

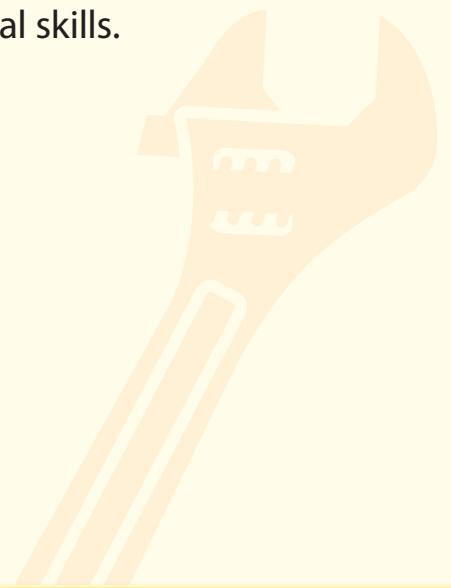
Chapter 9

More Than a Phone: Exploring Mobile Devices



Overview

Forget sunglasses, handbags, and shoes—in today’s world, everyone’s favorite accessory is a mobile device. In this chapter, you will learn about the different types of mobile devices, their features, and how to observe safety rules and etiquette while using them. Included is a discussion of the downsides of using mobile devices, including their negative effects on social skills.



Key Terms

- Mobile devices
- Text messages
- Application
- Mobile application
- Bluetooth
- Pagers
- Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)
- Smartphones
- Tablet



Mobile devices allow on-the-go communications that were unimaginable to your parents and grandparents.

What Is a Mobile Device?

Some consider only smartphones and tablet computers—devices that have an Internet connection—to be **mobile devices**, while others consider mobile devices to be any portable media device, such as an MP3 player. Mobile devices have freed activities (such as placing phone calls or using a computer) that were once tied to a stationary device (such as a landline telephone or a desktop computer). Being able to make a phone call, send an email, or surf the Web while walking down the street once seemed like a scenario from a science fiction story. But mobile devices have made possible on-the-go communications that were unimaginable to your parents and grandparents.

Why We Use Mobile Devices

Before there were telephones, it was extremely difficult for people to communicate over long distances. Most communication took place via messengers, handwritten letters, or (later) telegraphs. The invention of telephones greatly sped up long-distance communication. Since then, people have tried to make communication even faster and more efficient. Mobile devices are, to date, the fastest form of communication we have.

Three common uses of mobile devices are shown below:

1 Texting

Communicating has become quick and easy with **text messages**, which are written (as opposed to verbal) messages people send each other on their mobile devices. Many people find texting quicker and more efficient than phone calls. Older cell phones have tiny keyboards to use when typing these messages, while smartphones and other mobile devices have touchscreen keyboards.

2 Internet Browsing

Got a question that needs an answer? Web surfing has become one of the most popular uses of mobile devices today. Information is literally at the fingertips of anyone using a mobile device.

3 Applications

An **application** (or *app* for short) is software that performs useful tasks, such as word processing. A **mobile application** (or *mobile app*) is an app designed to run on mobile devices. Practical apps include those for banking and navigation (GPS). Fun apps include media players and games.



Downsides of Using Mobile Devices

While mobile devices have made communication and information access easy, **there are downsides to the explosion of mobile device use in our society:**

1 Lack of Social Skills

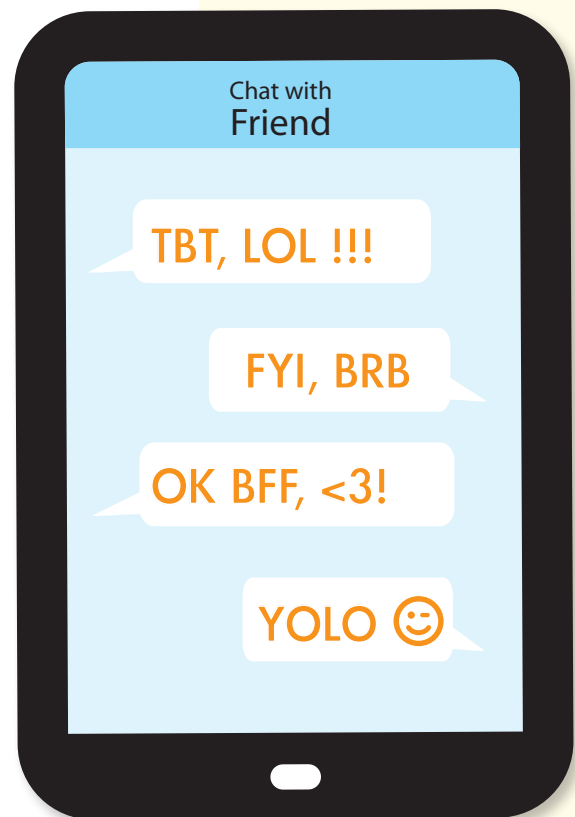
Many people now text their family, friends, and acquaintances more than they call or speak face to face with them. Some experts believe that relying too heavily on mobile devices for communication discourages face-to-face social interactions, which can lead to isolation and depression.

2 Safety Risks

Because of the level of distraction it causes, texting while driving has become a controversial, much-debated topic. Smartphone apps can also pose serious distractions. Some states have responded to these dangers by banning some uses of mobile devices while driving. **Bluetooth**, a wireless technology, has allowed car manufacturers to combat mobile device safety concerns. Drivers using Bluetooth-enabled devices can talk hands-free, which allows them (theoretically) to keep their attention on the road. However, even people using hands-free devices can become too involved in a conversation and lose their focus on driving.

3 Evolving Language

Abbreviations used in texting, such as *lol* (*laugh out loud*) and *ttyl* (*talk to you later*) are changing the way we communicate. Some experts argue that the informal language used in texting will eventually alter the English language for the worse and change how we write.



Abbreviations used in text messages are changing the way we communicate, perhaps for the worse.

The Evolution of Mobile Devices

1970s

In 1973, the world's first cell phone call was placed by a manager at Motorola. The company had spent about \$1 million developing the cell phone, which weighed 3.3 lbs. (1.5 kg). Consumers weren't able to buy cell phones until nearly 10 years later, but if they could have purchased the 1973 cell phone, it would have cost almost \$10,000. This pivotal moment in technology history set the stage for the evolution of mobile devices. Cell phone technology continued to progress rapidly throughout the 1970s as more and more people saw the value in mobile communication.

The first cell phone was nicknamed "the brick."



1980s

Pagers became instrumental business tools in the 1970s and 1980s. **Pagers**, which are personal devices designed for simple messages, made it easy to reach someone who was not at home or in the office. Callers would transmit a phone number to the pager, and the recipient would then find a telephone and call the number. Eventually, pager users created a code of numbers to send messages to one another. (These numbers were like very basic text messages.) Some pagers could record and play back voice messages as well as numerical messages. By 1983, basic mobile phones became accessible to the public, making telephone communication outside the home a growing trend. However, early cell phones had a talk time of under an hour and took from 8 to 10 hours to recharge. They also cost about \$4,000, which made them too expensive for most people. In 1989, Motorola started selling the first flip phone, a hinged phone that folds in half so it can fit in a pocket.

Pagers were small enough to clip to a belt loop.



PDA's could not surf the Web.



1990s

By the mid-1990s, cell phone technology had advanced significantly, and pagers fell out of favor. A new technology made available to the public in the mid-1990s was the **Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)**. A PDA's main function was to act as a personal organizer by recording, tracking, and managing personal data. PDAs were highly popular for their calendar functions and stylus (or pen) navigation. However, when PDAs were introduced, they had no Internet browsing capabilities, and the devices didn't automatically sync with computers. As the technology evolved, users were able to make phone calls, check email, and browse the Internet on their PDAs.



2000s

While PDAs offered great benefits to users, the development of **smartphones** in the late 1990s and early 2000s changed the landscape of mobile device technology. Smartphones are more advanced than basic mobile phones, and they have absorbed the functions of basic PDAs. Smartphones offer maximum computing and connectivity abilities. Today, almost all PDAs have morphed into smartphones.



2010s

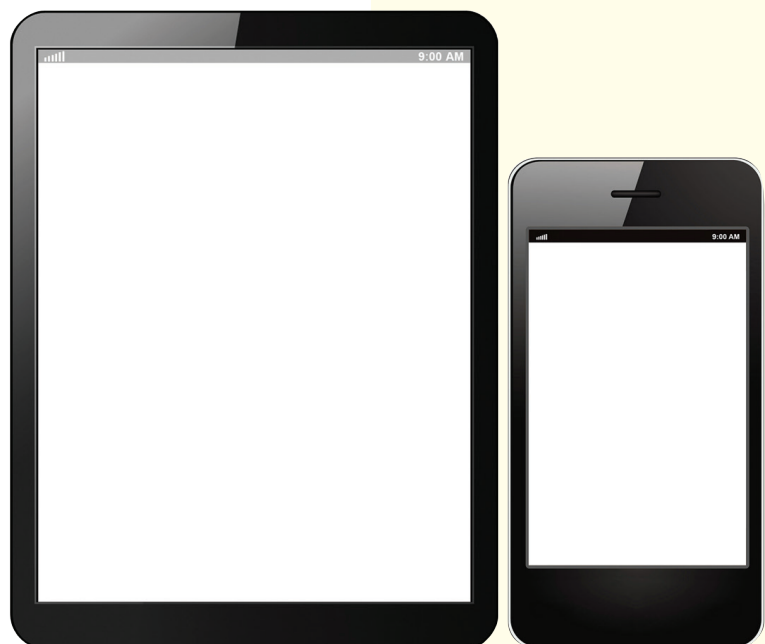
Smartphones remain extremely popular. They dominate the mobile device world with feature-rich models in small, but powerful, packages. Some of the most popular features of smartphones today include those listed below:

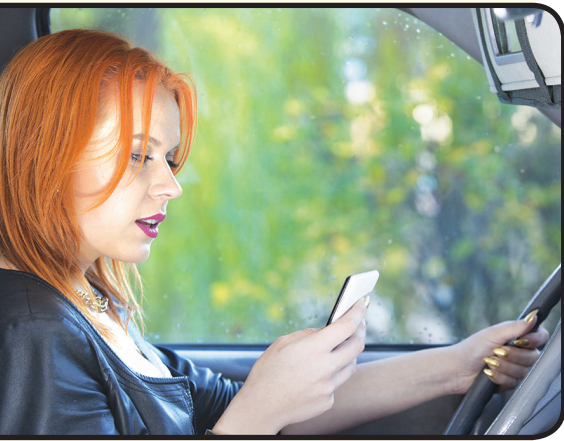
- Fast, direct Internet connection
- High-resolution touchscreens
- Multimedia capabilities
- High-resolution digital cameras
- GPS applications
- Media players
- Larger screens
- Thinner widths
- Water-resistant exteriors

Since 2010, smartphones have had a new rival: **tablet** computers. Tablet computers combine features of smartphones and laptop computers. Tablets have bigger screens than smartphones, and users generally find that multimedia applications (such as movie-streaming and graphics-creating programs) are richer on a tablet. Tablets are also easier to transport than laptop computers. However, most tablets are not phones, so some businesspeople find it necessary to own both.

Smartphones are more advanced than basic mobile phones.

Phablets, which combine features of smartphones and tablets, are currently in development.





▲ **Never text while driving. If you must send a text, pull over and park first.**

Remember:
If someone is stalking you via text, tell your parents or guardians immediately.



Text Messaging Safety

Texting can be a great way to communicate. When you need simple information—*What time does the movie start? Which pages did Mrs. Smith assign for homework?*—texting can save time. However, just as there are for all technologies, there are rules for the safe use of texting. **Would you add any rules to the list below?**

- **Never text while driving**, as you could cause an accident. If you must send a text, pull over and park first.
- Always **put your cell phone away** after texting. If you leave it lying around, it may be stolen.
- Give your number **only to people you know** and trust.
- **Don't reply to a text** if you don't know or can't tell who it is from. If you do, you may fall victim to a scam or find yourself communicating with a dangerous person.
- If someone is stalking you via text—repeatedly and relentlessly texting you over a period of time when you've told them to stop—**tell your parents or guardians** immediately.
- **Lock your phone** so that if anyone picks it up, he or she won't be able to see your texts or calling history.
- **Think carefully** before allowing someone to use your phone. If you do allow someone to use it, watch carefully to make sure he or she isn't snooping through your private information.
- Never take a compromising photo of someone and text it to others. **Never let anyone take a compromising photo of you**, because you don't know where it will end up—it could be texted to your whole school.
- **Avoid communicating only via text** so that your in-person social skills don't erode.
- **Turn off your phone at night** so the sound of incoming texts doesn't wake you and so you aren't tempted to text back. Teenagers need adequate sleep in order to be healthy and to do well in school.



Text Messaging Etiquette

Just as you would find certain actions rude, offensive, or hurtful in face-to-face communication, the same logic applies to texting. **So, when you text, apply the basic rules of common courtesy listed below:**

- If a friend shares something personal in a text, **don't share the text** with others or forward it without your friend's permission.
- **Don't use hurtful language** in texts to cyberbully another.
- Don't compose a text while in the middle of a face-to-face interaction. Whether you are talking to a friend or attending a meeting for work, most people consider it **rude to interrupt a real-life interaction** to compose a text.
- **Don't text during class.** It's probably against school rules, and it's rude to your teacher.
- **Be mindful of your audience.** Remember that texting is considered more of an informal exchange, and so it may not be appropriate to text a teacher or a boss as you would a friend.



What's Next?

As history shows us, cell phone technology advances more and more quickly every year. So, where is mobile device technology headed next?

Some experts believe that as mobile device technology progresses, mobile devices may eventually replace computers entirely. Technology companies are working to combine tablets with cell phone technologies to create handheld devices that have dual functionality as telephones and computers. The companies are trying to find a happy medium between the screen size of smartphones and tablets—a screen big enough to work on but small enough to be practical when making a phone call.

While there's no certainty of what's in store for the future, you can be sure that mobile device technologies will continue to progress. What do you think mobile devices will look like in 20 years?

▲ **Your teacher will be offended by any texting you do in class. Be mindful of your surroundings, and wait until class is over before sending texts.**

Chapter 9 Assessment

What Do You Think?

Write a reflection of three to five paragraphs on how you and your friends use mobile devices. Your paragraphs should answer the following questions:

- 1 How do you, your friends, and your family use mobile devices?
- 2 What level of risk do you encounter when using mobile devices?
- 3 Do you ever feel that you use your mobile device too much? Why?
- 4 Which of the safety rules listed on page 124 under Text Messaging Safety do you follow regularly? Explain.

Challenge: What Would You Do?

Read the scenarios below. For each, write one paragraph explaining what you would do if you were faced with a similar situation.

1 You have a long drive coming up, and you want to return some phone calls while you have the time. You're worried you might get distracted while driving, though.

What would you do? Why?

2 You send a friend a private message about your grades in math class. Without your permission, she forwards your text to everyone in her contact list.

What would you do? Why?

3 One day Ethan realizes that he never calls his friends anymore. Instead, he texts them. Sometimes he texts to avoid in-person communication. Ethan realizes that he's been feeling depressed lately.

If you were Ethan, what would you do?



Extension Activities



Activity 1 Multiple Choice

Read the questions below. Use what you have learned in this chapter to help you choose the correct answer.

- 1 What are mobile devices?
 - A. Just phones
 - B. Internet applications
 - C. Handheld computers that include many functions such as email, an Internet connection, a digital camera, and games

- 2 When was the world's first cell phone call placed?
 - A. 1973
 - B. 1982
 - C. 1993

- 3 What is a PDA's main function?
 - A. To take pictures using a digital camera
 - B. To send and receive text messages
 - C. To act as a personal organizer by recording, tracking, and managing personal data

- 4 Which is a possible downside of using a mobile device?
 - A. Information being too readily accessible
 - B. Forgetting to turn the device off
 - C. Texting while driving

- 5 Which of the following is NOT an etiquette rule for texting?
 - A. Feel free to make private texts public.
 - B. Don't use hurtful language in texts.
 - C. Avoid texting while in the middle of a face-to-face conversation.

continued



Extension Activities

Activity 2 Short Answer

Write a short response to each of the prompts below.

- 1 Define the term *mobile device*.
- 2 Explain how cell phone technology has changed from the 1970s through the 2010s.
- 3 List at least three downsides of using mobile devices.
- 4 Define the term *smartphone*.
- 5 Identify three common uses of mobile devices.



Hands-On

Mobile Device Driving Debate

Read and consider the questions below in preparation for a debate:

- Should drivers be banned from using mobile devices while they are behind the wheel?
- Is it just texting that is the problem, or is any use of a mobile device while driving a potentially deadly distraction?
- Is use of mobile devices while driving safe if drivers use hands-free technology?

These are widely debated questions, and public opinion on the topic varies. Some states have already outlawed texting while driving, making it a criminal offense to do so, while other states are still debating the issue. No states ban all mobile device use behind the wheel, but many states have laws about which types of mobile devices can be used while driving and which drivers can use them. (For example, novice drivers are banned from using mobile devices while driving in many states.)

Based on your own observations and what you've learned in this chapter, write down your opinions on the bulleted questions. Your teacher will divide you into groups based on your answers. After some preparation with your group, hold a debate with another group on one or more of the questions above.



Hands-On



Mobile Device Search

There are hundreds of mobile devices available to consumers. While many share the same features, others offer greater or fewer options. In this activity, you will conduct a cost comparison of three mobile devices to find the best value.

When you are considering a purchase, it is important to weigh your wants versus your needs. Do you need to have a certain number of voice minutes because you use your device primarily for making calls? What about using your phone for entertainment? Is this a want or a need?

When you choose one selection over another, you have to consider the *opportunity cost*, or the loss of the benefits of one option that comes when you pick another option. This means that if you pick a device with extra entertainment features, the opportunity cost may be that you lose extra voice minutes available for the same price.

Step 1

What features are most important to you in a mobile device? Rate the following in order of importance from 1 to 9, with 1 being the most important and 9 being the least important:

- Brand
- Model
- Size
- Entertainment features
- Internet connectivity
- Camera and video capabilities
- Phone capability (and quantity of voice minutes)
- Text messaging capability (and quantity of texts)
- Price

Step 2

Using the Internet, research three different mobile devices and create a table similar to **Table 9.1** to display your research.

continued



Hands-On

Mobile Device Search *continued*

Write short answers to the questions in Steps 3–5.

Step 3

What features do you value the most in a mobile device? Why?

Step 4

What are the opportunity costs between each of the three models you researched?

Step 5

Based on your research, which mobile device best fits your needs and wants? Why?

Table 9.1

Mobile Device Features			
Features	Description Phone #1	Description Phone #2	Description Phone #3
Brand			
Model			
Size			
Entertainment (games, media, Web browsing)			
Connectivity (GPS, Wi-Fi)			
Camera			
Phone capability (and quantity of voice minutes)			
Text messaging capability (and quantity of texts)			
Price			