

Alexander graham bell and the telephone: making the world a lot smaller



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Since the time it was invented, the telephone had developed from being a novelty item to a necessity which is now present in every home and business all over the world (McMaster 1). In fact, it seems to be difficult to imagine to the centuries prior to its invention. It is for this reason that this paper will present supporting evidence as to why Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone (Haven 150) can be considered as an individual who has made a positive impact to the world as we know it.

The paper would first present information that discusses briefly the circumstances and events that had led to the invention of the telephone. It would then provide information on the development of the telephone throughout the years as well as how the concept that had brought about the invention of the telephone led to the development of other common means of communication that is currently used today.

The telephone is, no doubt, the single most widely used means of communication throughout the world. In fact, it is the telephone, and not the telegraph, that has been regarded as the first communications superhighway used by human societies.

This is because unlike the telegraph, the telephone was the first tool that had allowed people to converse with each other on a real-time basis as if they were face-to-face without both parties having to be present in the same place at the same time (Haven 150).

The man behind this ground-breaking invention was Alexander Graham Bell. Commonly referred to by many historians and biographers merely as

Graham Bell, came from a family of men who had been fascinated with the science behind speech.

While his grandfather, Alexander Bell, began the quest to study the principles behind how speech becomes possible, it was Graham Bell's father, Alexander Melvin Bell, who began to study the principles in speech through using a scientific approach. This fascinated the young Graham Bell. This became the reason why he took up the profession to become a teacher for the deaf (Burlingame 102; Haven 150).

Contrary to the popular belief, Alexander Graham Bell did not invent the telephone as we know it. In fact, he only invented the concept and the means used by telephones today which is the ability of different sounds brought about by speech activity to be carried through an electric current (Burlingame 103; Haven 150; McMaster 5).

In fact, the first telephone system we have come to know today was developed by Elisha Gray, an electrician who worked for Western Electric which was, at that time, a part-subsubsidiary of Western Union. Despite this, it was Alexander Graham Bell who had first filed for a patent for the telephone invention, beating Gray by just a few months (Haven 151).

Along with his colleague, Thomas Watson, and a series of trial and errors, Alexander Graham Bell discovered that compressed carbon had the ability to transmit weak electric signals from one point to the other. The more compressed the carbon is, the greater its capability to transmit electrical current between two points (Haven 151).

It was on March 10, 1876 when through the help of an acid-based liquid transmitter to serve as the source of electric current, Alexander Graham Bell was able to first transmit the words “ Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you” (Haven 151; Aversano 5). From that day, the telephone system as how we know it slowly developed.

The first telephone system was launched in New Haven, Connecticut in 1878. The system comprised of a switchboard serving only 47 customers. By the late 1890s, the demand for telephones greatly increased and soon virtually every town and city in Connecticut was furnished with a telephone (Haven 152).

Since then, the telephone has been continuously developed into a mere tool to allow simulated face to face communication between two individuals who were not located in the same place in a particular time into a communications device that now provides the same features commonly found in a computer.

Apart from communication through the use of speech, telephones today have the capability to transmit real-time videos to make the conversation a lot more personal. It also now provides the capability to send messages through a Short Messaging System, also known as SMS, between each other (Haven 152).

It was not only the telephone that Alexander Graham Bell invented that had made a huge contribution to the ability for individuals to communicate with each other across great distances. Graham Bell had also been known to have developed the telegraph which was invented by Samuel Morse.

Through his research and experiments, Graham Bell was able to modify Morse's invention into being able to transmit multiple messages through the same wire at the same time. This had been known as the multiple-telegraph (Burlingame 104).

Through his research with electrodynamics, he had discovered that, with the use of tuning forks, the sound waves produced by the tuning forks provides the needed breaks within a magnetic transmittal which is used in telegraphic transfer at a faster rate than when it is done manually as in the case of the invention created by Morse (Burlingame 106).

Alexander Graham Bell's invention has also made business transactions to become more convenient. By means of business transaction, this is not limited to corporate personal. The development of the automated voice response in the 1970s and now used by academic and business establishments has now made various transactions now to be more convenient and more efficient both on the part of the establishment and to the individuals that they serve.

The automated voice response system provided in 800 Toll-Free numbers used by various establishments can now immediately route an individual to the proper department by simply selecting from a list of options provided by the voice prompt (Aversano 5).

At the time that the telephone system was invented and the patent awarded to Alexander Graham Bell, he established the Bell Telephone Company. Over the years, this has come to be known as AT&T Communication which is now the largest communications provider in the United States.

While the initial monopoly of AT&T had prompted the Supreme Court to impose a ruling to allow other communications company to be established, the increasing demand for communications technology has now led to the development of the communications industry to become one of the most lucrative industries in the United States (McMaster 1-3) which has, in turn, led to the development of more jobs for more individuals across the country.