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'EURO-COLLISION CONTEST':

CLUMSIEST MOBILE PHONE USERS IN EUROPE REVEALED

- **The smarter they come, the harder we fall: straw poll of UK GPs finds a rise in mobile-related injuries, as our tendency to browse and walk leads to tripping incidents.**
- **37.2% of UK smartphone users have stumbled with their phones in the last two years.**
- **'Mobile thrown:' Greece, Italy and Spain have Europe's clumsiest mobile users.**

A pan-European league table of mobile mishaps has found that Greece, Italy and Spain have the clumsiest mobile phone users in Europe. Data gathered over two years across Europe by protection plan providers SquareTrade places Norway and Ireland in fourth and fifth place with the UK sixth. Data was gathered across eighteen countries in total.

According to the study by SquareTrade, just over 40% of Greek smartphone users managed to damage their phones in stumbling incidents the last two years. In the same period, 39.8% of Italian and 38.9% of Spanish smartphone users had slipped up when using a phone. The least clumsy country was Poland, with only 24.3% of users reporting having had an accident in the last two years, followed by Belgium, Europe's bureaucratic heart (24.9%) and Switzerland (26.3%). German mobile phone users came a respectable 12th in the list.

In the UK, 37.2% of smartphone users had damaged their phones in stumbling incidents in the last two years with over half of all accidents happening in the home. Interestingly 18% of the accidents were caused by someone other than the owner of the phone.

It's not only phones that can get damaged, people can too. A separate poll of UK smartphone owners found that 86% had tripped, stumbled or hit a lamppost or wall when distracted using a mobile device. Whilst the phones may end up intact, the users don't necessarily do so. Last year, Laura Safe hit the headlines after falling into a canal in Birmingham while texting her boyfriend.

Kevin Gillan, European managing director for SquareTrade said: “Generally speaking, it seems that people from countries on the edge of the European dancefloor are the least surefooted, with Mediterranean phone owners, perhaps surprisingly, stumbling the most.”

He added: “While the percentage of smartphone tumbles varies from country to country, it’s clear that there are a lot of people out there who have damaged their phone and themselves in some way. Talking and walking are perfectly safe, but perhaps our smarter phones are now putting us at risk by diverting our eyes off the path ahead.”

Dr Louise Newson, a British GP, says that she has seen a significant increase in the number of people sheepishly reporting that they have had an accident whilst walking and using a mobile phone. Many of the injuries are bumps to the forehead when hitting posts or walls or grazed knees when falling over kerbs. “I’ve seen a lot of mobile-related injuries in my surgery in the last 12 months, mostly from people tripping or bumping into something because they’ve been distracted by their smartphone. Some of the injuries are quite nasty. As more young children and elderly people are using mobile phones, I expect that we’ll see more mobile-related injuries in these groups of people in future.”

Kevin Gillan added: “We all want to stay connected all the time, but there are moments when you need to switch off – when you’re walking down the street for example. Right now it seems that when it comes to phones, the smarter they come, the harder we fall.”

Europe has a long history of multi-tasking on the move. Mediaeval monks would consult their illuminated manuscripts on the way to morning prayer, often navigating cobblestones and dimly-lit staircases in the process. Today’s battery-powered illuminated manuscripts, now owned by the vast majority of the adult population are creating a modern risk not dissimilar to that experienced by our forebears.

Some stories from “distracted walkers” who have lived to tell the tale

“I have rugby tackled a man walking alone with his girlfriend on London road in St. Albans because I was texting while walking at speed and tripped over a wobbly paving stone.”

“I have walked into a low-hanging tree branch and almost knocked myself out while tweeting.”

“I walked into a shop window and I’ve also fallen over using my phone”

- Ends -



About SquareTrade

SquareTrade is the top-rated protection plan trusted by millions of happy customers for its fast and exceptional service. SquareTrade protects mobile devices, laptops and tablets, and other consumer electronics and appliances from malfunctions, accidental damage and life's frequent mishaps. Unlike old-fashioned warranties, SquareTrade is designed for today's consumer and uses innovative technology to deliver a zero hassle claims process. SquareTrade has more than 200,000 fans on Facebook, consistently wins industry awards and receives thousands of 5-star reviews for its legendary customer service. Top retailers around the world offer SquareTrade, achieving significant sales growth and happier customers. Privately held, SquareTrade's investors include Bain Capital and Bain Capital Ventures. SquareTrade is headquartered in San Francisco and London. For more information, go to www.squaretrade.com.

Data Sources:

To learn more about the prevalence of smartphone accidents and the associated costs, we launched an online survey to collect feedback from thousands of smartphone users across Europe and Scandinavia. The survey was fielded in August 2014 using two of the highest-quality online panel providers in the world: Qualtrics and ResearchNow. Demographic weights were applied to the results for each country to ensure that accident rates for each country could be appropriately compared.