

The Wildcat Chronicles

Durant High School

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Poll: 1 in 5 spend 6+ hours on phones daily

By Danielle Paulsen

Have social media and cell phones taken over the lives of students at Durant?

There is no doubt that technology is much more present in the world, including small-town high schools, but just how much time are students spending on their phones in one day?

A survey went out to a majority of the high school students at Durant to answer those questions.

Out of 132 student responses, 39.4% of people spend between three to four hours a day on their smartphones. In second place, a shocking 21.2% of students at Durant spend more than six hours a day on their smartphones.

A somewhat new feature on the iPhone, called Screentime, gives users the ability to see how much time they are spending on their cell phone all together, as well as each app daily.

Soren Murray-Lopez, a sophomore

at Durant High School, checked his Screentime while taking the survey.

"My Screentime says I spend eleven hours a day on my phone, but I didn't realize it was that much," he said.

Murray-Lopez said he does believe he is addicted to his phone, but he feels like he could stop himself from being on his phone if he absolutely had to. Out of the eleven hours Murray-Lopez spends on his smartphone, Snapchat and Instagram rank at the top for his most time spent.

He said that he didn't even notice when he started becoming addicted to his phone.

"It probably started when I got my phone like one to two years ago," he said.

What can this much time on social media do to someone? According to a study done by researchers from Korea University, students who were diagnosed with smartphone addiction showed much lower levels of GABA (a "neurotransmitter that regulates

various brain functions, including anxiety"), according to a study reported by the Radiological Society of North America.

For many people, severe anxiety when not being able to access their cell phone is actually very common.

Durant seniors Cheyann Hilbert and Tessa Brandenburg admitted to being victims of this addiction. Hilbert explained how she often feels anxious, as if she is missing a part of herself, when she doesn't have access to her phone.

There were many different responses from students of what benefits they get from using social media.

A majority of Durant students (54.7%) agreed that seeing what is happening in the lives of friends and family is the most important benefit, but there were several students who said there wasn't really any benefits.

"There really is no benefit," one student said. "I use social media as a way to

pass the time."

Students also had many different opinions about what the most negative impacts of social media are. Of the 132 responses, 38.5% agreed that feeling disappointed when you compare your life to those of people on social media had the worst effect on them. There were a few very eye-opening responses given as well.

The most negative effect of social media for one student is "Feeling anxious, nervous, and useless whenever one of your online friends is sad and talking about really bad things that you can't do anything about."

Another student wrote, "Feeling as if people will judge anything/everything you post."

A surprising 63.4% of the students who took this survey said that they would not be able to give up social media for one week, and 82.4% said parents do not closely monitor their cell phones.

Pain-related illness strikes Wildcat sophomore

By Kiley Stineman

The month of November is designated to raise awareness for Amplified Musculoskeletal Pain Syndrome (AMPS). This condition hits home for one of Durant's own students.

Sophomore Kristina Vasquez was struck with AMPS this past summer and had to start school in August using a walker to get to her classes. She has made progress this fall and now only uses a cane for assistance.

According to Providence Medical Center, AMPS is a medical condition in which an individual develops an abnormal pain reflex.

Vasquez sometimes feels severe pain in the back, legs, and head on a daily basis, and it has affected her balance and ability to walk.

A concerning factor for Vasquez's condition is the potential that she may never fully recover. There is also a possibility that even if she makes a full recovery, she could end up in the hospital unable to walk again.

"I'm put in a loop of forgetting and relearning everything," said Vasquez.

Vasquez had been dining with her

family on July 20 when she felt sudden stomach pains. This concerned the family, but at the time, they thought it was a common cold. That thought suddenly changed when they witnessed Vasquez suddenly fall to the side of the booth.

The ambulance rushed to the restaurant, and the last thing Vasquez recalls was people hovering over her and recording the entire scene.

She was taken to Genesis East in Davenport and woke up shaking so violently that she needed to be strapped to the bed and given medication to calm down.

It was a waiting game for Vasquez until the doctors decided that she needed a spinal tap. At this point, she was feeling extreme pain in her back, head, and neck.

Vasquez was later transferred to the University of Iowa Children's Hospital. While she was there, she had a team of doctors who examined her to find the problem.

Vasquez's recovery process started with physical therapy throughout the entire month of August. However, she decided that she had not improved enough, so she lengthened her physical therapy by two months,

attending it until the end of October.

She was given a walker to use until the doctors cleared her to walk on her own, but when that time came, Vasquez was scared to start walking without help, so she decided a cane would be a sufficient middle ground.

Starting school again was another one of the many challenges Vasquez faced, but she welcomed it with open arms. She was surprised with the amount of support she received from her peers after the news spread to many about her condition.

The biggest support Vasquez received was that of a friend who has also faced a recent injury. Bryce Czarnetzki, another Durant sophomore, tore his left lateral meniscus playing football and underwent surgery on Oct. 17th.

While Czarnetzki was out of school dealing with his own recovery, he couldn't help Vasquez.

"It sucks knowing that she has questions about classes that I can't answer," said Czarnetzki.

Czarnetzki has helped Vasquez with improving her walking and has con-

stantly given her words of encouragement.



Photo by Kiley Stineman
Kristina Vasquez struggles with AMPS but appreciates being supported by many people at Durant High School.

Lights, camera, action! Durant play debuts Nov. 15-17

By Nicole Brown

As the lights dim and the curtains prepare to draw, the play is right around the corner.

Director Ms. Cinnamon Kleeman is putting on the production of *Ten Ways to Survive the End of the World* on November 15, 16, and 17.

But with only 12 cast members, Ms. Kleeman, also the high school choir instructor, has most participants running double roles. At least five students have to memorize three parts and one student has four roles.

Low theater numbers were not always the norm, though.

Dr. Lynne Lundberg headed the play department from 2000 to 2010 while also employed as an English teacher, speech teacher, and simultaneously running the debate team for a period of time.

Dr. Lundberg is currently teaching at Pleasant Valley High School.

Dr. Lundberg's largest play at Durant High School was *Cinderella* with 40-45 kids on stage and 20-25 kids working backstage on sets and running the production. She excitedly recalled *Cinderella* having beautiful music and a full-size staircase.

In the past few years, the drama department has struggled with numbers. Despite the prominence of sports at Durant, Dr. Lundberg was able to gather a large staff.

"It was very, very difficult," she said. "I remember one play where a lot of them were in football or cross country. I just had to work around everyone. Sometimes we had play practice until 9:30 at night. I would tell kids if you need to do your homework while you're not on stage, that's fine. Go ahead and get your school work done and finish what you can, and I will call you up on

stage when needed."

According to Ms. Kleeman, play practice was held at 5 or 5:30 p.m. in the past, and that didn't work for her. It is now held from 3:05 p.m. to about 4:30 p.m. Despite having low numbers, she chooses to have play practice then because she feels the play should go at the same time as some sports and not have to go later in the day.

The athletic coaches do encourage students to participate in multiple extracurriculars, especially with the small numbers at Durant, according to athletic director and basketball coach Mr. Matt Straube.

"In years past and how athletics has done it, we have always been flexible with the drama department," said Mr. Straube. "When [former theater director] Mr. Whitson was here, we have allowed kids to leave practices early, and we still do that. He [Whitson] was good about working with us

and enabling the most kids possible to do the plays."

Mr. Straube said that limited school facilities have also caused problems for athletes who participate in theater.

"We also have sports practices in the morning, especially during the winter, and practices going until 9 o'clock at night," he pointed out.

A bond referendum that recently was voted down in Durant would have helped the situation, however.

"Another thing proposed in the bond was additional facility space. The bond referendum would have enabled all kids to be home by 7, and we could have been flexible alternating times with either drama or sports after school and still have people home at a decent time while allowing the students to fully participate in both athletics and theatre."