



**Bernd Rohrmann**

**Essay  
about tools  
for mobile phoning  
and for compact computer tasks**

**13-05-2025**



## *The preface*

*This essay has two facets - it shall explain what a smart-?-phone can do, indeed lots of things, but also discuss its critical features, which may have negative implications on human behaviour.*

## *The history of the smart-?-phone*

*What now is named "smart-?-phone" goes back to the "mobile phone". This was invented, in a provisional style, in 1973, and became worldwide usable from 1983 on, first in USA, then Europe.*

*A mobile phone (also called cell phone) is a portable telephone. With it users can make and receive calls while moving within a designated telephone service area, unlike the classical phone, called "landline phone" which has a fixed-location, in a house or in a public facility.*

*The mobile phone changed communication immensely: Now you could phone someone from about everywhere if you were in the service area. In Australia, where I live, almost every urban area has been provided with the necessary feature.*

## *What the current smart-?-phone can do*

*From about 2000 onwards modern mobile phones were created which could actually do much more:*

- /// GPS navigation*
- /// built in camera*
- /// playing music*
- /// text messaging*
- /// voice calls*
- /// mobile payments*

*These tools got the (slightly incorrect) name "smart phone". Smart-?-phones are distinguished from earlier mobile phones by their advanced hardware capabilities and extensive mobile operating systems. The label "smart" is questionable though.*

*The first proper smart-?-phone, named Nexus 6, came out in 2014. Smart-?-phones are meanwhile available anywhere. Since about 2020 almost every one has it, substituting earlier mobile phone. Phone calls are only a minor feature of current smart-?-phones. And interestingly, there is an obvious indicator for the assumed*

importance of smart-?-phones - most people, at least almost all women, carry it in their hand, don't place it in a pocket or bag.

By the way, I find the naming "smart phone" weird - because in my view it's neither "smart" nor just a "phone" - it is, by its very nature, a multiple tool. Of course a name like "compact tool" is not accepted by its creators.

### *The good features of the smart-?-phone*

Good features are obvious: The smart-?-phones can do much more than phone calling, they are some kind of mini-computer. This modern tool is available anywhere.

It's not cheap though, pricing from some hundreds to over 1000 \$.

### *The bad impacts of the smart-?-phone*

First comment: The following statements are certainly subjective, which means, they reflect what my (!) pertinent attitudes are. What I notice, since several years, is this:

/// People with a smart-?-phone hardly talk face-to-face.  
/// Many are addicted - spending hours/day with smart-?-phone.  
/// Most owners check their smart-?-phone all the time.  
/// They may run into you because they don't notice people.  
/// Using the smart-?-phone while driving the car is common.  
/// If young people have one they may not learn to write.  
Some social researchers call all this smart-?-phone addiction.

### *The outlook - about the future of the smart-?-phone*

Currently having and almost permanently using a smart-?-phone is a cultural 'must', even more so than owning a car. In my view, the worst impact is that people are not interested in personal face-to-face communication anymore. I also find it sad that these people are nowadays hardly caring for life music.

Nevertheless, naively I hope that after some years the dominance of the "un-smart" smart-?-phone will go down, and that people will eventually remember that talking and chatting (yes, talking, yes chatting) with others can not be substituted by restricting oneself to smart-?-phone use.

Yes! Yes! But maybe my outlook is just a bit naïve? Naïve? Naïive?



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