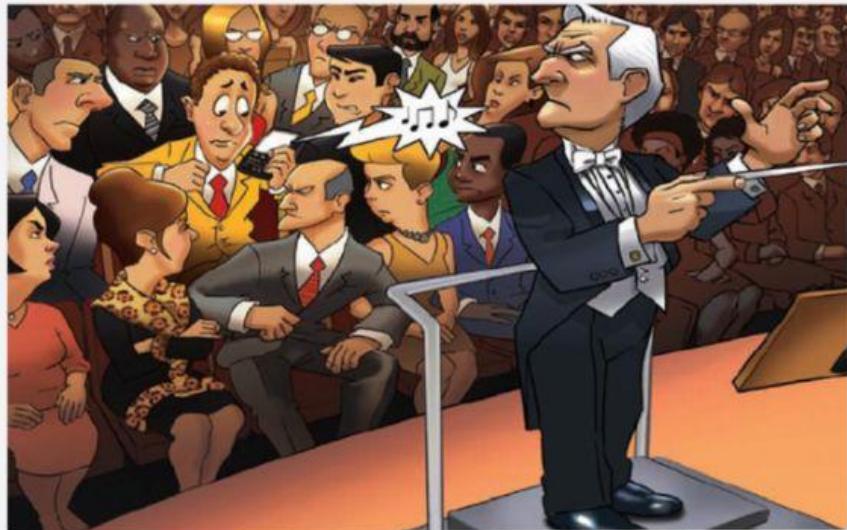


**OPINION****Modern Menace or Benefit?**

Today life without a cell phone is [redacted]. I must be one of the few people I know who does not [redacted] one. To many, this fact causes surprise and even [redacted]. "You don't have a cell phone?" It's as if I were an [redacted]. The way I see it, cell phones are more of a [redacted] than a benefit to society.



First, they actually reduce [redacted] and communication. I have seen groups of teenagers hanging out, and each one is glued to a cell phone. The teens simply don't talk to one another. Then there are those people who film the most [redacted] scenes and post them on the Internet. That can lead to cell phone [redacted], which is another serious problem.

Also cell phones have become the main cause of [redacted] for drivers. Many countries have banned their use for drivers—for a good reason. Drivers are unable to [redacted] on the road, and, as a result, they have less concentration and slower reaction time. They put themselves, their passengers, and others at [redacted].

In my opinion, the most [redacted] problem is the use of cell phones in public places. Some time ago, during a New York Philharmonic concert, a telephone went off

near the end of Mahler's Ninth Symphony. The marimba ring tone began to compete with the [redacted]. The cell phone rang so loud that the conductor had to stop the music. The [redacted] wanted to kick out the owner of the phone.

Although the cell phone is a global [redacted], I realize that the [redacted] does bring some benefits. For example, during hurricanes and [redacted], many people stuck under [redacted] have been saved thanks to their cell phone. People also carry cell phone for personal [redacted] reasons. Parents concerned about their children's well-being frequently [redacted] cell phones for their kids even before they can read and write.

In my case, I'd rather not have those benefits. I'm quite [redacted] to live without a cell phone, and be free from constant annoyance.