

The 50th Anniversary of the First Mobile Phonecall [B2]

Mezzo secolo fa un ingegnere della Motorola fece una chiamata usando un prototipo di telefono portatile, il primo del suo genere. Adesso non possiamo più farne a meno: per parlare, mandare messaggi, vedere film, trovare indirizzi, lavorare... per non parlare dell'uso delle reti sociali.



Fifty years ago, an event [took place](#) that would transform the way we live. On 3 April 1973, the very first mobile phone call was made, [heralding](#) a new era of global, continuous connectivity. Motorola engineer Martin 'Marty' Cooper was walking on New York's Sixth Avenue when he called rival inventor Jo- el Engel of Bell Laboratories at AT&T. He informed Engel that he was calling from a [portable](#) telephone. Engel responded with silence, but history was made.

SHOEBOX PHONE

At the time, car phones already existed, but were [powered](#) by heavy equipment that had to be [stored](#) in the [boot](#). This mobile prototype, named the DynaTAC (short for 'dynamic [adaptive](#) total area coverage'), could be

carried around but was still the size of a shoebox. It only had a half-hour battery life, and it took ten hours to charge. However, the press enthusiastically reported about a new concept of a “take-along phone”; for the first time, phone calls were tied to a person, not a place or a car.

YUPPIE GADGET

Marty Cooper and his team worked for years to reduce the phone's size. Finally, in 1983, the world's first commercially-available handheld mobile phone was released. The Motorola DynaTAC 8000X was 25cm tall, without the antenna, weighed 790g and cost \$3,995. It became the ultimate yuppie (young urban professional) accessory, a symbol of wealth but also of gratuitous spending.

POPULARITY

In just fifty years, however, Cooper's invention has revolutionised our world. The cell phone is no longer considered a status symbol, it is a necessity. Smartphones, introduced in 1993, became ubiquitous by the 2000s. Since then, phones have become slimmer, lighter and more powerful, and can cost from \50 to \1,500 for the latest iPhone. According to recent statistics, the current number of cell phone owners is 7.33 billion, over 91 per cent of the world's population; 66 per cent own a smartphone.

TECH PIONEER

Cooper worked for Motorola for twenty-nine years, contributing to significant inventions, including paggers and two-way radio dispatch systems. He set up several businesses with his wife, Arlene Harris, also a wireless tech inventor. Now, at ninety-four, he still sits on several committees in the industry. Despite cell phones' reported negative effects on mental health, Cooper considers them a good thing for humanity. He believes they can improve healthcare and even eradicate poverty. As he told CBS News: “We are only at the very, very beginning. I know I sound like an optimist, but poverty is going to be a thing of the past.”

A movie based on his autobiography Cutting the [Cord](#) is [currently](#) in production.

Glossary

- **handheld** = portatile, tascabile
- **slimmer** = più sottili
- **took place** = aver luogo, succedere
- **adaptive** = adattabile
- **stored** = riporre, conservare
- **boot** = bagagliaio
- **carried around** = portare in giro
- **paggers** = cercapersone
- **wireless** = senza cavo
- **sits on several committees** = esser membro di un comitato
- **portable** = portatile
- **powered** = alimentare
- **heralding** = annunciare
- **weighed** = pesare
- **spending** = spesa, acquisto
- **current** = attuale
- **dispatch** = messaggio, comunicazione
- **Despite** = anche se
- **Cord** = cavo
- **take-along** = portatile
- **tied** = legare