

Headline	Electric youth and the mobile generation		
Date	2009-05-25		
Media Title	The Straits Times (Home) (Mon-Wed)	Section	Home You Think
Page No	B08	Size	N/A
Description	Using proper English sometimes means sending out a carefully thought-out message which takes more time to compose.		

MY LIFE

Electric youth and the mobile generation

Pros and cons of complete immersion in a cellphone culture

Minding my language

THE mobile phone has invaded several segments of my life because of the convenience it offers.

But there is one aspect that has not changed. I still use proper English to reply to short messages.

Although the use of SMS lingo is pervasive and popular, I will not succumb to the temptation of convenience. The lack of standards of that informal language could result in miscommunication. It reflects sloppiness at its worst.

Using proper English sometimes means sending out a carefully thought-out message which takes more time to compose.

But that is a small price to pay to keep my language in check.

Ephraim Loy, 27, is a final-year social science student at SMU.

Stop this social ineptness

I WILL not deny that my cellphone has affected my life. We all need to stay connected, or risk falling far behind at work or in social situations.

But one should not have their phone permanently attached to their wrists, ears or fingers.

One of the worse dampeners in a face-to-face conversation is to have the other party take out their phone and reply to what seems like an unimportant message, effectively tuning you out for the next half minute and rendering the situation socially moribund and awkward.

As people choose texting and technology over actual face-to-face communication, problems will surface.

After all, there is no emotion in pixels. People may become socially inept, though they may be able to negotiate the virtual world with no problem.

Do not take acts like replying to a text in the middle of dinner or taking a call in the cinema as normal behaviour.

Restrain yourself, or apologise if you must do so.

Like the signs you have been seeing around Singapore for the longest time, courtesy begins with me and you.

Bernice Leong, 16, is a first-year mass communication student at Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

But do I really need this?

ONCE, I fervently sought to attain the nirvana of acquiring the best mobile phone on the market.

Newer and newer phone models boast of ever more offerings, slickly advertised to lure impressionable youth like me.

Yet, like Rebecca Bloomwood in Confessions Of A Shopaholic, I soon found myself asking "Do I really need this?"

Your phone is a jack of all trades and so master of none. It cannot replace a camera or a laptop. And most youth could not afford the expensive plans those functions would need.

To top it off, there is the constant worry of keeping one's expensive gadgetry from thieving hands.

Rueben Tan, 20, has a place to read law at NUS this year.

Confessions of a phone-a-holic

MY NAME is Jonathan and I am a phone-a-holic.

It began when my father bought me the sleek, multi-function Sony Ericsson M600i last year.

That innocuous-looking device quickly captivated me because of its fast, high-resolution mobile Internet surfing.

Every time I logged onto that restless virtual construct of round-the-clock news updates, I felt connected to the living world at large. I kept abreast of the US election results throughout many breakfasts; walked

into pillars while reading e-mail messages; and checked endings of movies in the cinema if they became boring. Knowledge is power, and power was addictive.

Do not blame the phone though. It is the insatiable human need for continuous connectivity with our friends, family and the world that has irreversibly plugged everyone I know into this wireless world of text messaging, free incoming calls and mobile Internet.

So I am definitely not alone in my generation in seeing my phone as my indispensable gateway to the world. It cannot be so bad when even the US President cannot live without his BlackBerry!

Jonathan Lin, 20, has a place to read economics at Princeton University.

A culture of tardiness

THE proliferation of mobile phones has not helped youth become more responsible with time management.

Before phones, people had to be punctual for appointments. If you showed up late, you might have missed the rest of the group.

But latecomers can now text or call their friends to find out where they are, long after they have left the pre-determined meeting point.

A short message of "Sorry I'm late, carry on first and I'll call you when I get here," saves tardy people a world of inconvenience.

It takes away any incentive to be on time. Friends who text me to tell me they are late when I have made an effort to be punctual? They are rude.

The mobile phone has cultivated frivolousness and irresponsibility in our youth. How I wish for the pre-phone days, when people were respectful of one another's time, and made a greater effort to be punctual. Jonathan Kwok, 24, has graduated with honours in economics from NUS.

