How Texting Affects Spelling

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Every day, people all over the world use their cell phones. In recent years, these devices have evolved from simple telecommunications devices into pocket-sized computers. Now equipped with internet access, these "phones" have arguably become more oft-used than personal (desktop) computers. As a result, the "texting" actions, involving almost exclusive use of thumbs, that were previously used just for texting have become more prevalent than ever. However, these actions are fundamentally different than any other form of writing or typing, and they are so recently prevalent that there is no decisive evidence about how they affect someone's spelling tendencies. This science project aimed to answer the question: "How does texting affect how people spell words?" Subjects of all ages, vocabulary range, and "texting experience" were used to gather data. Several factors were examined, including dexterity and how psychology plays into spelling when looking at a touch-screen keyboard. This data was then be compared to previously-collected data that examined how typing on a computer keyboard affected spelling. All in all, subjects spelled an average of 2.86% more words incorrectly when texting when compared to writing, with a little to no difference in left-right key distribution. This compared to typing on a keyboard, in which subjects spelled 4.5% more words incorrectly and were 6.6% more likely to use letters on the right side of the keyboard when typing as opposed to writing.

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