

## How Cell Phones Have Changed Our Lives

Ever since the mid 1980s, cell phones have been quickly moving their way into our everyday lives, especially with the introduction of camera phones in the early part of the new millennium. As cell phones evolve they have more and more of an impact on our everyday lives and I want to just how much they are impacting. As with new technology in any other form, cell phones have changed greatly over their relatively short life spans. As these changes occur, so does the populations like and sometimes dislike for these new smart phones. One of the major problems occurring with cell phones in modern times is that people use them at inappropriate times, such as when they are checking out of a grocery store. Even though there are a couple negative aspects about cell phones, my research and my paper are going to mainly the benefits of cell phones in the United States of America. My research focuses on a couple of key areas in cell phone communication, such as the evolution of cell phones, text messaging, smart phones and other cell phone applications as well as my own research including a survey that I distributed to some of my classmates.

### The History

The first cell phone was much different than what we have today. In 1984 the Motorola Dyna TAC8000X was released into the market (Associated Press, 2005). This phone was the first of its kind and was totally unlike anything that anybody in the United States had ever seen before. Due to its size and weight the TAC8000X has become known as the `brick`. The brick weighted two pounds and was an outstanding

\$3,995 when it was released (Associated Press). The TAC8000X took 12 years to get onto the market from the time that it was first thought about. The head of the design team for the brick got the orders to start designing the phone in 1972 (Associated Press).

From the introduction of the brick in 1984 we go to 1992 when the first commercial text message was sent (Cell-Phone-Accessories.com). The text message was sent by a man named Neil Papworth to a Richard Jarvis, who was attending a Christmas party in Newbury England, and read "Merry Christmas" (Shannon, 2007). The text message that was sent that night was not at all like the messages we send today. At that time cell phones were not built to type out individual letters, so Papworth sent his message using a computer keyboard (Shannon).

## Text Messaging

Ever since that day in 1992 when Neil Papworth sent the first text message, the text message revolution has exploded. As more and more people get cell phones every year the number of text messages sent and received soars with them. In just the past year the number of cell phone subscriptions across the nation increased to 24.3 million, which is about 105 cell phones for every 100 people (Writer, 2008). At the end of last year there was an increase of 26 percent increase in text messages sent by cell phones from the previous year which ended up being 1,256 billion (Writer). Let me give you some figures from the Taipei Times about the number of text messages in the fourth quarter last year. There was a growth of 9 percent from just the previous quarter, with the average cell phone user sending 54.7 text messages during the quarter and 18.2 text messages per month (Writer). Now these numbers could be skewed either way because

there are some people that do not use their cell phone for text messaging or they do not even have text messaging on their phone and on the other hand, there are people who send upwards of 50 text messages a day or more.

Those are just some numbers and facts about text messaging and from those you can see just how much text messaging is impacting our everyday lives, but there also tests and research being done to see how cell phones and text messaging are improving society. On April 16<sup>th</sup> Samsung Mobile announced that through a survey focused on family texting habits, that text messaging is improving the parent-teen relationship (Business Wire, 2008). Some findings of the survey show that teens are teaching their parents how to text message, however teens are still text messaging more and they are far surpassing the amounts mentioned before.

If you remember, on average during the last quarter of last year, the average cell phone subscriber sent 18.2 text messages per month (Writer, 2008). From Samsungs survey they found that teens are sending 455 text messages and receiving 467 per month (Business Wire, 2008). That is right around 15 text messages sent and 16 received every day. On the other hand, parents that do text message only send about 84 messages and receive 96 per month. Not only are parents learning to text message, but it is also helping the communication between them and their children.

Out of all of the teenagers that participated in the survey (13-19 years old), 53 percent said that they think that their relationship with their parents have improved since their parents have started text messaging (Business Wire, 2008). Along with that,

they found that 51 percent of parents agree that since they have started text messaging they have been their relationship with their teenager has improved.

### Cell Phone Applications

Over the last couple of years, cell phone applications such as text messaging, gaming, music, banking, the internet, e-mail, global positioning system (GPS) and many others have been revolutionizing the cell phone as we know it. Since I already talked extensively about text messaging I will focus on the other applications and some new ones that not too many people know about.

With the new world of smart phones, applications are nearly endless. Smart phones are phones that are offer PC like functions while still letting you be able to talk on them. These phones offer advanced versions of normal applications such as e-mail and other internet applications. They make it easier to access the internet by using advanced operating systems almost like windows for your phone. These smart phones include phones such as the iPhone, the blackberry, the Verizon Q and many others.

One new cell phone application that I found really interesting was one by AllOne Mobile. This new application would let people access their personal health records on their cell phones and PDAs (McGee, 2008). At first I thought that this might be a bad idea, in case you lost your phone and somebody else found it and had access to your information. Then, when I read the article I found the benefits of this application. This application would allow you to get your records if something happened like you broke a bone or got sick when you were on vacation or on a business trip and you could get help

right away with no trouble. They did not really mention anything about security but I would imagine that they will have a very advanced and in depth, security plan on this application.

## Research Results

For the survey section of my paper I decided to use surveymonkey.com. The reason that I decided to do it this way was because I thought that I would get better and truer results than a traditional survey due to the fact that people were not forced to take part in the survey. This theory however, backfired. I sent my survey to 248 students in a couple of my classes, but only 25 people actually took the time to fill out the survey. This really disappointed me because I stated in my e-mail that this was just a short survey that might take two minutes and I was not lying, as you can see below in figure 1 there are only nine questions and there is one open answered question that you can choose to answer. Some of the answers that I got in the survey surprised me and some of them I could have predicted.

First of all, 60 percent of my participants fell into the 18-20 years of age range. I also had 32 percent of participants fell into the 21-25 year old range and one person in each the 30-40 and 40< age ranges. As far as the gender difference, 53 percent were males and 40 percent were female with eight percent filling in the `other` answer, meaning either they did not want to put in the gender, they did fall into the other category or they were just trying to be funny. I found it interesting that everybody that filled out the survey had either a cell phone or a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). When I asked what applications the participants had on their phones I found that everybody

had text messaging, 37.5 percent had the internet, 41.7 had games, 8.3 percent had banking, 37.5 percent had e-mail and one person added that they music on their cell phone. I have put the answers to question number 5 into the chart below in figure 1.1 so it will be easier to understand rather than me writing out all of the numbers. One of the questions that I asked, that the answer surprised me was if the participants talk or sent text messages more with their cell phones. Even though cell phones were made to call people on I found that only 56 percent of the participants use their cell phones to talk more where as 44 percent stated that they text message more than use their phones for calling. We talk a lot in most of my classes about how cell phones may cause people to feel a lack of personal connection so I asked a question about that and only 12 percent said that they did fell a lack of personal communication where 88 percent said that they do not fell a lack of personal communication. My next question was related to a statement that I have heard multiple people say and when I asked if the participants could live without their cell phone or PDA 60 percent said that they could not. I do not know if that is necessarily a good thing that we have become that dependent on our portable devices. The last question that I asked was how many years the participants have had a cell phone or PDA and 56 percent said that they have had one for between 5 and 7 years. The information from this question actually formed a pretty good bell curve between the 2 and 10 year range with the mean being the 5-7 year group.

The last part of my survey was where people could leave a comment if they wanted and I would put any good ones into my paper. Out of the 25 participants only one person actually left me a message with permission to put it into my paper. Ryan

Subers (Sophomore IST) left a message that said, "I used to think I could not live without my phone, but in the beginning of semester my phone broke and I waited a month to get a new one so I didn't have to pay for the new phone. It made me realize I could live without a cell phone, but it was really hard to do so especially with planning my weekends." I really liked this comment and I am glad he left it because it was based around the question of, "Could you live without your cell phone or PDA," which was the most interesting question of the who survey I think.

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Figure 1

1. Age?

>18  
18-20  
21-25  
26-30  
30-40  
40>

2. Gender?

Male  
Female  
Other

3. Do you have a cell phone or PDA?

Yes  
No

4. Which of these applications do you have on your phone or PDA?

Text Messaging  
Internet  
Games  
Banking

E-mail  
Other (Please Specify)

5. How often do you use each application?

	Never	Once	Once a	A couple times	Everyday	A couple times
A lot every						
Calling		A month	week	a week	every day	day

Calling

Text  
Messaging  
Internet

Games

Banking

E-mail

6. Would you say that you talk on you cell phone or text message more every day?

Talk  
Text

7. Does the use of your cell phone or PDA make you feel less connected from people due to lack of face to face communication?

Yes  
No

8. Would you say that you could not live without your cell phone or PDA?

Yes  
No

9. How many years have you had a cell phone or PDA?

<1  
1-2  
2-3  
3-4  
5-7  
7-10  
11<

10. The answers to this survey are going into a research paper and if you would like, you can add any comments that you feel are relevant and I will put them into my



paper. If you add your name I will cite you and if not I can make it anonymous. You do not need to write anything.

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Figure 1.1

	Never	Once a month	Once a week	A couple times a week	Everyday	A couple times every day	A lot every day	Rating average
Calling	0%	0%	0%	8%	16%	48%	28%	5.96
Text messaging	0%	0%	0%	28%	12%	16%	44%	5.76
Internet	72.7%	9.1%	0%	4.5%	0%	9.1%	4.5%	1.95
Games	59.1%	27.3%	0%	9.1%	0%	4.5%	0%	1.77
Banking	90.9%	0%	0%	4.5%	0%	4.5%	0%	1.36
E-mail	82.6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8.7%	8.7%	1.96

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### Conclusion

This research paper was one of the most difficult, time consuming and most interesting papers that I have done. It took a lot of research but I think that I found out what I wanted to know about how cell phones are affecting our lives. The first thing that I learned about cell phones was some of the history behind cell phones. There are a lot of differences from the original brick that weighed 2 pounds (32 ounces) to the new Motorola Razor that weighs only 3.49 ounces (Verizonwireless.com). The next thing that I learned through my research and my survey that text messaging is growing and becoming larger part of our everyday lives. Along with this, text messaging is also helping to strengthen the relationship of some parents with their teenagers by helping them communicate more. I also learned that there are a lot of applications for your cell phone and with the innovation of the smart phones there are more and more

applications being created every day. Some of these applications are created for fun, some are to help us communicate better and some new ones that are keeping us safe like the one from AllOne Mobile. One of the most interesting things to me about this project was my survey. I really enjoyed using surveymonkey.com and I like how it automatically analyzes your data for you. The only problem was the lack of response from my fellow classmates. Other than that I found some interesting facts from the results of this survey. Two of the most interesting things that I found were that almost half of the participants, use their phones to text message more than talk to people and that 60 percent of participants say that they could not live without their cell phone or PDA.

My overall impression of cell phones, after doing this research, is that cell phones and PDAs are in fact having a huge impact on our daily lives and it looks like new information points out that they are not going to be backing off anytime soon. I do not know yet if this is a bad thing or a good thing but there I can say that the way we operate and communicate in our everyday lives is changing and it is going to continue to change.