READING

**Read the article about mobile phones and say whether you are going to use your mobile phones more or less in the future. Living with risk**

TECHNOLOGY

**UNIT 6**

Every season seems to bring anotherscary story about potential dangers of 

new technologies, like the one revealing

the possible links between mobile phone

radiation and brain damage. Mobile use

may cause premature Alzheimer’s, though

the study in question looked at the effects

of electromagnetic radiation on rats, not

people. None of those stories has dented

the popularity of mobile handsets. Instead,

what’s freaking Europeans out is the idea

of electromagnetic radiation from phone

masts.

The rage over masts is strange. Mobile

phone users tend to be exposed to much

higher levels of radiation from the handsets

than they are from masts, because they

are so much closer to the source. But that

hasn’t stopped 320 million Europeans from

buying mobile phones or activists from

organising to prevent the installation of

transmitters.

But why all the fuss?

According to the French

Environmental Health

and Safety Agency’s

report, no health risk

can be linked to mobile

phones or base stations.

On the other hand, the Scientific Committee

on Electromagnetic Fields published a

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report stating that antennas could cause

sleep disturbance and headaches and

weaken the immune system. However, the

independent experts who signed the first

report called for more research into the

effect of mobile phone radiation on children

and admitted that other effects had yet to be

sufficiently explored.

We can’t wait for a final safety verdict.

We need to decide now whether the

convenience of a mobile phone is worth

the potential hazard, we must make some

kind of analysis of the cost and the benefit.

And we need ways to make the risk feel

acceptable, because there’s no such thing

as total proof, no such thing as zero risk.

*(Adapted from James Geary article for*

*TIME Magazine July 28, 2003.)*

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