

A world gone cell phone crazy

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Could you live without your cell phone?

According to the latest Ericsson Mobility Report, there will be an estimated 6.1 billion smartphone users in the world by 2020, up from the current 2.6 billion subscriptions. This growth is largely due to the rise of smartphone sales in developing markets, with smartphones expected to pass landlines in the next five years.

But get this factoid ? currently, there are 7.1 billion mobile subscriptions in the world, and growing at a rate of nearly 5% per year. What? Isn't that more subscriptions than people on this planet? What's going on?

The report also shows a 55% growth in data traffic compared to a year ago. The Asia Pacific region will represent 45% of total smartphone traffic in 2020. What sector grows by more than 50% each year? By the end of 2020, Ericsson predicts significant growth in video-based mobile traffic, increasing at a rate of 55% a year for a six-year period. Video traffic increases dramatically with data usage, with heavy data users watching an average of one hour of video per day via their mobile devices. Ericsson predicts 90% of the world's population over the age of six would own a mobile phone by 2020.

That's what humankind needs, every seven-year-old around the globe chatting over the airwaves, or texting LOL every five minutes!

Our intoxication with cell phones has grown exponentially in just a couple of decades. Cell phones became popular for mass consumption in the 1990s. At the time, cell phones were already small, but they became more attractive with the flip, swivel and the slide. Though the display screens at this time were still monochrome, mobile phones allowed users customization with fonts, languages, icons, wallpapers, and screen savers. For some strange reason, I remember my earlier phones with fondness. I really liked the Motorola flip and the Star Tac. Smartphones were introduced as early as 1992, but it wasn't until about 2000 that they became a standard for business. Cell phones then took on the role of portable computers. By 2005, mobile phones were already a hybrid of other mobile devices. Phones featured a camera, a music player, and a video recorder. Users could also create full office documents and content with them. By 2009, smartphones were the standard. People were not just using their mobile phones for communication and creating content, but also for surfing the Internet, streaming media, and downloading content. With the increase in people using the internet and their smartphones, it's believed that downloading content from the internet has become increasingly more dangerous due to hackers and viruses. This is why some people have made the decision to purchase a reliable VPN, such as Cyberghost. For people wondering '[What is cyberghost](#)', it's a virtual private network created to keep users safe from the dangers of the internet whilst browsing and downloading online content.

Just a few years ago ? 2011 ? saw the height of social media. Mobile phones are instrumental in connecting people online and in

social media networks. It's inevitable for socially connected people to have their own smartphones. With network providers making it more affordable to connect to the Internet, mobile phones have never been more convenient to use.

Yes, these gizmos evolved, to the point where our mobile computers fit in the palm of an over-sized hand.

Of course, there are some great positives to this global connectedness. Business can take place any time, any place, 24 hours a day.

You can find your exact location on the globe, even if you're lost in the jungle. You can take photos of car accidents and catch criminals in the act. You can share the birth of your child with relatives far and wide.

The average North American gets a new cell phone every 18 to 24 months, making old phones, which can contain hazardous materials like lead, mercury, cadmium, brominated flame retardants and arsenic, the fastest-growing type of manufactured garbage in the world.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Americans discard 125 million phones each year, creating 65,000 tons of waste.

What about the impacts on our health?

A new Canadian federal government report says cancer, infertility, and learning disabilities might be caused by our cell phones and WiFi.

The microwave radiation from our little wireless devices is now a "serious public health issue," according to the report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health (HESA). The selling of anti-radiation headphones such as airtubes is happening more now as people are becoming aware of radiation and its effects.

The report recommends Canadian doctors be taught to recognize the symptoms associated with using common wireless devices.

It also recommends parents be taught the risks of wireless radiation to ensure their families are safe at home and at school.

The committee heard from wireless industry representatives as well as international scientists working on the health fall-out from our "wireless world."

The committee also recommends that federal workplaces recognize employees who have developed electro-hypersensitivity.

You can access the full report and transcripts at www.c4st.org/HESARRecommendations

I like to paraphrase a quote from a famous movie that sort of goes like "I desperately wanted ... And for my sins they gave it to me." Just where are we headed?