

# THE AGE

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150 YEARS - SINCE 1854

## Msg on text sex: u r sprung

Soccer star David Beckham is the latest high-profile person accused of being caught in the act of mobile phone philandering, writes **Dan Silkstone**.

**T**hey used to say a man was led by his penis but these days, whether you are male or female, it might be your thumb that lands you in extramarital trouble.

That friend in your pocket — the sleek, shiny phone you just can't do without — is also a dossier of your most private text messages and numbers. And some of them might be best kept secret.

Take this week's revelations of the apparent saucy exchange between soft-drink salesman David Beckham and his former "personal assistant" Rebecca Loos. Among the (printable) highlights, Ms Loos tells the soccer star: "U should see me, naked with only a white cotton g-string," to which Becks supposedly responds: "Love the sound of that cotton."

Sex scandals and text messages go together, like . . . well,

sex scandals and footy players.

Then there's Warney — accused last year of bombarding South African woman Helen Cohen Alon with salacious SMS entreaties. And that was after admitting, three years before, to making lewd phone calls to a British nurse.

Not that he was the first to fall in Britain. Prince Charles got into trouble a decade ago with Diana — and the rest of the world — thanks to a mobile-phone conversation with Camilla Parker-Bowles that was mysteriously taped. And that was after the time his wife hit the redial button on his mobile to find out who he had been talking with.

In an age where our most basic communications are mediated by technology, experts agree it's increasingly likely that phone philanderers and chat-room cheaters will be



**Phones and scandals go hand-in-hand.**

tripped up by their own gadgets and devices. An Associated Press report last year suggested nine out of 10 extramarital affairs in Italy were exposed by partners checking mobiles.

Angela Lewis, commentator on technology and relationships, has researched "cyber infidelity". She says texting, emailing and chat rooms combine the instant gratification of an immediate response with the comfort of a technological buffer. As a result, people are less inhibited and communications can become intimate far more quickly, she says.

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