



### **A NEW "TECHNOLOGY" TOBACCO**

I think most of us are familiar with the tobacco wars of recent times and how it has manifested itself into aspects of our lives through issues like smoking at public venues, lawsuits from addicts suing manufacturers, corporate sponsorship of sporting events like Formula 1 and advertising in general, pregnant mothers, etc. I think most people would concede that if cigarettes and tobacco were invented today, they would never pass organisations like the Therapeutic Goods Administration who are responsible for clearing products for safety before being released to the Australian market. However could we now have a new tobacco brewing on our doorsteps.

There is a growing wave of scientists who believe mobile phones will be the new tobacco. Thus terms like passive mobile use and usage bans in public may be a realistic possibility. Like tobacco companies in the past, mobile companies deny any link between their product and things like cancer. In fact phone manufacturers spend vast amounts of money discrediting findings that say otherwise. Insiders have come out and said that long term use may be dangerous and warning information is now made available. Now a growing momentum of lawsuits are being filed, so far all have been dismissed. There are even now support groups to help people who are addicted to their phone and people as young as 6 are found to be heavy users. It bears a lot of similarities to tobacco. However phone companies are not making their product addictive like tobacco and given the global use and endless studies on mobiles there is not a conclusive study saying they are dangerous.

What does that mean you should do? Well like they say with anything, do it in moderation. Apart from the possible health risks of heavy mobile phone use, it is becoming another anti-social activity, annoying for fellow commuters in trains and patrons in movies and is spawning a whole new butchered version of the English language.

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