

The telephone: then and now

[Technology](#), [Mobile Phone](#)



Jennifer Evans The Telephone: Then and Now HUMN 303: Introduction to the Humanities Instructor E. Elliott February 11, 2011 The Telephone: Then and Now The telephone was one of the greatest American inventions. Developed in the 1800's by Alexander Graham Bell, it quickly became one of the most used inventions in the world. The telephone had many impacts on society and the way we communicated and still plays a huge role in the world we live today. The telephone has developed from something that was not a necessity to something people must have.

The telephone opened the door for communications across the world and played a part in the development of personal and business cultures by allowing people from different countries the ability to communicate with ease. Carl F. Gauss and Ernst H. Weber built the electromagnetic telegraph in 1814 and was the first step to making electrical signals travel from one device to another which influenced the invention of the telephone (Mann, 2010). Alexander Graham Bell first introduced the telephone to the public on May 10, 1876 (Shulman, 2008).

Some developments had already taken place on the invention of a way to obtain voice transmission, but a device that actually could do it had not yet been developed (Mann, 2010). The problem was developing the transmitter which is the device in the phone that actually allows each person to hear each end of the conversation (Shulman, 2008). Bell had to defend himself in several court cases because of a German inventor by the name of Phillip Reiss already developed a device like the telephone in 1816 (Shulman, 2008). Bell eventually won his patent and invented the first telephone company (Shulman, 2008).

Globally, the invention of the telephone was not accepted. People in other countries viewed it as evil, or a way someone could spy on them (Mann, 2010). The telephone was mostly utilized in foreign countries for government, military, and business use only and the general public did not own them (Shulman 2008). European countries did not accept the invention of the telephone and leaders of these countries laughed at its presentation (Mann, 2010). Today, on a global level, we see that the phone did eventually become accepted worldwide and cultures of all kinds are dependent upon its use.

The world no longer had to communicate through mail or other means that did not send clear messages. The telephone has evolved to a device that people cannot leave home without and this is obvious in every country around the world. Global communications are used today for government communications, business dealings, and personal relationships (Shulman, 2008). The economy grows from the use of telephones because we are able to pay bills and make business deals from anywhere. People make purchases on the phone and telemarketers use telephones to assist in sales marketing.

The invention of the telephone had many impacts on society. It improved communication so that people could maintain more relationships. People had no lines of communication before its development. The mail was the only option and was a very timely process. The impact of the telephone on society when Alexander Graham Bell developed it was to allow everyone, including the poor to have communication ability through the use of the

telephone (Mann, 2010). The telephone was the first device that permitted voice communication over long distances.

Because of this technology your society and the world changed. It is easy to take technology, inventions, and advances in any field for granted. We accept that we have computers, appliances, and the telephones. We do not consider the impact that these technologies have on our lives and they do have an impact, whether good or bad. They affect our lives in ways that we may not even know. One of the most influential, and controversial, inventions has been that of the telephone (Shulman, 2008). When the telephone was introduced it was met with some resistance and a few technical problems.

As time passed it became so accepted that almost everyone in the western world had a telephone. The telephone was marketed in that it would increase revenue, employment, and improve communication (Telephone calls for all, 2007). During World War II, the telephone systems were destroyed in the war stricken countries and the US remained intact (Farley, 2005). The military had already developed radio communications but the telephone was still just a landline. This gave the United States a jump in the invention of mobile communications (Farley, 2005).

Dr. Martin Cooper developed the modern day cell phone (Farley, 2005). He invented the technology responsible for the cell phone when he was the Director of Research and Development at Motorola (Farley, 2005). Dr. Martin Cooper is also known as the first person to make a call on a cell phone and his famous first call took place in April of 1973 in New York (Farley, 2005).

Cell phones and internet have become the most widely used means of communication and we are in a culture of mobile dependence. Everywhere we go people are on their cell phones or on the internet.

Businesses use free access to the internet to attract customers. The telephone and mobile communications have given people access to the world and all the things the world has to offer us in the means of communication with people. The cellular phone industry has grown rapidly with major effects on the economy. People pay monthly bills and buy new phones all the time. I believe there has been a massive culture shift over time with the invention of the telephone. Culture in the earlier time of the invention of the telephone was resentful of the device.

We now see a culture of dependency on the phone and the internet. Cell phones look like small computers now and internet access is easily obtainable from anywhere. From rejection to acceptance, the phone was a major invention of American history. The telephone was one of the greatest inventions in American history. Most people today do not leave their home without some type of communication device with them. In most cases, this is a mobile phone but the invention of the mobile phone was dependent upon the invention of the telephone and how to transmit voice signals.

The only difference being one has wires and one does not. Communications across the globe are happening everyday and contributes to our growing and expanding culture. If we were not able to communicate with other countries, we would not have a grasp on the events or changes happening around the world. The telephone made a huge impact on the world and our ability to

communicate on a global level. The culture shift with the invention of the telephone is dramatic and the economy has definitely reaped the benefits. The telephone and mobile phones were milestones in America's history and the we are still inventing new types of telephone devices today. References Farley, T. (2005, April). Mobile telephone history. *Telektronikk*,(3). Retrieved from <http://www.cems.uwe.ac.uk> Mann, M. (2010). The deep digital divide: The telephone in British India 1883-1933. *Historical Social Research*, 35(1), 188-208. Shulman, S. (2008). A game of telephone. *Technology Review*, 111(6), M18 Telephone calls for all. (2007). *New Scientist*, (193)(2589), 14. Retrieved from EBSCOhost. an: 23996043.