Social progress parallels that of human communication. The need to communicate led to the production of written languages, a plethora of communication channels, and has been a crucial element in the development of our brains. This chapter deals with the importance of one of these communication channels, the cellular telephone, and how it impregnates our culture. The cell phone is a portable device which has become a social object that is personal, exclusive, and intimate. The different names used for this device help us see the very particular relationship each country has with this tool: it is called a móvil in Spain, cellular in Latin America, cell phone in the United States, handy in Germany, “sho ji” (handheld) in China, and “makhmul” (portable) in Arab-speaking countries. In Japanese society, this technology is so commonplace that cell phones are simply called telephones. Whatever its name, people everywhere have developed an intense relationship with their cell phone, much more intense than they ever did, in its day, with an ordinary (fixed-line) telephone.

The fusion of computing and telecommunications in the 1970s gave rise to the development of the so-called information and communication technologies (ICT). This moment saw the birth of the philosophy of mobile telephony, a technology which combines the Bell telephone, Morse telegraph, Marconi radio, and computing. Humans have always tried to overcome distance as
a barrier to communication, giving rise to carrier pigeons, telegrams, letters, postcards, books, magazines, radio, television, fixed-line telephones, electronic mail, Internet Relay Chats (IRC), and videoconferencing. The latter few overcome more than just the distance barrier, achieving real-time communication at a distance.

Cell phone use in today’s society is common, and sales have increased notably. The number of cell phone subscribers has risen all over the world, Europe being the continent with most lines (followed by Oceania, America, Asia, and Africa). Between 2002 and 2003 the total cell phone users worldwide crossed the 1000 million boundary. It had taken 130 years for fixed-line–based telephony to reach this figure, whereas cell phones did it in a decade. Eight of every ten people in Europe possess a cell phone. Many people who only a few years ago would not buy one, or used one only sporadically, nowadays use one daily. Some models are truly objects of desire and have provoked changes in forms of communication. Cell phone uses even include things like teaching English, helping people give up smoking, or therapy in people with driving phobia or agoraphobia. Cell phones have played an important role in communication between opposers of the totalitarian regimes of northern Africa in 2011 and in the diffusion of images of their repression.

In parallel with increases in use and social acceptance, there has also been consideration of the possible negative consequences: medical (negative effects of the electromagnetic waves emitted by cell phones themselves and by their base station antennas), in road safety (effects and risks of cell phone use while driving or cycling and their involvement in traffic accidents), and psychological. Cell phones can play an important role in bullying (recording and diffusion of acts of vexation), in violence (recording and diffusion), and in sexual harassment. One of the most worrying negative consequences is the possibility of creating addiction, particularly among teenagers and young people. This possibility will be dealt with in the next section.

WHAT MAKES CELL PHONE USE SO GRATIFYING?

One of the factors determining the capacity of a substance to create addiction is its gratifying properties. It is accepted that the more intense the positive reinforcement, and the shorter the delay between consumption and physiological response, the greater is the capacity of a substance to produce addiction. So, let us analyze the positive reinforcement properties of cell phone use.

Euphoria

Euphoria from cell phone use appears to be at least as strongly related to message emission (calling or sending someone a message) as reception is to being feeling valued or loved when calls or messages are received.

Instrument

A cell phone may at the same time serve as pocket watch, alarm clock, digital camera, sound and/or video recorder, electronic diary, video console, radio, mp3 player, or Global Positioning System (GPS). It is a multifunction instrument with many utilities adapted to the age and social role of its owner.

Symbol of Identity

Cell phones have become one more element among the intimate components which constitute the personal sphere (just as other things do, such as a wristwatch, wallet, photos, key ring, etc.) with which the bearer has an emotional bond. Never before has a technological apparatus come to have such importance in so many people’s daily lives, so essential to revealing identity.

The degree of personalization possible with a cell phone is one of the factors favoring expression of individual identity, particularly among younger people. The cell phone appears to have become an object through which a person can provide clues about their gender identity, social and professional position, attitude toward society, character, personality, or mood. A cell phone, like clothes, may transmit information about an individual’s characteristics and about the idea they have of themselves, and which they want to transmit to others.

Social Status

Cell phone technology appears to confer power on young people. A young consumer who buys a cell phone feels powerful, not only through the use made of it, but also through the purchase in itself. Also, the number and/or quality of messages received, the number of calls, the number of contacts in the address book, the sophistication of the games and services offered by the cell phone, and the brand of the apparatus, all help to enhance the user’s social status.

Social Network

Cell phones also are a tool to build a social network via the device’s contact list. These networks are constantly evolving; the rate at which new phone numbers are added to contact lists is as rapid as that
of numbers falling into disuse. Moreover, we may speak of a collective identity. The social networks based on cell phones have created a new sense of identity for teenagers and young people.

Online Social Networks

In its short life, the cell phone industry has managed to adapt to keep pace with the demands of users, and create new needs: cell phones for professionals and business people, cell phones with only basic functions for children and the elderly, others for listening to digital music, and finally the cell phone as a discrete medium for checking emails and online social networks, and consulting Internet.

Independence

Cell phones play a significant role in socialization and creating a feeling of belonging to a group, particularly among teenagers. They foster a process of emancipation from parents and act as a kind of barrier between teenagers and their parents. In other words, for young people the cell phone is above all a personal telephone, and having a personal telephone not accessible by parents marks a boundary. Having a cell phone helps a teenager to acquire an ever greater sense of self and an increasing orientation toward the peer group. The cell phone favors independence and reinforces contact with friends and other people outside the family.

The cell phone is definitive when it comes to deciding if a young person can enter into society so that young people use them to maintain their social framework. At the same time the social contacts allow them to maintain their status in terms of class and peer group. In Tokyo public schools cell phone owners have more friends than nonowners. Children and teenagers usually receive a cell phone as a gift from parents. Making a present of a cell phone could be seen as a rite of passage, a gift related to initiation into the teenager phase, into social independence. And it would appear that this rite occurs at ever earlier ages.

Short Distance

The cell phone is an instrument which facilitates contact over short distances, in the sense of contact with people with whom we do not relate on a daily basis. One typical characteristic of youth is that it involves tightly closed, local social circles, neighborhood, school, club, etc., and the cell phone here is a practical medium for maintaining contact when face-to-face conversation is not possible. When members of the social network are a greater distance away, other communication channels are preferred, such as electronic mail, social networking, fixed-line telephone, or, ever more rarely, letters.

Increased Security and Control

Cell phones are instruments of control which generate feelings of security among parents, between couples, or even for oneself when away traveling. Parents buy their children cell phones because of a need to control them and restrain them with a "digital leash." This eagerness to control is a feeling which parents transmit to their children. Often the degree of control and sense of security is false: it is very easy to lie about where one is, and, anyway, battery life and coverage are both limited. Teenagers can mutually communicate while at home without parental control, something which was more difficult with ordinary (fixed-line) telephones, as well as at school without being controlled by teachers. In adults, this sensation of controlling/being controlled also occurs in sentimental and workplace relationships.

Permanent Mobility and Access

The fact of being mobile means that accessibility of people carrying a cell phone is perceived as permanent. This process gives rise to two opposing illusions: one, believing that we are not being controlled when in fact we can be located at virtually any moment wherever we are, and two, believing that one can control others when really cell phones only allow us to hear someone’s voice or receive an SMS without us really knowing from where. Even so, parents prefer to believe they have some degree of control than to let their children escape from their clutches. Something similar could occur in sentimental and workplace relationships between adults, and some firms employ cell phones with GPS functionality permitting their location to be tracked.

When the user does not answer calls or respond immediately to SMS text messages, the caller can experience a sensation of concern. This arises because of the wrong interpretation of availability, often understood as "obligatory" creating an illusion of "permanent availability" and the cell phone user is pressured to carry the device turned on, and to always respond to calls or SMSs. Even so, the user is more interested in being able to call others while on the move, lending less importance to always being locatable.

Entertainment and Games

Cell phones carry a broad range of functionalities, and may even act as a portable videogame console.
Being up-to-date, playing the latest games, feeling integrated, and/or up with the fashion are goals pursued by many of today’s teenagers and young people. One must also bear in mind that, increasingly, more leisure time activities are available through cell phones, for example betting, buying, getting sexually stimulated, and downloading music and videos. Children under 10 years of age regard games as the most important characteristic of cell phones, since at their age communication in itself is too abstract. The incorporation of applications (“Apps”) in the latest generation of cell phones (so-called smartphones) has opened up an enormous range of possibilities for their use at work, for leisure, and for practical aspects of daily living; in many of these applications, these functions are intermixed. Cell phones are becoming personal mobile computers.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication

Voice calls and text messages are used differently depending on the purpose and on the characteristics of the message sender and receiver. Voice is synchronous communication, simultaneous in time, whereas text messages are asynchronous, like electronic mail.

Family Conciliation

The social evolution of family structures could partly explain the increase in personal telephone use. We may speak of various factors: (1) the emergence of single-parent or patchwork families: particularly reliant on external phone connections due to characteristics of their structure; (2), internal democratization of the family which accentuates individual autonomy and is susceptible of favoring diffusion of a less collective, more personal, form of telephonic communications; (3) the demand for individual communications devices given that children remain living with their parents for longer in some countries. The increasing incorporation of women into the workforce might be considered a fourth factor. Even though cell phones have not changed any social conventions, women tend to use it to cope with family responsibilities across a space-time gap, bringing their private world of domestic responsibilities to their public, occupation-related world, and vice versa.

All these changes in family morphology are reflected in affective and social bonds. Cell phones have made it possible for teenagers to construct a kind of virtual brotherhood. Moreover, cell phones promote individual thinking and networks of external support and propitiate virtual proximity (in the double sense of the word virtual). Connections mediated by cell phones only deal with the issue generating the call, leaving the parties involved free of any emotional commitment beyond the topic dealt with in the conversation or message. Present society demands fast and efficient connections. In this respect, distance is not an obstacle for connecting, but being connected is likewise not an obstacle for maintaining distances. Being connected is more economical than really relating. Thus, we may speak of new family constellations and emotional processes deriving in a society, still under construction, which gives rise to new ways of communicating to maintain family unity and the sense of belonging which both adolescents and adults need.

Individualization of Assets

This is one aspect of social evolution and the increasing quality of life in the Western world. In the technological field, telephones have followed the same path as television, in becoming an individual asset rather than a family one. Just as teenagers may have a television set in their own bedroom, they also have their own computer, and cell phone, etc.

WHAT IS THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TEXT MESSAGING?

The short message service (SMS) is the facility which permits sending text messages between fixed-line or mobile phone devices. The SMS culture has hit our society and their use is a social phenomenon: inviting users to political meetings or parties, follow-up of patients, as vehicle for therapy, obtaining status of commercial and bank transactions, participating in television contests and programs, receiving official bulletins, etc. Let’s consider the inherent characteristics of the SMS separately.

Functionality of Written Language

Written information has an added value: its permanence. SMSs, with this attribute, are thus very different from oral conversation. The transmission of information, petitions, and self-expression represent the genuine, and historically almost invariable, dimensions of communication. An SMS is not a letter, but could be considered the equivalent of the postcard or telegram at least in regard to brevity and condensed content, with the additional advantage that they may be sent to various people at a time. An SMS can be a substitute for electronic or postal mail. At Christmas and New Year people use
skyrockets, as they are a quick and instantaneous replacement for Christmas cards.

Expression of Feelings

SMSs help to express, with little direct involvement, the feelings that people cannot or do not want to express orally and moreover they respond to the impulsive need to share feelings at the moment they are being felt. Also, regardless of age, sending an SMS indirectly implies that one is manifesting their very presence to the receiver, and thus the SMS carries an important symbolic load. This all means that SMSs are perceived as particularly satisfactory and, in the view of some authors, end up promoting more intimate ties and enriching personal relationships.

Abbreviated Language

The need to communicate as much as possible in the reduced space of an SMS has contributed to the development of an intensive use of abbreviations. In this form of expression, all kinds of strategies are used to abbreviate as much as possible, for example “lol” to mean “laughing out loud” or “xD” to mean happiness or laughing very hard. Lists giving the translation of these abbreviations abound, as do certain rules for writing SMSs.

Use of Emotion Icons

Diagrammatic representations of emotional states, (for example a smiling face, whether written by using ordinary keys :-) or via the symbol, may be used to indicate happiness. These icons, known as emoticons, serve to express feelings in the middle of the written text. The advantage of emoticons is more notable in an SMS than in electronic mail because the available space is more limited. How better to save words than to replace them with a pictorial representation.

Nocturnal Networks

SMSs can be used to set up a virtual nocturnal network of friends. Whereas most adults use SMSs mainly to confirm appointments, teenagers use them to express a broad spectrum of emotions and feelings which result when they find themselves alone, usually just before going to bed. With the responses to their SMSs, also charged with romanticism, they feel that their emotions have been corresponded, and hence they feel valued. As a result of all this, there is a tendency for young people to save emotion-charged messages in the cell phone’s memory.

Avoidance of Telephone Conversations

The unilateral aspect of an SMS, and its concise, direct, and synthetic nature responds simultaneously to three needs: to save time, save money, and, most interesting of all, maintain bonds even when the user does not want to get into a telephone conversation, due to the degree of commitment a voice call involves.

Respect for Privacy

The beep notifying reception of an SMS is usually shorter and more discreet than that of a normal call. SMSs are an easy form of communication for shy people, or people in embarrassing situations. Some people politely send an SMS before calling, to check that the other person is available and wants to speak with them.

Anxiety

Some people feel uncomfortable or irritation when they do not get a response to an SMS they have sent. This could be due to a variety of factors: the immediate-ness and permanent availability, the particularity of written language, the exclusive dedication needed to send an SMS (typing an SMS requires dedicating time exclusively to its composition, and hence of thinking about the person for whom it is intended, whereas making a call permits doing several other things at the same time). A user faced with an unanswered SMS could feel the time spent writing it has not been corresponded and interpret that the investment in involvement has likewise not been corresponded by a response of similar intensity. This can lead to increased anxiety. To cope, some users use the missed calls technique with the aim of attracting the receiver’s attention so that they realize they have received an SMS, or in order to make them understand the need for an immediate reply. This can lead to the creation of a loop, and can thus escalate levels of concern until a state of genuine anxiety is reached. Some users even go further, in a desperate attempt to get a reply from anyone at all, by sending an SMS to an entire list of contacts, in this way, as might be expected, increasing their anxiety even more.

DIFFERENCES IN USAGE IN TERMS OF GENDER AND AGE

Possession of a cell phone nowadays is independent of age group and gender, although their preferred modes of use differ. In regard to gender, cell phone use by girls is characterized by being mainly to keep up with their social network, whereas boys use it more to...
coordinate their movements, and to play games. The structure of social relationships mediated by cell phones coincides with the typical differential gender characteristics: (1) women extend their social networks through the use of SMSs more than men; (2) women use cell phones to maintain social contacts whereas men use them for commercial gain, similar to what already happens with fixed-line telephone use; and (3) women are more compulsive in their cell phone use than men. Among teenagers, for example, girls’ cell phones are used as a security measure and for controlling their autonomy, whereas among boys cell phone use is related to a process of independence and gender identity charged with the symbolism of modernity. In some countries, women use cell phones more than men precisely because they have less freedom of movement.

Young, highly educated adults also face a particular form of socialization. They aspire to company leadership positions and cell phones are well suited to bolstering their image, epitomized by giving and receiving orders while running between flights. In fact, business people tend to use cell phones more when on the move than in other circumstances. The issue here is about marking the difference between oneself and the people around us, and parallels the teenager drawing a boundary line between themselves and their parents. Adults tend to prefer voice calls due to their synchronicity and because they are simple and practical. Nor is there so much personalization of the device, perhaps because they correspond to a different generation whose need for establishing an identity is a phase that has been passed. Still, adults are not entirely strangers to fashion or to using a cell phone as a symbol of status and identity. For example, think of the migration from company-provided Blackberries toward iPhones, from the micro-keyboard to touch screens, etc.

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS ADDICTION TO CELL PHONES?

To date there is little scientific literature with reliable data on prevalence, symptoms or clinical cases of addiction to mobile telephones, yet there is a climate of social alarm, generated by mass media insistence on their addictive risks.

The colloquial usage of the word addiction can be confused with its technical usage. One initial possibility is that the supposed addiction to cell phones is a problem which is limited in time and in severity of its consequences. It may arise through a “novelty effect,” where stimulation by something novel provokes an increase in the frequency of a behavior during a short period of time, after which the behavior becomes less frequent or disappears. Something similar to what can happen, say, with the purchase of a new camera, or bicycle, or attendance to a fitness or wellness center. A period of adaptation to the new technology is also necessary, not only for the user but also their immediate social circle (in many cases the parents of the user). A second possibility which likewise must not be confused with true addiction is the non-severity of the consequences. Abuse of a cell phone can generate discipline problems at school (paying attention to the device when not allowed) or problems with parents if the bill is too high. However, these problems cannot be considered equivalent to those caused by an addiction to substances and must be seen as comparable to other limits which teenagers need to have imposed on them as part of their maturing process. Just as the behavior of biting fingernails is a bad habit but not an addiction, and although it may be considered a problem of control of impulses, in fact it is not treated as such in the classification of mental disorders.

Another aspect is that this type of pathological cell phone use would only be possible in people suffering a mental disorder or primary personality disorder. Psychological cell phone use would be a symptom of depression or an impulse control disorder, and would not be observed in healthy people. A third aspect would be, as with Internet, not to confuse addiction to a device with an addiction on a device. A pathological gambler who uses Internet or a cell phone to place bets is addicted to gambling, not to Internet or cell phones. Similarly, addiction to phone sex must not be confused with addiction to telephones. Finally, some cell phone users confuse dependence on a technology with a symptom of addiction. For example we cannot do without servo-assisted steering in our car, or electricity in our home or workplace. Similarly, a young person who feels the need to always carry their cell phone so as to be able to give warning in some emergency or simply to be available for receiving calls does not suffer true addiction, rather they are making conscious use of a security measure, just like a safety belt, or a car’s servo-assisted steering or braking system.

When comparing problematic cell phone use to the well-known symptoms of addiction, among the most commonly described aspects, we may observe:

- Tolerance. The well-being originated by gratifying stimuli, such as receiving a call or SMS, is short-lived and reinforcing behaviors are repeated more often, such as calling insistently for no precise purpose, or soliciting further SMSs.
- Abstinence. As soon as the possibility to use the cell phone is lost, symptoms similar to a withdrawal syndrome appear. For example, a flat battery or a loss of coverage leads to displays of anxiety, general malaise, anger or uneasiness, and the same
may be felt when one does not receive a reply to calls made or messages sent.
- Insecurity. Some people are afraid of going out of the house without their cell phone, and would go back for it if they forget it; they may feel nervous or experience debilitating insecurity, and not be able to do anything when without their cell phone; children are particularly sensitive to developing uneasiness, even anxiety, if they are obliged to do without their cell phone, whether this be as a result of a breakdown or as a punishment imposed by parents. This is related with the fear of losing something important, of being left out of the information circuits (fear of missing out, FOMO) or of missing that hoped-for or anxiously awaited call or SMS. Moreover, the user knows that other users expect one to always have their cell phone with them and fears that the others may be disconcerted if their calls are not answered.
- Attempts to control or cut usage. Some users attempt to control their cell phone use by blocking calls or setting quotas, by disconnecting the ring tone or switching the device off.
- Persistence in using the cell phone despite its negative effects. The most common of these are (1) spending more than initially intended (children can even fool, lie to, or steal from their parents); (2) using the cell phone in places where it is prohibited, or while driving; (3) use the cell phone so much it reduces time available for sleeping; and (4) have discipline problems in class or at school.

In any case, it appears that the symptoms found in the literature regarding pathological cell phone use are less consistent and less serious than those relating to Internet use. It is rare to find clinical cases of cell phone addiction. But it seems that there are certain maladaptive behaviors (or problematic uses) with respect to this medium. The reported prevalence rates of problematic cell phone use in population surveys vary from 2.8 to 10.4%. This problematic use was greatest in the youngest age groups. The results suggest that females have more difficulties with phone use than males and perceive their use as more problematic.

Some authors have conducted research into possible addiction to instant messaging (IM) among teenagers, i.e. one aspect of cell phone use. In a sample of 330 Chinese teenagers, 9.8% of them were classified as IM addicts; factor analysis identified four major addiction symptoms: preoccupation with IM, loss of relationships due to overuse, loss of control, and escaping from reality.

The distinction between information use, communication use, and identity-altered communication use could explain why cell phone use is not itself an addiction. The traditional use of cell phones has been for communication. Since calls and messages are exchanged with people whose identity is known, there is no identity-altered communication and therefore the risk of problematic and/or addictive use is likely to be very low. In identity-altered communication, playing with one’s identity can become problematic and/or pathological as the users take on alternative (i.e. false) identities that provide greater satisfaction than their true self, allowing them to escape from their true self. In the case of cell phone use or Internet chat applications such as Messenger, the negative consequence is time wasted, while the positive aspect is maintenance of social relations with friends and acquaintances and broadening of the social network. However, this risk could potentially be higher for newer generation cell phones since applications that promote alteration of user identity may be supported.

For instance, some people may confuse or self-define dependence on a particular technology as an addictive behavior. For this reason, some people consider themselves cell phone addicts because they never go out of the house without one, do not turn it off at night, are always expecting calls from family members or friends, and/or they overutilize it in their work and/or social life. Finally, there is also the importance of economic and/or life costs. The crucial difference between certain forms of game playing and pathological game playing is that some applications involve a financial cost. If a person is using the application more and is spending more money, there may be negative consequences as a result of not being able to afford the activity (e.g. negative economic, job-related, and/or family consequences). High expenditure may also be indicative of cell phone addiction but the phone bills of teenagers are often paid by parents, therefore the financial problems may not impact on the users themselves.

The latest generation of cell phones, with permanent Internet connection, web 2.0, and a growing multitude of related functions (Apps, real-time emailing, VoIP, etc.), could increase the risks of problematic use, since they combine the elements of ICT and remove the clear demarcation between information and communication. Every day more and more people use their cell phones compulsively to check their email or SMS inboxes and social networks, play games, listen to music, or idly scroll the appstore in search for interesting and useful applications. Whenever not occupied with something else, or indeed, even when they are. Thus the cell phone is becoming a catalyst of FOMO, and hence increase stress and anxiety.

Studies show that teenagers are the population most at risk of suffering the negative effects of cell phone use, and may need psychiatric help to avoid relationship and academic after-effects. It would also be beneficial to develop school-based preventive programs, aimed at
both students and their parents. For the former, through their tutors, promote well-adapted use of this communication medium. The way to tackle this would have to promote self-esteem, autonomy, self-concept, etc. in such a way as to ensure they have a favorable effect on the overall health of the adolescent. For parents, through seminars, facilitate guidelines for actions and support to follow-up, with the same objective.

**SUMMARY**

In conclusion, while perhaps it is not wise to label these possible problematic uses as addiction, one may assert that there is a series of maladaptive behaviors in regard to cell phone use, which change people’s daily lives and play an important role in their feelings of personal security, identity, and belonging to a social group. While not intending to pathologize this behavior – we would rather classify it as problematic or maladaptive – the possible negative consequences in the long run must still be recognized. We suggest studying the possible negative consequences of mobile phone use not exclusively in the context of addiction, but in a broader context of the negative consequences for psychological health in a postmodern society, for three reasons.

First, we live in a society where, encouraged by the style of advertising, type of leisure activities and social values, high-impact, but short-lived emotions seem to be more valued than deeply felt and long-lasting sentiments. The new technologies and especially cell phones with texting are perfect channels for expressing these types of emotions in a quick and volatile (“light”) way. They are more addictive than deeper feelings, for the same reason that gambling is addictive: its quick, but not always contingent recompense. Second, the overall possibility of permanent and global access to information creates in many people a feeling of “infoxication,” an information overload impossible for the individual to cope with; but the fear of missing important details for their personal or professional lives keeps people in a constant state of concern about catching up that may ultimately lead to anxiety and stress.

And finally, the changing ways of relating to other people, identified as “liquid bonds” by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, not only allow, but also encourage the individual to create and dissolve social relationships easily, a life style that can lead to considerable psychological distress. Calling and texting behavior could become excessive precisely because it corresponds to contemporary communication styles and habits. In this sense, “addiction to the cell phone” can be understood as a social over-adaptation to the predominant values of our society in order to avoid being excluded from social dynamics: being always informed, being always available, but preserving continued possibility to avoid the other, to refrain from implication, and to elude compromise.

**SEE ALSO**

Internet: Immersive Virtual Worlds, Overuse of Social Networking, Video Game Addiction, Substance Use and Mental Health Issues on the College Campus, Historical Understandings of Addiction

**List of Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOMO</td>
<td>fear of missing out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>global positioning system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>information and communication technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>instant messaging</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>Internet relay chat</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>short message service</td>
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<tr>
<td>VOIP</td>
<td>voice over Internet protocol</td>
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**Glossary**

**Apps** in general, short for “application software,” a program designed for end users. The term was broadly introduced by iPhone®; app, or application, is what Apple® calls third-party software programs developed specifically for the iPhone® and the iPodTouch®. The applications available can be downloaded directly by the cell phone, or downloaded to a computer and transferred to the phone. Other providers now also offer application software for their mobile phones.

**Emotion** portmanteau of emotion and icon, a facial expression pictorially represented by punctuation and letters, usually to express a writer’s mood. Emotions are often used to alert a responder to the tenor or temper of a statement, and can change and improve interpretation of plain text.

**Information and communication technologies (ICT)** a term that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals), intelligent management systems and audiovisual systems in modern information technology, including computer and network hardware and software. The term ICT is now also used to refer to the merging (convergence) of audiovisual and telephone networks with computer networks through a single cabling or link system.

**Instant messaging (IM)** a form of real-time direct text-based communication between two or more people using personal computers or other devices, along with shared clients. The user’s text is conveyed over a network, such as the Internet. In many cases IM includes additional features. One broadly known type of IM is Windows Live Messenger (formerly named MSN Messenger), created by Microsoft, or whatsapp, an application created by Apple.

**Internet relay chat (IRC)** a form of real-time Internet text messaging (chat) or synchronous conferencing, mainly designed for group communication in discussion forums, but also allows one-to-one communication via private messages as well as chat and data transfer.

**Mobile telephone (mobile phone, cellular telephone, cell phone)** electronic device used to make mobile telephone calls across a wide geographic area; it allows to make and receive telephone calls to and from the public telephone network which includes other mobiles and fixed-line phones across the world, by connecting to
a cellular network provided by a mobile network operator. In addition to telephony, modern mobile phones (“smartphones”) also support a wide variety of other services such as text messaging, multimedia messaging, email, Internet access, short-range wireless communications (infrared, Bluetooth), business applications, gaming and photography.

Online social networks an online service, platform, or website that focuses on building and maintaining social networks or social relations among people. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks. Currently, the most famous online social network is Facebook.

Short message service (SMS) text messaging, or texting, refers to the exchange of brief written text messages between fixed-line phone or mobile phone and fixed or portable devices over a network.

Voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) one of the family of Internet technologies, communication protocols, and transmission technologies for delivery of voice communications and multimedia sessions over Internet Protocol (IP) networks (Internet). Internet telephony refers to communications services – voice, fax, SMS, and/or voice-messaging applications – that are transported via the Internet, rather than the public switched telephone network.

Web 2.0 the term Web 2.0 is associated with web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design and collaboration on the World Wide Web. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators of user-generated content, in contrast to websites where users are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them. Social networking sites or video sharing sites are typical examples of Web 2.0.

Further Reading


