



# Driver Distraction from In-vehicle Telematics Devices: The Public Opinion

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# In-vehicle Telematics

- devices that incorporate wireless communications technologies to provide information services, vehicle automation, and other functions.
- include cellular telephones, navigation systems, e-mail and Internet access capabilities



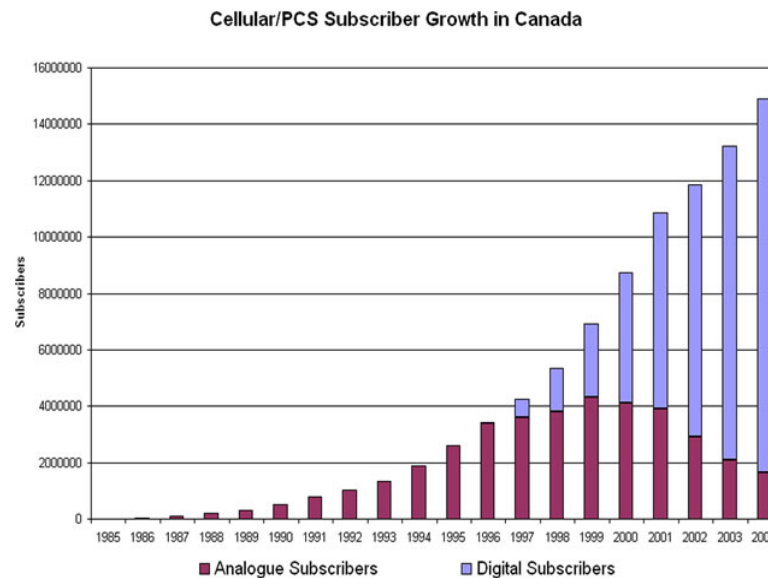
# Introduction

- Other sources of in-vehicle distraction
- Previous debates regarding the introduction of novel in-vehicle devices
  - e.g., windshield wipers (1905); AM car radio (1930s)
- In 2005, half of all Canadians own a cellular telephone ([www.cwta.ca](http://www.cwta.ca)).



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- In 2005, half of all Canadians own a cellular telephone ([www.cwta.ca](http://www.cwta.ca)).
- Today, 30% percent of Canadians say they use a cellular telephone while driving ([www.cwta.ca](http://www.cwta.ca)). Up from 20.5% in 2002 (TIRF) and 16% in 1997 (Transport Canada).
- Prevalence of in-vehicle telematics devices expected to increase; 45% of vehicles to have access by 2008 (The Strategis Group, 2002).



# Rationale

- other sources of distraction not set to increase; not within the jurisdiction of the federal government (original equipment on motor vehicles).
- substantial and mounting body of experimental research indicating that using telematics while driving can impair driving performance.
- 64% of Canadians believe that the use of cellular telephones while driving represents a serious or extremely serious problem (TIRF, 2002).



# Purpose

- To provide policy guidance to Transport Canada based on the representative and considered views of the general public
- Telephone survey – May '03
- Deliberative democracy focus groups – Aug. '03



# Method (Telephone Survey)

- Short telephone survey of 1504 Canadians aged 16 and over
- 12 questions
- Opinions regarding a variety of road safety issues



## Results (Telephone Survey)

- “drivers using cell phones” ranked third (by 53%) in severity after “drunk driving” (77%) and “speeding” (58%)
- 40% of respondents thought drunk driving had improved over past 5 years; only 3% thought driver distraction had
- 49% erroneously thought that telematics devices currently undergo testing to ensure they are not too distracting
- 74% thought hand-held cellular phones should be banned
- 47% agreed with a ban on hands-free models
- imposing restrictions on types of devices offered in vehicles most effective (35%); banning drivers from using certain devices (34%); voluntary industry code of conduct (7%)



## Method (Focus Groups)

- 3 deliberative group sessions held in Toronto, Montreal and Calgary
- 60 people (20 each session); 3.5 hours in duration
- 10-page background document provided beforehand
- 2 bilingual moderators, plus Transport Canada resource person to answer factual questions
- At conclusion, questionnaire completed that replicated initial telephone survey



# Results (Focus Groups)

- Distracted driving identified as major and growing threat
- Most surprised to learn of emerging telematics technology
- Thought risks to road safety would result from how drivers would use (misuse) the more distracting devices
- Did not want to prevent Canadian drivers from having access



## Results (Focus Groups)

### Policy options:

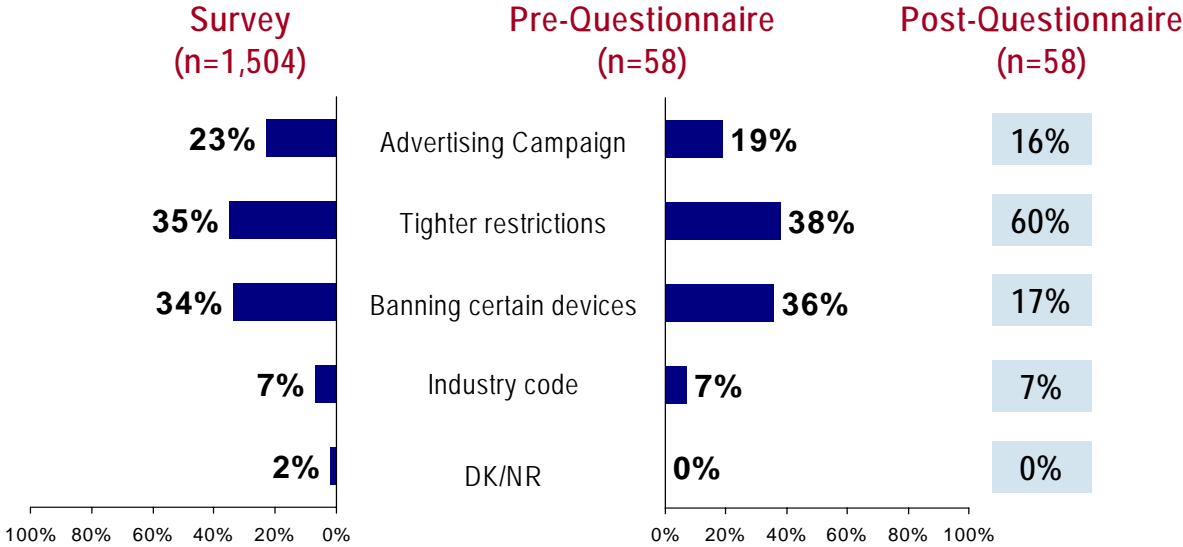
- Initially overestimated the ease with which government could pass and implement regulation; underestimated level of cooperation that exists between federal gov't and industry
- Felt that Canadians could not be relied on to use telematics devices responsibly; similarly, a purely voluntary industry-developed approach would be inadequate; regulatory approach felt to be premature, heavy-handed, complicated.
- Co-operative approach should, at least initially, be adopted.
- Preferred method: memorandum of understanding (MOU) that includes safety testing requirements and manufacturing criteria; also public awareness/education campaign



# Results (Focus Groups)

## Post-discussion questionnaire:

“In your opinion, which of the following four approaches would be the MOST effective for dealing with the issue of dangers associated with using electronic devices while driving?”





## Current Status

- In fall 2004, joint industry-government working group created to develop key elements of a Telematics MOU
- Continuing research on distraction risks and countermeasures
- Work on developing a driver distraction awareness and education campaign [within the CCMTA's Strategies to Reduce Impaired Driving (STRID) subgroup on driver distraction]



# Thank you

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