: (laughs) Just has a T in it. I love it, man. I love it (laughs).

RESEARCHER: Do others correct you on your grammar often?

PARTICIPANT 2: No, not really.

PARTICIPANT 3: Most of the time, you can kind of tell what somebody is trying to say.

PARTICIPANT 6: My thing is, people will try and tell me, "You don't use punctuation," and I'm like, "I'm not writing an essay, here. It's a stupid status. It's not formal. I don't care, you know? I got 30 seconds to get this out. This is what you get." I'm not out to impress anyone. I'm not like Benjamin Franklin, some incredible smart guy with a kite.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 5: Well, texting. I would rather get a text while driving than an actual phone call. That means I can look at it later.

PARTICIPANT 2: Plus, it's illegal (makes sound simulating car skidding off road).

PARTICIPANT 1: That's what he said. That he can look at it later.

PARTICIPANT 2: Oh, my bad.

PARTICIPANT 3: I got it mastered. You hold it where the wheel's at and you can look up and back and check the speedometer (pantomimes holding phone by steering wheel).

PARTICIPANT 5: Well, I don't.

PARTICIPANT 6: That's awesome.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, we know—

PARTICIPANT 3: My problem is I'd rather just talk to 'em while I'm driving.

PARTICIPANT 2: I'm not passing you on the highway.

RESEARCHER: You said you like that you can look at it later. Does that come in handy in other situations?

PARTICIPANT 2: All the time.

PARTICIPANT 5: So long as it isn't pressing information.

PARTICIPANT 6: Well, I think it's a silly thing some people have on their phones, some phones come that you can tell when someone opens a message. That's not fair. Because if you open it, and you read it, and you're like "I'm not going to reply right now."

PARTICIPANT 2: You're caught.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah, because they know you opened it!

PARTICIPANT 3: Yeah, you can see what time they read it. They read it at 7:55. Five minutes later, it's like "Why didn't you text me back yet?"

PARTICIPANT 6: You can't say you didn't get it.

PARTICIPANT 2: Right, like "Yeah, you did."

PARTICIPANT 1: Some tech nerd developed the program for that and never got replies to his text messages. He's like "I'm going to find out!"

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: Cruel world.

PARTICIPANT 3: The response to that is, "I really didn't want to talk to you, but I didn't want to hurt your feelings."

PARTICIPANT 6: And then he gets more depressed.

PARTICIPANT 4: Should have just left it alone.

PARTICIPANT 1: You were talking about grammar a little bit earlier, this is a result from people text messaging. It's just that people's grammar in general is worse because of the way they use it in a text message. You can see it if anybody ever jots something down (pantomimes writing), it's pretty rough. I don't expect everyone to be students of grammar, but (pauses) just has a T in it.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 3: Do you write it like that?

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah, I do. I caught myself when I was talking to colleges when I was in high school. If I'd e-mail the lady, I'd e-mail it like a text. I know she probably looked at it like, "Oh you want to get to college, but you can't put punctuation right?" So I tried to remember to do that if I'm texting anyone formally.

PARTICIPANT 6: It's kind of sad that this generation has to remind themselves to write correctly. Like, oh yeah, I'm not texting. I got to do things right. It's kind of crazy.

PARTICIPANT 5: I don't like the tiny buttons.

PARTICIPANT 6: We went from writing with quill and ink to this.

PARTICIPANT 1: I know that everyone is like, you know, it's easy. It's just convenient. This isn't an essay (motions to PARTICIPANT 6). I'm not Benjamin Franklin. All that's true, and I'm not trying to be Benjamin Franklin, and I'm not trying to be religious, but the scriptures talk about language and having the written language, and how people went down certain paths because they lost their written languages. I mean, English is going that way.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: There's actually a dictionary now for it, I think.

PARTICIPANT 2: "Why you do dat?"

PARTICIPANT 4: "How you is?"

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, for real.

PARTICIPANT 1: Do you speak that way?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT 6: I don't speak that way.

PARTICIPANT 1: When someone's talking to you, you just say lol?

PARTICIPANT 6: It's going to get there in 20 years.

PARTICIPANT 2: Probably.

PARTICIPANT 3: R-O-F-L.

PARTICIPANT 6: L-O-L-T-S-F. That's so funny.

RESEARCHER: Anything else you'd like to say?

PARTICIPANT 2: Good pizza.

RESEARCHER: Good. Anything about text messaging?

PARTICIPANT 5: As I said, I do not like the small buttons for texting. You use your thumb all the time. It just takes a while for me. I remember hearing on the news once how teenagers were developing arthritis from all the texting they do.

PARTICIPANT 1: (laughs)

RESEARCHER: Really?

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah. Actually.

PARTICIPANT 3: They text like nonstop. They send like 5,000 text messages in a day.

PARTICIPANT 6: There are people who text a lot. I'll send, on a really good day, 20 text messages. On a really, really good day.

PARTICIPANT 1: On the radio, some guy was complaining to Sprint or Verizon or someone. His daughter had texted, I don't know how many. At the time, this was probably four or five months ago, I calculated how many that would be per day. She could have done nothing else except text all day long. I don't care how quick she was. It was several thousand dollars worth of a phone bill.

PARTICIPANT 2: Wow.

PARTICIPANT 6: They have competitions now.

PARTICIPANT 3: Some of these people now text so much that they never even look down. They just type, and they know what it is.

PARTICIPANT 6: I worked for Verizon. Part of my job was to text other stores, "Do y'all have this product or whatever." Or ask them questions about a product or something. I would get to where it was important to answer other stores back, so I could text in my pocket. I had a phone with buttons. You can feel the five button, and you can go around. I would be talking with a customer and texting this person back in my pocket. It was, it's just weird. They probably knew I was

texting because I couldn't keep the conversation up perfectly. I'd just space out and be like, "What did you say? What'd you say again, sir?"

PARTICIPANT 2: (addressing PARTICIPANT 6) Actually Potter, you know Potter?

PARTICIPANT 6: Mm-hm.

PARTICIPANT 2: He used to, he went through like five phones. Every time he got a new phone, he would drop it the same day and break the screen, so it would go black. But he still used it! He knew what he was saying, kind of, doing what you were saying. Just going around the five.

PARTICIPANT 5: How did he get text messages, then?

PARTICIPANT 2: There was a white piece in the corner, and he would do space. He would add spaces or delete it until he saw the whole thing. Really.

PARTICIPANT 1: Just call.

PARTICIPANT 5: I've got an idea. Smart phones are becoming more, cell phones are becoming more like computers. Here's an idea for an app: spell check.

PARTICIPANT 2: Already exists, buddy.

PARTICIPANT 3: Some of 'em got it where you type words, and it fixes it for you.

PARTICIPANT 6: Autocorrect can really mess you up.

PARTICIPANT 4: Yeah, autocorrect.

PARTICIPANT 2: Yeah, it does.

PARTICIPANT 6: Autocorrect is bad.

PARTICIPANT 2: Autocorrect, man.

PARTICIPANT 5: I said spell check, not autocorrect.

PARTICIPANT 2: Well, that's basically what autocorrect is, but it changes it for you.

PARTICIPANT 1: Recently a guy gave a talk, like four, five minutes long entitled Smart Phones, Dumb People. It was very interesting. It made me think. I don't know if you guys have ever seen the Disney Pixar Motion Picture Wall-E, the little robot. The people have got their little screens and everything. They're just sitting there (pantomimes using a touch screen). I saw it sometimes when I went over to my mother's house, and there's a bunch of little kids and everything. They're all on phones and iPads and stuff. Nobody was running around playing. They're all just like (pantomimes using a touch screen).

PARTICIPANT 6: It kills me when 9-year-olds have their own cell phone. Who are they texting? Who are they calling?

PARTICIPANT 2: Who is that important that they need to talk to?

PARTICIPANT 6: Well, what if I need to get a hold of my kid? Okay, if your kid is nine years old, and he's not with you he needs to be one of three places: at school, at home, or with a friend. Their parents should be around, and you should have their parents' phone number.

PARTICIPANT 2: I didn't get a phone until I was 18.

PARTICIPANT 4: We used to play outside when we were kids. Now they stay inside and play with their phones.

PARTICIPANT 6: It's ridiculous.

PARTICIPANT 2: And I paid for my own phone.

PARTICIPANT 6: I was 16, and I had to buy my own Southern Link.

PARTICIPANT 4: I had one too.

PARTICIPANT 1: Those are so bad.

PARTICIPANT 6: I wish I could go back to the Link, man. You kidding me?

PARTICIPANT 1: No I'm not kidding you. You weren't a cop then. There's no way anybody needed a walkie-talkie that was that loud.

PARTICIPANT 6: Oh whatever. My Southern Link I had back when it was this big (gesture indicating about 6 inches), and the antenna was this big (gesture indicating about 12 inches). In school you couldn't have them. I put in my back pocket with the antenna stuck out. They noticed it like one time. "What's that in your back pocket?" I was like, "I don't know, it's a radio."

PARTICIPANT 4: Did you ever have it go off in class? (makes beeping sound)

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: Ha, yeah.

PARTICIPANT 4: "Whatcha doing?"

PARTICIPANT 2: "Who said that?"

PARTICIPANT 4: And you just look around like you don't know what happened.

PARTICIPANT 6: Or if a person doesn't have service you hear (persistent beeping sound).

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 1: That's classic.

PARTICIPANT 3: Go back to the Link. Ha-ha.

PARTICIPANT 6: Verizon actually tried to do that.

PARTICIPANT 3: Some phones have push to talk on them.

PARTICIPANT 1: It has its benefits: cops, construction workers. There's a use for it, but whenever I'm going grocery shopping, or I'm standing somewhere, there's no need for me to hear his Southern Link, you know? That was a nightmare. Oh, I hated those things.

PARTICIPANT 6: "Don't forget the Preparation H, honey!"

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT 6: (quietly, as if speaking into a walkie-talkie) 10-4.

(Laughter)

Researcher: Any other comments you'd like to make about text messaging?

(Heads shaking)

Researcher: Thank you for coming and participating.