



TECHNOLOGY

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ON THE GO

Louisville team talks app that makes safe driving fun

Louisville's Kevin Renfro says friends don't let friends text and drive.

A few years ago, Renfro even created a billboard at his daughter's school to share the message. Now, he's doing a little more to meet people where the issue starts: behind the wheel and on their phones.

He worked with two other locals to develop Drive2Win, an app that turns not texting and driving into a game, complete with prizes.

As a lawyer at Becker Law Office in East Louisville, Renfro works daily with people who were injured in auto accidents, most often caused by phone use on the road. He knows the damage that can be done when someone takes their eyes off the road for even a few seconds to read a text.



DRIVE2WIN

So when John McCafferty approached Renfro with an idea to get people to stop texting and driving with a smartphone app, Renfro jumped at the chance.

McCafferty, president and creative director of McCafferty Advertising in Louisville, and Renfro started working on the Drive2Win app along with Ashley Blakemore, director of business development at Mediaura, a Jeffersonville, Ind.-based digital advertising and marketing firm, to deal with the logistics of developing and marketing the app.

Once launched on someone's smartphone, the app locks the rest of the phone's uses and allows players to collect

points for safe drives. Users also compete against each other for the highest scores. Once a user racks up enough points from their safe driving, the

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ASHLEY BLAKEMORE, director of business development at Mediaura

points can be exchanged for different prizes, awarded by sponsors.

Drive2Win had a soft launch last week and is available for download from Google Play and the Apple Store.

A lot of safe driving campaigns talk about how unsafe it is to drive drunk, but, McCafferty said he knows texting while driving is even more dangerous than drinking and driving – it's about six times more likely to cause an accident, Renfro said.

"The average text takes four seconds to read," McCafferty said. "In four seconds, at 55 mph, you travel the length of a football field without looking through your windshield."

The bigger problem is that, while people understand the extreme dangers of drunk driving, they don't seem to see as big of a problem with distracted driving.

"More than 75 percent of people that

text and drive think they do it safely," McCafferty said. "The problem is there's no incentive to stop. Why would you stop something you think you're doing safely?"

That's where Drive2Win comes in.

Blakemore said they have about five companies participating and offering prizes to safe drivers, but Louisville is the test market, so they are looking for more local and national sponsors who want to be featured on the app. They want to offer small prizes, like a free pizza or a pair of movie tickets.

"If we can offer some incentive, it might change those habits and save lives," he said.

The three think there is a large market for the app, with half a million cell phone-toting 18- to 35-year-olds in the state of Kentucky. They hope the app catches on statewide so they can even go national.