

# AT&T:

## the last text

Yeah

Where r

Yeah T

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## SUMMARY

Texting while driving is more dangerous than driving while intoxicated.

As category leader, AT&T committed to take a stance; igniting genuine acceptance of the problem, and inciting real behavior change.

We seized an opportunity to shape the formative habits of a generation who were just beginning to drive by trivializing the text message, not demonizing the texter.

The thought at the heart of it: was your last text worth dying for?

Our campaign broke down youth's sense of invincibility with real stories of people whose lives had been destroyed, and exposed the trivial little texts that caused the destruction.

Social norms change slowly. But by stirring public debate with a powerful documentary, and providing tools for young people to socially declare their allegiance to our cause, we accelerated this change dramatically.

The many facets of our campaign are now embedded in culture and community alike:

Driving institutional change, our documentary is now used by driving schools and policy makers.

And driving social change, our children are taking the Texting While Driving pledge, denouncing the behavior in front of their peers, and evangelizing our cause.

# AT&T: the last text

## A harmless little killer

16,000 people in the U.S. died in cars between 2002 and 2007.

Each of these deaths was probably avoidable.

Were they drinking?

On drugs?

Speeding?

No.

They were texting on their phones.

In fact, one harmless little text is much more likely to cause a traffic accident than a drunk driver.

Yet in 2009, an estimated 26% of the population was texting while driving.

And while drunk driving was both socially and legally unacceptable, texting was still in its formative years in terms of laws, public opinion, and education. And the problem would get worse as texting overtook talking as the natural, everyday method of communicating. In 2009, 473 billion texts were sent across the country on AT&T networks alone. By 2011, it had doubled to 854 billion.

The problem is exacerbated in a generation for whom texting plays so fundamental a part of life, helping kids to flirt, boast, gossip, tease, hang out, confess. Not having their phones within reach is tantamount to not breathing. And when they receive a text, reaching for their phone is a Pavlovian response.

***"I'd rather give up, like, a kidney, than my phone."*** – Phillipa, 16 years old

In fact, given a car, driver's license, and cell phone are what give kids their freedom and independence, it's really no surprise that 60% of 18–24-year-olds admit to texting while driving.

As the category leader, AT&T needed to take a stand.

## The Challenge:

### Create a new generation of young people

It took 30 years to get people to realize that drinking and driving isn't a good idea and to happily condemn it publicly. How could we accelerate this for texting and driving?

Bad habits are hard to break. But rather than trying to break a habit, what if we tackled the nascent habit in its formative years – before it even became a habit?

We decided we had to focus on 16–21-year-old youth, just beginning to drive, whose behavior and habits behind the wheel were yet to fully develop.

## The Insight:

### Interrogating the text, not the texter

It's a truism that prohibition isn't a great way to get young people to do anything, so we set out to see what we could do to help them realize for themselves that texting while driving was a bad thing.

Sitting down and talking to them, we discovered that they rationalized and justified their behavior. They gloated about the techniques they'd honed to drive and text; balancing steering wheels with their knees, holding phones at eyeline with the road... Could we really demonize this kind of confident behavior?

What about the texts themselves? Why were they so irresistible to our target? Our focus groups talked about the social lubrication texting provides, about how important it was to be "in the loop." About how kids never make calls anymore.

But, during one of these focus groups, we had a collective epiphany:

We asked everyone in the group to pick up their phones and read their last text message. We wanted to see what was so important.

Everyone read the texts from their phones:

*"They're about meeting up – Where are you? See you in 10. That kind of thing... maybe some flirting. Or it's, 'OMG, what's biology homework?' And, 'I'm babysitting and I'm SOOOO bored.'" – Tracey, 16 years old*

"Is this the kind of stuff worth dying over then?" the moderator asked.

We knew from the thundering silence we had struck a nerve.

## The Strategy:

### Trivialize the text

Our insight told us that communications had to focus on the text as much as the tragedy. If youth were desensitized to dramatizations of grave *consequences*, perhaps they would empathize when we exposed the *cause* for what it really was – just another little text message...

Trivializing the text, not exaggerating the consequences, we decided was key.

## The Big Idea:

### *The Last Text*

To diffuse that youthful invincibility and the cognitive dissonance surrounding the behavior, we grounded our story in real-life examples.

We exposed the very last text that was being written, sent, or read by people while driving – actual people whose lives were consequently ruined as a result.

The thought that punctuated our campaign and challenged youth to rethink their behavior was, “Is your last text message worth dying for?”

## Launching the idea

Having a great thought means nothing if you can't deliver it in the right way.

We knew the dissemination of our idea would be critical in ensuring it was received, owned, and shared by our teen target. That it didn't look like another big corporation looking for credit in the public sphere.

Our launch model was:

### 1. Make it public

Make the dangers of texting while driving a reality that youth couldn't ignore

### 2. Make youth commit

Ensure youth actively choose not to text and drive

### 3. Make it spread

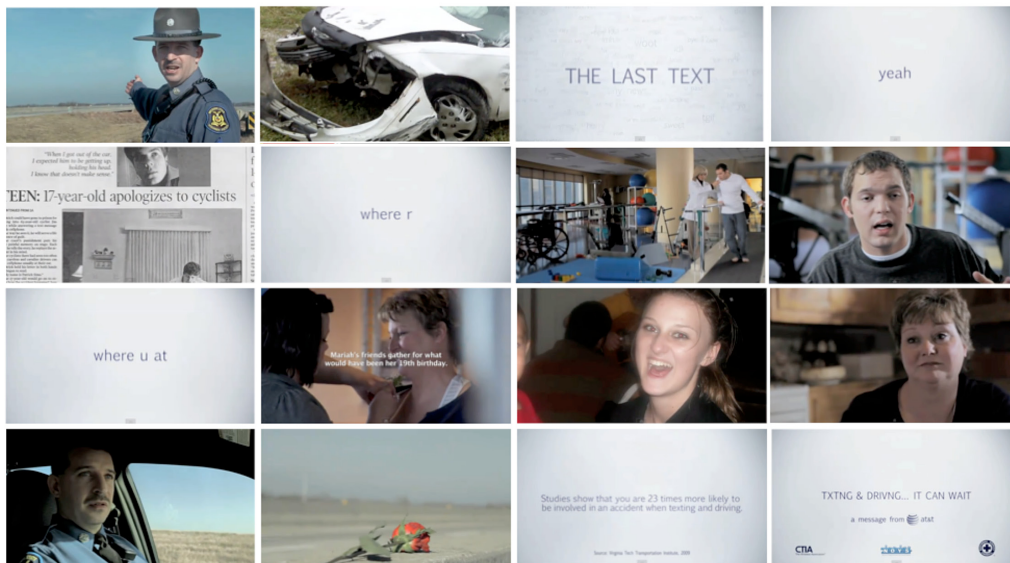
Embed our message in culture and community to ensure it continued to spread

## Make it public

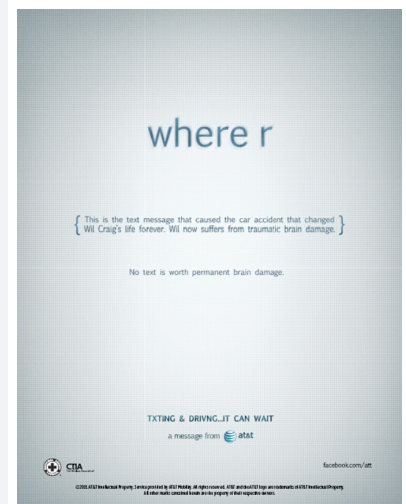
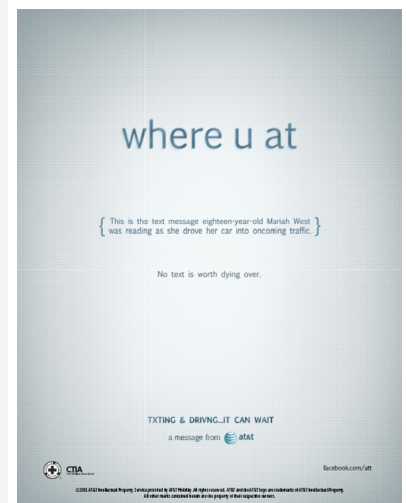
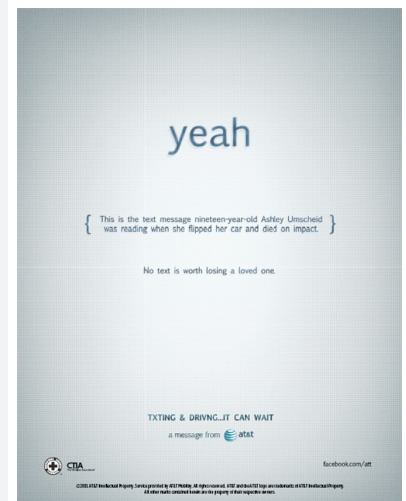
On December 27, 2010, a holiday period when road hazards are at their worst and loved ones, socializing and “arriving safely,” are top-of-mind, we launched with a 10-minute documentary *The Last Text* featuring real stories of real people whose lives had been turned upside down. The documentary format ensured we didn't preach, telling real peoples stories in their own voices. Our creative techniques delivered on the strategy of exposing the texts as the culprits, the texters as the victims.

We seeded the documentary through AT&T's YouTube channel, Facebook page, Twitter feed, and landing page – [att.com/txtingcanwait](http://att.com/txtingcanwait).

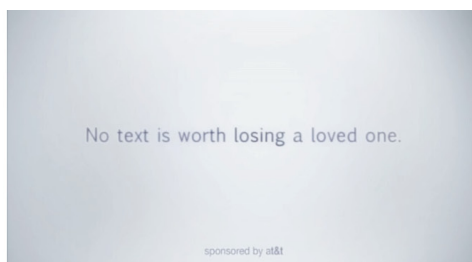
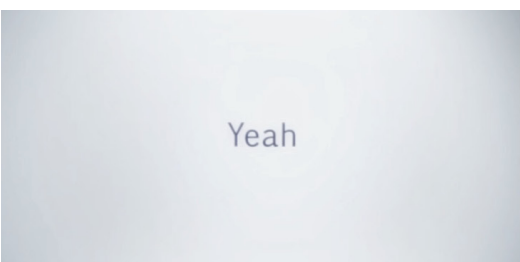
We supported it with PR releases, TV, radio, digital, and print campaigns featuring actual “last texts.”



*The Last Text* documentary example stills  
(<http://youtu.be/DebhWD6ljZs>)



*The Last Text* example print



*The Last Text* example :15 TV

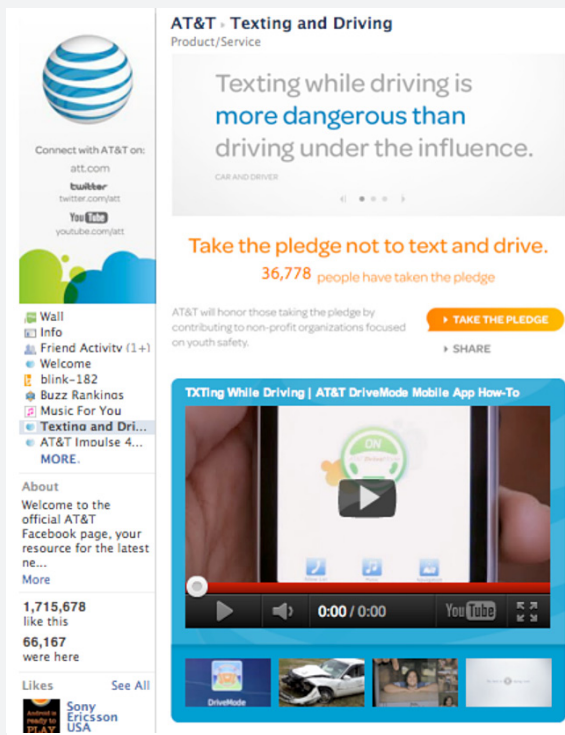


## Make them commit

It was important that kids publicly committed. The last thing we wanted was private agreement and public denouncement.

So we encouraged them to “pledge” not to text while driving on our Facebook page and on AT&T’s homepage.

Pledges were shared across social media and the critical mass, acceptance, and ownership of the issue began to take root.



Facebook “Pledge” page example

## Make it spread

We embedded *The Last Text* DVD where it would get traction and intimate that the cause went way beyond AT&T; family and youth safety organizations, schools, driving schools and test facilities, state police agencies, and public health organizations.

We made sure policy makers and educators could easily download all the support materials from our site.

[About Us](#)
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[Network](#)
[Innovation](#)
[U-verse](#)
[Business](#)
[Investor Relations](#)
[Site Map](#)

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[Media Resources](#)
[Consumer Blog](#)
[Serving Customers](#)
[Sustainability](#)
[AT&T Aspire](#)
[Careers](#)

### Downloads: PSAs, Advertising and Educational Toolkit for Schools and Companies

According to CTIA — The Wireless Association — in the 12 months ending December 2010, **more than 2 trillion text messages were sent and received — or 6 billion per day.\*** It is becoming the way many people communicate, which means some people may be doing it at an inappropriate time — such as while driving.

If your school or company is considering a texting while driving awareness program, AT&T is pleased to offer optional information and resource tools to help you jumpstart your campaign. The materials available to you include:

#### Downloadable Resources:

##### "The Last Text" Documentary

- 90-second preview of "The Last Text"
- Full-length version of "The Last Text"

##### TV PSAs

- TV PSA :15 – where r
- TV PSA :15 – where u at
- TV PSA :15 – yeah
- TV PSA :15 – yeah t
- TV PSA :30 – Wil
- TV PSA :30 – Mariah
- TV PSA :30 – JB
- TV PSA :30 – Ashley

##### TV PSAs (Closed Captioned)

- TV PSA :15 – where r
- TV PSA :15 – where u at
- TV PSA :15 – yeah
- TV PSA :15 – yeah t

##### Print Ads

- Print Ad – where r
- Print Ad – where u at
- Print Ad – yeah
- Print Ad – yeah t

##### "It Can Wait" Media Coverage

- USA Today: Parents urged to talk, make contract with their teen drivers
- The Washington Post: Teen drivers are texting, just like their parents
- Reuters: Despite dangers U.S. teens text and drive - poll
- MSNBC's GadgetBox: AT&T's new app disables texting while driving
- New York Times' Bits Blog: AT&T Video Shows Texting and Driving Don't Mix
- Engadget: AT&T releases dramatic anti-texting while driving documentary
- USA Today: Word to youth: Texting, driving don't mix.

##### Radio PSAs

- Radio PSA :30
- Radio PSA :60

##### In-Store Materials

- In-Store Video
- In-Store Handout

##### Kentucky PSA

- TV PSA featuring Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear, along with AT&T

##### Educational Toolkit

- Infographic: The Dangers of Texting While Driving
- Fact Sheet: AT&T's "It Can Wait" Campaign
- Texting and Driving Safety Tips
- Texting While Driving safety brochure
- Texting While Driving Poster
- AT&T DriveMode App Fact Sheet
- It Can Wait Infographic
- Top Ten Safe Driving Tips
- Teen Driving Checklist
- Texting and Driving Quiz
- Print and Sign Our Parent/Teen Pledge
- Print and Sign Our Teen/Teen Pledge

##### Additional Resources for Schools and Students

- Script introducing "The Last Text" documentary and PSAs
- Script for in-game announcements
- Banner Ads
  - Small 1
  - Small 2
  - Large 1
  - Large 2
- Special Event and Activity Ideas
- Window, locker pamphlets
- School leadership message
- Full-length version of "The Last Text"
- Sample school newspaper story

##### Additional Resources for Companies and Employees

- Employee Message
- Flyer
- E-mail Tag
- Sample Pledge Form
- Sample Pledge Policy
- Signage
- Fact Sheet

##### Toolkit – En Español: Caja de Herramientas Sobre Textear & Conducir

Hemos desarrollado una caja de herramientas diseñada para informarte — así también como a tus hijos/as jóvenes — acerca de los riesgos de textear y conducir.

- Texteando & Conduciendo: Consejos de Seguridad
- Imprime y Firma Nuestro Compromiso Entre Padres y Jóvenes
- Imprime y Firma Nuestro Compromiso Entre Amigos Jóvenes
- Descarga el Folleto de Seguridad Sobre Textear al Conducir
- Texteando & Conduciendo: Video en Nuestras Tiendas
- Texteando & Conduciendo: Información en Nuestras Tiendas
- Texteando & Conduciendo: Aviso de Servicio Público con el Representante Estatal Cliente Quintanilla

\*CTIA — The Wireless Association

### Download AT&T DriveMode

Curb the urge to text while driving with the AT&T DriveMode app.

#### AT&T Customers, download the app for free now:

BlackBerry App World™  
Google Play

Check back soon for additional operating system availability.

When enabled, the app sends a customizable auto-reply message to incoming texts\*, letting your friends know you're behind the wheel and will reply when it's safe.

\* Data and text messaging charges may apply for download and app usage. Standard messaging rates apply to auto-reply messages. AT&T DriveMode is free to AT&T customers only. Compatible device required.

### YouTube

Watch how AT&T DriveMode works.

Watch the story behind AT&T DriveMode.

Commit to the cause on Facebook.

Download Texting & Driving Badge.

### Additional Third Party Supporters Include



## The Results: We made it public

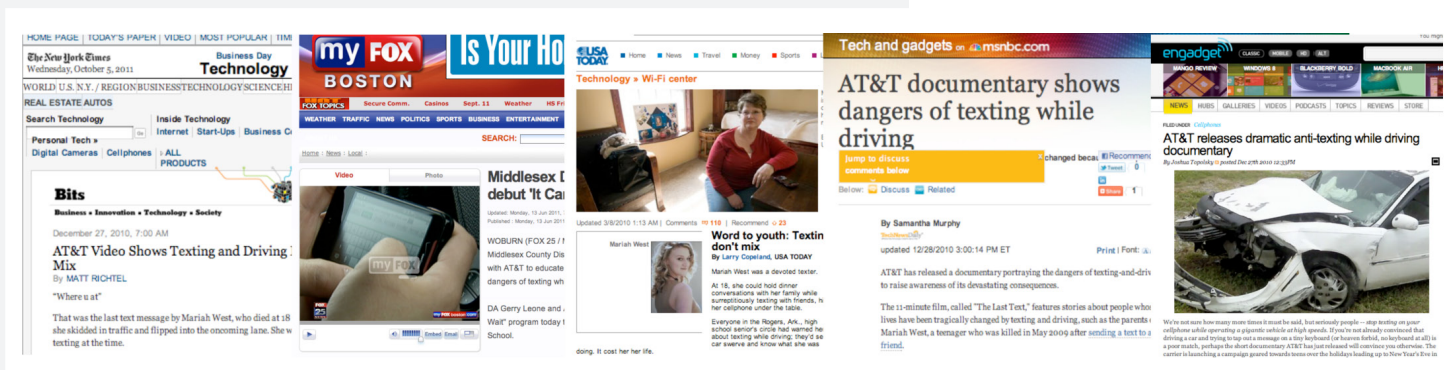
A week after launch, all four broadcast networks had covered the campaign in over 200 markets, with unpaid media specials over 5 minutes on CNN, and *Good Morning America*.

Publications like *The New York Times*, *Mashable*, *USA Today* and even the White House blog chipped in:

*"I've tweeted out this whole documentary. I encourage every person to sit down with their kids and themselves as well and watch the 10 minutes."*

Just one day after launch, *The Last Text* had 100,000 views on YouTube. In three weeks, it surpassed one million views. And by August 18, 2011, it had reached 2.483m views.

Importantly, and testament to its creative execution and emotional power, the full documentary was also embedded in nearly 75% of all online media coverage.



## The Results: We made them commit

By November 2011, over 93,000 people had taken the pledge online, not including thousands more at school and college viewing days across the U.S.



Utah State University, UT



Bridgewater-Raritan Regional, NJ



Lexington High School, TX



Woburn Memorial High School, MA



St. Cecilia Academy, TN

The YouTube documentary incited exactly the right kind of conversations, with kids overtly showing their support and beginning to denounce the behavior in their friends:

Because of Alex Brown, and this video. I'm never going to text and drive. I just got my car, and the first thing I do with my phone when I get in my car is put it on silent and put it on the passenger seat. And also, I hate when people text me while they are driving. Like what the hell? I don't want that regret if you get in wreck and die or kill someone else because you were texting me! :/

Don't text & drive people!! It's not just teenagers. I seen my mom do it all the time until I talked to her

SelenaL10 2 months ago

Infuriating! I said this when I 1st watched it: what message is so important that you can't wait instead of killing yourself and others? And if it is indeed that important, why can't you pull over somewhere to read and/or respond? Tired of seeing so many people die for this ridiculousness. It's time to "get the message." If you're driving, focus on driving. Nobody should die for this. I'm a smartphone-centric person, but I wouldn't give up my life or that of others for it. You shouldn't either!

iangertler 1 month ago

I am 14. I will be able to drive in 2 years. I had to write a persuasive essay in English and I wrote it on this. I thought kids in my grade should know the dangers of texting and driving though we aren't driving yet. We still need to know. Everytime I get in the car with my parents I take their phone and you know why?? All cause of this video!! Everyone needs to watch this no matter how old they are! They still need to know the consequences of texting and driving!!

Bocknerd1 5 months ago

Im in middle school and my language arts teacher just played this video for us today... I could not stop crying, everyone thinks they can do these things that they cant, my mom texts and drive's and I'm going to show her this video! please give a thumbs up for all the people that need to put down the phone, and save a life.

thank you

123laneyloveu 1 week ago 3

Facebook response examples:



**Dan Dialogue** AT&T - Just watched your new documentary on texting and driving...very powerful. If that doesn't change someone's mind about texting and driving, nothing will.

about an hour ago

John Seagle likes this.



AT&T Thanks for the feedback, Dan. We think it's a pretty powerful message, too. For additional info on our "It Can Wait" campaign, feel free to visit [www.att.com/bttingcanwait](http://www.att.com/bttingcanwait). Take care!

about an hour ago · 1 person · Flag



**Nick Fischer** Yeah I watched some of it and I know when I start driving I'll never do that it is just foolish to risk your life for 1 text message

38 minutes ago · 1 person · Flag



**Michelle Navalta Tangleo** That was a good video! I cried! I text n drive often! I think it's time to make a commitment not too!!

Monday at 7:12pm · Like · 1 person · Flag



**Julius Mawoussi** Thanks AT&T I hope this saves millions of lives. I hope that people see that texting and driving don't mix. I have been trying to get a friend to stop texting and driving this video did it. She didn't seem to know the damage that could be done. This message may have saved her life thanks AT&T.

22 hours ago · Like · 1 person · Flag

To get kids to commit behaviorally, as well as theoretically, we worked with AT&T's PR agency Fleishman-Hillard to launch a free mobile app, "AT&T DriveMode," reinforcing behavior and eliminating the temptation to stray. When activated, it automatically sends a customizable reply to incoming texts notifying the sender that the user is driving and unable to respond.

## The Results:

# We made it spread

AT&T received thousands of national requests to use *The Last Text* documentary in educational programs across the country. For example, in Chicago alone, 135 public schools permanently integrated the documentary into their curriculum and every DMV facility in the state shows the documentary to new drivers.

The documentary also inspired many to spread the word themselves. Jack Little from Xavier High School in Wisconsin created his own film to help spread the message at his school.



Source: Xavier High School student Jack Little's AT&T inspired film *It Can Wait*. 2011 (<http://www.textkills.com/?p=2302>)

And when Dr. Raymond Georgen, Medical Director of Trauma at Theda Clark Medical Center, heard of Jack Little's project, he used it to educate another 4,000+ students before they got their driver's licenses, saying:

***"It's so powerful when we have individuals from the same peer group relating the story as well..."*** – Dr. Georgen

## In Summary

We uncovered a powerful insight and harnessed it to a creative mechanic – disarming the air of invincibility without demonizing kids.

We trivialized the text itself, helping kids come to the conclusion that texting while driving really wasn't worth the risks.

We got kids to commit so they couldn't go back.

And we didn't just start a movement, we institutionalized it. And it's here to stay...