

Drumroll Please

Written by Jes-c Brandt

Outsmarted



Since the rise in cell phone popularity, I have always been a bit behind the curve. I still remember when the first of my friends got a cell phone in elementary school. It was the biggest news since the Spice Girls.

In retrospect, that phone was a tank—but it could go anywhere, and we were all pretty amazed. As the years went by, my clique amassed more cells, and my fascination began to turn to envy. By the time I was midway through high school, literally all of my friends had phones.

Certainly my parents remember, with equal clarity, my continual whining about the subject. But I'm telling you, it wasn't fair! I NEEDED a cell phone.

Believe it or not, all my complaining got me nowhere. I was 18 years old and a freshman in college before I got my first phone. I could finally join the world of on-the-go talking and texting, and I reveled in playing Tetris at the bus stop.

Unfortunately, by the time I managed to climb aboard the cellular bandwagon, everyone else had already jumped onto another. When I finally purchased my first basic flip-phone, the iPhone had been just recently released, and it was still the hottest new thing on the market.

While I was impressed that I could even use my phone outside my home, my peers were sending e-mails and checking their favorite websites. My joy at owning a cell phone was, not surprisingly, short-lived.

However, my strong desire to own a smart phone grew weaker and weaker as I paid my monthly bill and realized that my takeout fund would be even smaller if I had to regularly shell out for an iPhone. For the remainder of my college years, I just accepted that I would have a

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regular old cell phone, and it wasn't a big deal.

Once I started my first post-college job, I found myself surrounded by very trend-conscious high school students. Hardly a day went by that I wasn't questioned about my "ghetto flip-phone." None of the kids could understand how I was even surviving with such a dinosaur of a phone.

My choice to finally switch to a smart phone was not a result of my students' harassment; it was an incredibly drawn-out, heavily-contemplated decision. It had actually come to a point that I sometimes couldn't open messages from my boss on my phone. It really was necessary to upgrade.

When I was let go by my previous cell phone service provider, I jumped on the opportunity to get an iPhone with another company. Turns out I was too cheap to get the 4S, so Siri isn't my personal assistant, and I'm still a bit behind the curve.

Nevertheless, I am quite pleased with my latest cellular acquisition. I find myself more up-to-date than ever with work memos and updates readily available at the push of a button. I've even used the handy map function to find my way around the DFW metroplex.

I suppose I have to admit that I'm also guilty of using my smart phone to do dumb things. But then who doesn't enjoy taking ridiculous pictures and messaging them to their friends or posting to Facebook walls when your friends are in the same room?

One problem I've encountered is that my phone seems to be just a tad too smart for me. Much to my friends' and family's dismay, I am constantly inadvertently muting calls, dialing in a third party, pushing buttons or hanging up altogether.

It's even come to my attention that one false move can turn a regular phone call into "FaceTime," a function to video chat. As long as the recipient doesn't have FaceTime himself, there's not an issue. But if both parties have smarty-pants phones, an audio experience can instantly turn into a visual one.

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Now it hasn't happened yet, but I am absolutely terrified that one day I'll accidentally do this while I'm not entirely clothed. I've had to enforce a new policy that I won't make or receive a phone call if I'm not in a state that I would be willing to have a face-to-face conversation. It's just too risky.

Surely, with time, I'll adjust to the great power of my phone, and I won't feel too stupid to use a smart phone. But until then, I have to say the perks of the phone far outweigh the minor inconvenience of occasional operator malfunctions.

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