

The Ubiquitous Cell Phone, an Evolution in Telecommunications

The ubiquitous cell phone has revolutionized the way people communicate. Communication has become more efficient, and way more accessible. Gone are the days of searching for a pay phone, and then searching for those evasive quarters. Cell phones have evolved from a large, one-dimensional device to its present multi dimensional, small form. They keep millions of people in touch with business, family and friends. In addition, they are proven to be very valuable during times of emergency. Contemporary cell phones perform many functions, access to the Internet, access to streaming data, video cameras, and entertainment. They are clearly a great way to communicate, and in some cases are replacing traditional telephones.

In 1843 Michael Faraday did a series of experiments that ultimately lead to the underlining principals of today's cell phones. By 1947, a crude mobile phone was developed, and in 1977 cell phones went public. The city of Chicago was where the first service was started with around 2000 subscribers. The term cell phone originated from the use of many base stations to divide service areas into multiple cells. These multiple cells allowed for a wider range of coverage, and a greater call volume. The 1980's saw a genuine proliferation of cell phone use, and by the 1990s analog signals were being replaced by digital signals.

Like televisions, computers, and all other electrical devices, mobile phones emit electromagnetic radiation. The fear was that these devices were being held too close to an individual's head, and this radiation could cause some form of brain cancer. In a 1999 study, investigators at the Orebro Medical Centre in Sweden compared the past mobile phone use of 209 Swedish brain tumor patients and 425 healthy people. The study found no mobile phone/brain cancer link in virtually all respects, cancer researcher John E. Moulder, Ph.D., says. All the available scientific evidence does not show that any health problems are associated with using wireless phones in adults, children, and teenagers. In spite of this, prudent precautions should be exercised. These include taking measures to move the cell phone antenna at least eight inches away from your head by using hands-free sets, remote earpieces and microphones, or installing radiation shields for hand held phones.

In spite of the unbelievable demand for cell phones, it took cellular phone service 37 years total to become commercially accessible in the US, according to the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association. Today there are more than 60 million customers with cell phones, in spite of the fact that wireless service was just developed nearly 50 years ago. The cellular business was a \$3 million market 25 years ago and has grown exponentially to close to a \$30 billion per year industry, and projections far exceed those numbers.

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