

Smartphones provide distraction, overly expensive

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It's not unusual nowadays to see people of all ages carrying a cell phone. Not only does most of the population carry one, but a vast majority of those phones are Smartphones.

It is understandable that adults may carry an Android, Blackberry or iPhone. But at school everyday, more and more kids possess these high-tech items. Adults have good reasons to have Smartphones. They can use them as tools; things like email and the internet are essential for work communication and projects. I haven't seen many kids use Smartphones for email or checking grades. But I can't think of many reasons why kids would need to carry a Smartphone.

I do not have a Smartphone, and I manage with my plain LG phone just fine. It can call and text, and has some cool ringtones. That's just about good for me. Along with my iPod Touch, I do not see any reason to need a Smartphone. I



Games, social networking, internet access and other apps featured on Smartphones are distractions for students. The Smartphone epidemic is leaving parents with empty pockets and students with worsened grades.

Photo by Alex Houston

think Smartphones are distractions at school. Yes, I do agree it's fun to play games on Smartphones, but there is a time and place for that. It is too common to be sitting in a lecture to see students playing on their Smartphones under their desks. Sure, I've texted in class plenty of times, but it only takes a minute. I see kids messing around on Facebook and playing games for extensive periods of time in class on

a daily basis. I know if I had such a distraction in class, my grades would surely drop. Maybe if they paid attention, they'd have better grades. Phones—let alone Smartphones—are not appropriate in class.

The saddest thing about Smartphones are the cost. Not only do they cost a load of money to just have the phone itself (ranging in price anywhere from approximately \$100-\$800), but monthly fees can be

anywhere from \$50-\$150. I'm pretty sure not a whole

lot of kids have that kind of money to pay for their phones, so, their parents are paying it.

My parents have refused to pay for a Smartphone, for which I can't blame them. I know I wouldn't want to pay for it, so why should they? I am grateful that they pay for the phone plan that I have now.

My point is, kids don't need Smartphones. They are a heck of a lot of fun, but in the end, it's not worth the money, and it's not essential to have one. So if you have a regular phone, don't worry about rushing into buying the latest Droid or iPhone 4. It might save your money—and your parents' money—in the long run.

Bathroom graffiti; a common issue

Graffiti

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The most we can do is encourage people to not defile public property. When a five year old writes all over the walls, it's understandable and usually manageable. When a teenager does it, it's just lame and immature.

"We try to erase it as soon as we see it," Ray said. The custodial staff has the ability to remove the graffiti. But that's no excuse to vandalize school property. It makes the school look bad, both physically, and in

reputation. Writing on the walls is inappropriate in almost any setting, even a high school.

Next time you bring a pen or pencil into the bathroom, and look up to the walls with desire, stop. But don't just stop. Stop and think. Think about what impact your comments and drawings have on other people. Think about how your comments might be perceived by visitors to West Linn. But most importantly, put that pen away out of respect for yourself, because you're better than that.

Budget proposal avoids firing teachers

Budget

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One improvement that students will see is the retention of the Chinese program at WLHS, which has been saved by funding from outside sources including donations and grants. Other than Chinese, classes and program offerings won't be much different, aside from the changes in social studies

offerings that weren't a response to the budget, but rather due to a change in graduation requirements.

"Our goal was not to take away any big programs," Bailey said. "We simply tried to do things more economically."

According to Woehl, the biggest changes for next year as a result of the budget cuts district wide will be cutting teachers and reducing

instructional coordinators and librarians.

"The biggest thing is the cumulative effect over the last three years. We've lost a lot," Woehl said. On the bright side, "I think things will get better from here, after this two year budget plan. Hopefully we can eventually start bringing back things that have been cut."

STUDENTS speak out

How do you think Smartphones influence the lives of students?



"I think that it helps because you can look things up that you don't know."
—Michael Aden, freshman



"I think that they help with studying but also promote cheating."
—Nick Miller, sophomore



"I literally sleep with my phone. I feel incomplete without it."
—Brooklyn Cochran, junior



"I don't know if it influences me but it definitely distracts me."
—Jackie Steeh, senior