

Cyclists' use of Mobile IT in Sweden – usage and self-reported behavioural compensation

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ABSTRACT

The increasing use of mobile phone while cycling has raised safety concerns. In this paper two studies of cyclists' use of mobile phone are presented. The first study aimed at estimating and characterize cyclists' use of mobile phone in Sweden, while the second studied cyclists' behaviour and compensation strategy while using mobile phone. During observations in city traffic mobile phone use was observed in 20 percent of all bicycle trips. The usage varied with cyclist age with the highest usage among young cyclists. 90 % of the cyclists observed used headphones. In parallel standardized interviews more than one of three cyclists under 15 years old stated that they always use mobile phone while cycling. Listening to music in headphones was the most frequent self-reported activity. To speak in hand-held phone was also rather common, and was the only mobile phone usage reported by women above 50 years old. In the second study twenty-two young cyclists (age 16-25 years) completed a route in real traffic five times while listening to music, receiving and making calls, receiving and sending text messages, and searching for information on the internet. The route and the types of tasks were controlled, but the cyclists could choose rather freely when, where and how to carry out the tasks. When the cyclist returned to the starting point, a short interview was conducted. During the interviews cyclists reported feelings and compensation strategies while cycling. The results show differences between tasks performed and depending on the experience of using mobile phone while cycling. The more difficult the task was perceived, the more often compensation by reducing the speed or multiple strategies were used. Less experienced cyclists found the tasks more difficult and they compensated primarily by reducing speed while more experienced cyclist compensated with visual behaviour.

Keywords: cyclist, phone, behavioural strategy, compensation, traffic safety.

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