BMG

Ben Giles - BA (Hons) Digital Media Production Third Year Student

How have Mobile Phones changed and
the Influence they now have in Everyday Life?

Mobile Phones
[Image from http://cache.gawker.com/assets/images/4/2009/12/1.jpg]

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Intro

In my essay for the investigative study unit I have asked myself how have mobile phones changed and the influence they now have in everyday life? As I myself was born in nineteen eighty seven I thought it would be a good idea to look at how the mobile phone has changed in my lifetime. I will look at what made these devices so popular and how the technology has evolved to make them such a 'must have'. I have explored the evolution of the three main networks that mobile phones are able to function on. First generation, second generation and have had an in depth look into the transition from second to the third more commonly known as 3G.

1G - First Generation

In 1987 the first mobile phone was like a brick pictured. We have to go back a little further than nineteen eighty seven for the first commercial handheld cellular phone. This Motorola was launched back in 1983 and weighed 28 ounces and was very expensive, only people who worked, actually had one of these. In the eighties their were only two mobile providers both that are still with us today, one was Vodaphone the other Cellnet now known as O_2. Both run the original first generation network also known as 1G and was an analogue transmission.

First commercial handheld cellular phone by Motorola [Image from http://www.devicedaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/commercial-mobile-phone-356x500.jpg]

2G - Second Generation

Second generation mobile network, more commonly know as just 2G, is a wireless communications network. This network introduced the ability of SMS text messages, one of the first data services for the mobile phone, the primary function was of course calling people. The second generation mobile network was also a sign of the world changing to digital with phone calls being digitally encrypted to prevent eavesdropping, listening into private conversations. The 2G network also meant that it had a bigger penetration across the United Kingdom, so more people could benefit from these services. This freedom meant that people where not tied to the home just to make a phone call to communicate with people. The mobile phones were also becoming more affordable and cheap to buy and so more people began to use these devices.

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SMS Text Messages

The ability to send and receive SMS text messages is one of the fundamental things we now do on mobile phones and is often easier than the traditional calling of people. The first SMS text message sent in the world was back in nineteen ninety two sent over the Vodaphone network provider on the 3rd of December. *"The world's first mobile text message was an entirely naff "Merry Christmas" keyed in by engineer Neil Papworth of the British technology company Sema to Vodafone director Richard Jarvis in Newbury, southern England."*[1] However people could not send and receive SMS text messages until nineteen ninety nine, this was also the time that we began to see the pay as you go plan in mobile phones, also know for short as PAYG. Nokia mobile phones were the first to have the ability of sending and receiving SMS text messages and explains the reason behind the dominance Nokia now has in the mobile phone market place. Trillions of SMS messages are now sent yearly, commercially the SMS industry in two thousand and six was worth over eighty one billion dollars worldwide. *"In the UK we now send 215 million texts per day and a stunning 79 billion per year."*[02]

Photo of 1 message received
[Photo from http://www.thetechland.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/Inventions/Text-Message.jpg]

3G - Third Generation

Third generation mobile network more commonly known as just 3G and is basically what it says on the tin. It is a faster communications network so that we, the buying public, can have the latest and new features on our mobile phones, soon to be known as smart phones because of these new features. This new 3G network started to be introduced in March of two thousand and three by the 3 telecommunications provider to offer these new features first. The rollout of this new network finished in about the year two thousand and five and these new features were becoming more commonplace. The benefits of the new network introduced a new way of communicating with the introduction of video calls and the ability to access the internet with ease. The 3G network meant faster data speeds so video calls could actually work with no problems, it also meant faster load times for the internet on your mobile. Compared to the old 2G network it meant simultaneous use of phoning (speech) and data services (the web).

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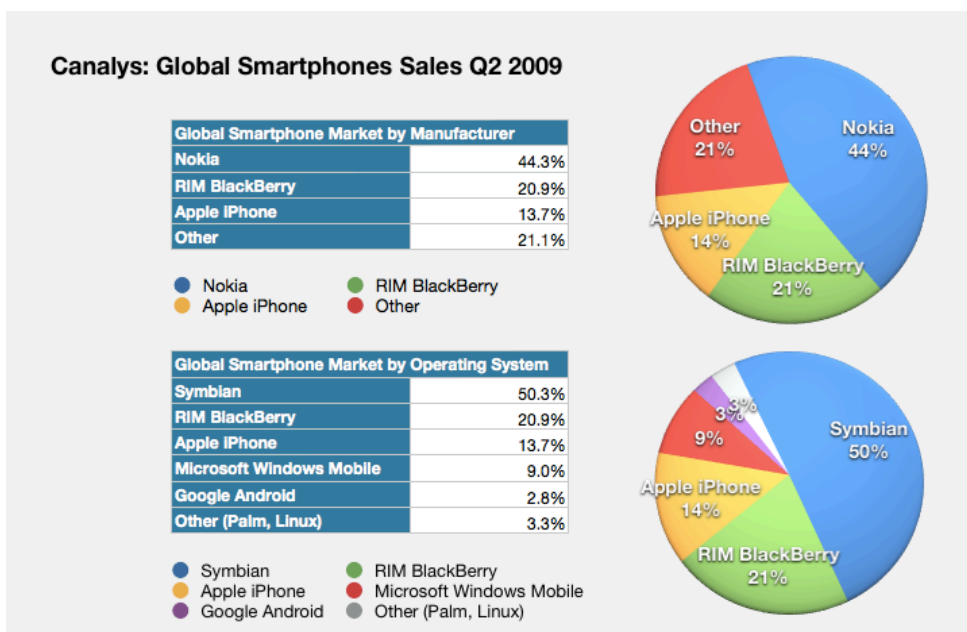
Smart Phones

Smart phones are the mobiles of the noughties, they are phones with advanced capabilities, noticeably the ability to browse the internet. The ability to browse the internet over mobile phones has made a major shift into what we expect the basic mobile phone to do. Smart phones had become more popular in about two thousand and six when Nokia launched the Nokia N95 that was as good as an actual compact camera, supporting a five mega pixel camera inside it along with GPS and the use of full web browsing.

Smart Phones Part 2

There are numerous different types of manufactures of smart phones, of which Nokia is the most popular as of the second quarter of two thousand and nine. Before there was smart phones, back in the nineties the main basic phone everyone new and most likely had including myself was

Smart phone sales for second quarter 2009
[Image from http://images.appleinsider.com/CanalysQ209.PNG]

a Nokia mobile phone. Mobile phones now have their own operating system on which they run and is one of the main reasons that Nokia's are the most popular phones to use. The operating system that Nokia's use is called Symbian and as of the second quarter of two thousand and nine the Symbian operating system had 50.3% of the global market sales. Other phones run on slightly different operating system's and are obvious to the manufacturers who integrate them on their phones. The others are RIM BlackBerry with 20.9%, Apple iPhone which uses a striped down version of the actual Mac OSX Leopard operating system which is used on Apple Macintosh computers with 13.7%, Microsoft Windows Mobile with 9.0%, Google Android which is a new operating system within the last couple of years with 2.8% and of course others like Palm & Linux with just 3.3%.

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Mobile Email

Another reason why mobile phones are so popular is that you can also access and manage your email on the move. Email on the move has been used longer than accessing the full world wide web on mobile devices. When 3G launched it brought the ability of accessing email in a new way. The manufacturer BlackBerry developed a new way of accessing email it is called Push email, it does what it says on the tin. This was also part of the smart phone range of BlackBerry's. Push email is one of the smart phone features. Push email pushes your home or business emails straight to your phone without having to do a thing, it is an automated system, with a way of emailing on the move and has proved very popular and now all smart phones have a Push email facility if you choose to set it up. It is the age of 24/7 communication and ensures you will never miss a thing.

BlackBerry 7250
[Photo from http://upload.wikimedia.org/
wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/e0/
Blackberry7250.jpg/180px-
Blackberry7250.jpg]

iPhone

The iPhone has been with us from two thousand and seven and was launched in the United States on the twenty ninth of June of that year. This mobile phone I think is the tipping point at which true accessibility to the internet changed. It made the idea of browsing the internet easy, the fact that it had a touch screen meant it could use the whole size of the device from top to bottom for viewing full web pages. The iPhone has been a success story, coming from no where, as this was Apple's first mobile phone to date. There has been different variations of the iPhone but it is still the same, Apple just keep adding new features to it. The iPhone has sold twenty one million units world wide according to the channel Five show The Gadget Show.

iTunes Store

The Apple iTunes store has had a large contribution to the success of the Apple iPhone. The store allows you to buy music, television programmes, movies, podcasts and audio books as well as the one thing that the iPhone has had a large influence on, applications. The Apple iTunes store was launched back in two thousand and three on the twenty eighth April and has changed the way we buy music. The store has helped the sales of the popular Apple iPod and has done the same with the iPhone. The Apple iTunes store is also available on the iPhone itself along with a stand alone App store for the applications available for the device.

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iPhone Applications

The iPhone applications also commonly known as just 'apps' are one of the most popular things on the iPhone. The Apple iPhone has grown to have a massive impact on the mobile phone market and most noticeable is making the world wide web/internet appeal, ease of use and simplicity. The iPhone has done this by letting third party developers develop applications and distribute them through the hugely popular Apple iTunes Store either for FREE or for a small fee. One of the 'apps' that I find most useful on my iPod Touch however is the Facebook app and just before Apple reached one billion app's downloaded milestone last year Apple announced the Facebook app as the most popular unpaid for app. Most social networking websites seem to have developed their own iPhone applications. It's not just Apple iPhones that have the ability to download your favourite apps, other mobile phone manufactures have also jumped on the bandwagon. Nokia now have their own online application store and is called Ovi and also offers similar apps. Most social networking websites have a mobile based version of their website for each platform now. Applications are not just for communications but also on the Apple iPhone their are small download-able games. The games were so successful on the iPhone that Apple even produced the iPod Touch and now the main way they promote the device is with other developers games on television adverts and other means of promotion.

iPhone and Apps
[Image from http://www.geeky-gadgets.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/one-billion-iphone-apps.jpg]

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Social Networking

Social networking websites have had a huge effect on the way in which we communicate now in the 21st century. The advances in the internet and the world wide web have promoted the accessibility of websites in general, with the faster and more affordable internet connections in the home. It seems to be more of the younger generation that mainly use

Facebook logo
[Image from http://www.tcd.ie/disability/projects/DS3/images/facebook.jpg]

social networking websites. The biggest social website of the moment seems to be Facebook, it did start off initially with only being available to students, that may account for why it is more popular with the younger generation. Back in January two thousand and nine a study carried out by compete.com found that Facebook was indeed the most used social networking website by worldwide monthly active users, second was My Space with Twitter coming in third. Twitter seems to be an unstoppable force integrating with everyday life along with Facebook. Most television, radio programmes and stations seem to have a Facebook and Twitter account for communicating news and thoughts. Recently before Christmas the X-Factor was promoting Facebook and Twitter to encourage the public to get in contact with your thoughts about the show, their was also still telephone and SMS text messages available to get in contact with the show too. Everyone seems to be embracing communication with social networking websites.

Design

The iPhone, when it was launched, was a massive hit and was partly to do with how Apple products look. The one thing Apple never fail on is the design. The feel and look of all its products, not just the iPhone, is increasingly popular. All of the computers and portable media players Apple release are very well designed which is one of the main things people look for before buying anything in general, not just Apple products. People tend to like shiny and contrasting colours but it's important to say that two may colours ruin designs and that is what Apple have got spot on. Other manufacturers produce devices with design in mind, which is considered very important, other phones are nice and aesthetically pleasing. This is one of the reasons why the sales of mobile phones is so high, old phones like the old Nokia's are not as fashionable now but you have to remember that the taste of the population changes.

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Upgrade Me

Last year I watched the Upgrade Me television programme from BBC4, which is about the gadget life people lead and why people feel the urge to upgrade to the latest & flashiest gadget. Simon Armitage takes us through this programme and explores why we upgrade. "*Last year in the UK we bought 24m phones*"[03] and the thing is that most people probably did not actually need a new one, when they actually have a perfectly functional phone most of the time. What I'm getting at here is mobile phone contract's, encourage us the buying public to constantly upgrade to the new, of the moment mobile phone. Our culture in Britain creates this problem, we just want the latest consumer products to be flying off the shelves, we want to show off our gadgets to illustrate our wealth to the world and more importantly to our friends. We don't want to get left in the stone age. I myself am on my third mobile phone as I tend not to replace them unless they go wrong but most of my mates can probably double my figure. I am also on my third iPod, but my iPod's are all still working and I prefer to upgrade for a newer model with extra features more frequently. Most people can't be bothered to wait until things break. The cost aspect of such gadgets is interesting, there is a contrast between those who are well off, those who can ill afford such luxuries, and those who are stingy with their money, at the end of the day everyone is different.

Connected World

The internet and accessing the world wide web on mobile devices have now become common place not just on mobile phones but also on portable gaming devices. The Nintendo DSi and Sony Play Station Portable PSP for short can also access the world wide web. We are noticing increasingly more devices are becoming connected wirelessly now to the internet via Wi-Fi. The mobile network carries access to the internet as well but not at as fast speeds as available on other technology. The Sony PSP has

iTunes Store
[Image from http://images.apple.com/ca/itunes/overview/images/slider1_20090909.png]

now been upgraded to the PSP Go and interestingly it has lost the UMD disc format for games. The device now has a similar online store for games like the Apple iPhone and Touch where you just download games from and to the PSP. My opinion is that Sony consider that the Apple iTunes store is the way forward for digital downloads of games, it also removes cost's for the packaging the games would be supplied in. The mobile gaming world for games devices is beginning to move online for the actual games.

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Headset

Wireless is not always the best way if you care more about the looks of your gadget. In particular hands free kits for use when you are driving with your mobile phone. The Bluetooth head set can help when you are in the car and can not hold your mobile phone as it is now the law that the use of holding a mobile phone while driving is banned. These Bluetooth headsets are normally just a long bit of plastic hanging from your ear, I think personally that they look unpleasant, some people like them but everyone is different. I think they are a great idea for the car but using them out and about in public they make you look ridiculous.

Bluetooth Headset
[Image from http://www.phonesonline.ie/img/mobile_phone_accessories/motorola_hs820_bluetooth_headset.jpg]

Social and Personal Impact

Social media back in the nineties was not based on the world wide web it was in-fact the humble mobile telephone with the introduction of SMS text messages. The first radical way to socialise was of course to make telephone calls without the need to use the home phone line, on what we now take for granted in everyday life the mobile telephone. This meant that you could organise to meet up in no time at all, say I was in town and my friend was at the same time, mobile phones make it easy to meet up at a moments notice, SMS text messages allow you to do the same. The mobile phone really has changed our attitude to communicating to an extent that some people will go to any lengths to stay connected in this very social world. *"Sometimes, I go without lunch just so I could use my allowance to buy a pre-paid call card for my cell phone," says Tammy Reyes, a 17-year old college student. "If I don't receive a text when I wake up or I receive only a few messages during the day, I feel as though nobody loves me enough to remember me during the day."* Rheingold (2002, p.21) Now in this day and age friendships have never been stronger due to the different ways in which we can all stay connected, however some people have now become addicted to their mobile phones, social networking has gone to their head. I mean that social networking websites like Facebook and Twitter are now also in everyday lives, now that you can also integrate these services with your mobile telephone. This is where the Apple iPhone has changed things, now you have better connected mobile phones to the internet, the App has been one of those milestones in mobile telephones of the noughties. Their has been experiments on mobile addiction, and for most people they can not seem to live without their mobile device, this is in part to do with that mobile telephones are now essentially mini computers in your pocket. The things that can be done on many of these newer mobile phones are just mind boggling.

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Social and Personal Impact Part 2

Social media is now everywhere in today's society, it essentially is your mobile phone, on the world wide web and now incorporates ways of marketing. One of the big social networking websites is a video sharing site called YouTube and allows you to share home videos between each other, however people also mix up television adverts and other media to make their own viral video's, they seem to be funny and amusing video's. This is great for companies trying sell their product because this is essentially free advertising, it saves time and money for the companies and it also gets the buying public involved in the process. *"It has changed the face of the Web, and there is hardly a marketing campaign that would not find value in a presence on YouTube."* Zarrella (2009, p.83) From free advertising to free information, I mean Twitter and it has been a massive contributor to journalism in the past couple of years. Twitter is another social network website, it is a microbloging website, you post short bursts of information for the world to see. It is also instant as it is a popular App on mobile devices as like all the other social network websites.

Conclusion

The mobile phone has changed a lot over the last twenty years, they influence us in so many different ways. They influence us over the way we look with the latest phone, does it suit our taste? Mobile phones are not just phones any more they are a way of life in a way, we communicate with phones because we are all busy people nowadays. We like to have the latest gadget of the moment and that gadget seems increasingly to be mobile phones nowadays. The child in us wants to play and so phones are getting better to be able to play games on like the Apple iPhone. Mobile phones are one of the things that we carry with us all the time, along with keys and your wallet. We want to listen to music on the move, play games, watch movies & television programmes, look at your photos, browse your favourite website, listen to the radio and take some photos and video clips and it's all now in your pocket on one device, your mobile phone. The list is endless nowadays and Im sure we will get more features on our mobile phones in the future. Technology is shrinking the hardware used all the time, mobiles are basically now small computers, we can do anything on them. I see mobile phones becoming faster and faster in the future, what standalone devices will we lose to the mobile phone?

Books

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