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A mobile phone or mobile device can refer to other uses, see Smartphone (disambiguation). A Nexus 6, an Android smartphone, displaying the main page of the English Wikipedia. A smartphone is a mobile phone with advanced computing capabilities and internet access.^[c] It typically has a touchscreen interface, allowing users to access a wide range of applications and services, such as email, social media, navigation, entertainment, business productivity, and more. Smartphones are distinguished from feature phones by their advanced hardware capabilities and extensive mobile operating systems, access to the internet, business applications, mobile payments, and multimedia functionality, including music, video, gaming, radio, and television. Smartphones typically feature metal-oxide-semiconductor (MOS) integrated circuit (IC) chips, various sensors, and support for multiple wireless communication protocols. Examples of smartphone sensors include accelerometers, barometers, gyroscopes, and magnetometers; they can be used by both pre-installed and third-party software to enhance functionality. Wireless communication standards supported by smartphones include LTE, 5G NR, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and satellite navigation.

By the mid-20s, manufacturers began integrating satellite messaging and emergency services, expanding their utility in remote areas without reliable cellular coverage. Smartphones have largely replaced personal digital assistant (PDA) devices, handheld/palm-sized PCs, portable media players (PMP),[1] point-and-shoot cameras, camcorders, and, to a lesser extent, handheld video game consoles, e-reader devices, pocket calculators, and GPS tracking units. Following the rising popularity of the iPhone in the late 2000s, the majority of smartphones have featured thin, slate-like form factors with large, capacitive touch screens with support for multi-touch gestures rather than physical keyboards. Most modern smartphones have the ability for users to download or purchase additional applications from a centralized app store. They often have support for cloud storage and cloud synchronization, and virtual assistants. Since the early 2010s, improved hardware and faster wireless communication have bolstered the growth of the smartphone industry. As of 2014^[update], over a billion smartphones are sold globally every year. In 2019 alone, 1.54 billion smartphone units were shipped worldwide.[2] As of 2020^[update], 75.0% percent of the world population were smartphone users.[3] It has been suggested that this section be split out into another article titled History of mobile telephony, which would contain information about how mobile telecommunications evolved through time, covering topics like network types and the immaturity of wireless data services. These issues were eventually resolved with the exponential scaling and miniaturization of MOS transistors down to sub-micron levels (Moore's law), the improved lithium-ion battery, faster digital mobile data networks (Erdholm's law), and more mature software platforms that allowed mobile device ecosystems to develop independently of data providers. In the 2000s, NTT DoCoMo's i-mode platform, BlackBerry, Nokia's Symbian platform, and Windows Mobile began to gain market traction, with models often featuring QWERTY keyboards or resistive touchscreen input and emphasizing access to push email and wireless internet. Main article: IBM Simon IBM Simon and charging base [1994][4] In the early 1990s, IBM engineer Frank Canova considered that chip-and-wireless technology was becoming small enough to use in handheld devices.[5] The first commercially available device that could be properly referred to as a "smartphone" began as a prototype called "Angler" developed by Canova in 1992 while at IBM and demonstrated in November of that year at the COMDEX computer industry trade show.[6][7][8] A refined version was marketed to consumers in 1994 by BellSouth under the name Simon Personal Communicator. In addition to placing and receiving cellular calls, the touchscreen-equipped Simon could send and receive faxes and emails. It included an address book, calendar, appointment scheduler, calculator, word time clock, and notepad, as well as other visionary mobile applications such as maps, stock reports and news.[9] The IBM Simon was manufactured by Mitsubishi Electric, which integrated features with its own cellular radio technologies.[10] It featured a liquid-crystal display (LCD) and PC Card support.[11] The Simon was commercially unsuccessful, particularly due to its bulky form factor and limited battery life.[12] Using NiCAD batteries rather than the nickel-metal hydride batteries commonly used in mobile phones in the 1990s, or lithium-ion batteries used in modern smartphones,[13] it had a maximum standby time of one day. The device could be used as a standard telephone via a corded handset connected to a landline. The Palm OS smartphone was introduced in 1996 by Ericsson, whose distribution channels focused primarily on enterprise customers. Main article: Personal digital assistant Beginning in the mid-to-late 1990s, many people who had mobile phones carried a separate dedicated PDA device, running early versions of operating systems such as Palm OS, Newton OS, Symbian or Windows CE/Pocket PC. These operating systems would later evolve into early mobile operating systems. Most of the "smartphones" in this era were hybrid devices that combined these existing familiar PDA OSeS with basic phone hardware. The results were devices that were bulkier than either dedicated mobile phones or PDAs, but allowed a limited amount of cellular Internet access. PDA and mobile phone manufacturers competed in reducing the size of devices. The bulk of these smartphones combined with their high cost and expensive data plans, plus other drawbacks such as expansion limitations and decreased battery life compared to separate standalone devices, generally limited their popularity to "early adopters" and business users who needed portable connectivity. In March 1996, Hewlett-Packard released the OmniGo 700LX, a modified HP 200XL palm-top PC with a Nokia 2110 mobile phone piggybacked onto it and ROM-based software to support it. It had a 640 × 200 resolution CGA compatible four-shade gray-scale LCD screen and could be used to place and receive calls, and to create and receive text messages, emails and faxes. It also is 100% DOS 5.0 compatible, allowing it to run thousands of existing software titles, including early versions of Windows. The Nokia 9110 Communicator, opened for access to keyboard in August 1996; Nokia released the Nokia 9000 Communicator, a digital cellular PDA based on the Nokia 2110 with an integrated system based on the PEN/GEOS 3.0 operating system from Geoworks. The two components were attached by a hinge in what became known as a clamshell design, with the display above and a physical QWERTY keyboard below. The PDA provided e-mail; calendar, address book, calculator and notebook applications; text-based Web browsing; and could send and receive facsimile transmissions. The device could be used as a standard telephone via a corded handset connected to a landline. The Eseries PDA smartphone was introduced in 1996 by Ericsson, whose distribution channels focused primarily on enterprise customers. Main article: Research In Motion Research In Motion popularized the term "CrackBerry" in 2006 due to the BlackBerry's addictive nature.[32] In the U.S., the high cost of data plans and relative rarity of devices with Wi-Fi capabilities that could avoid cellular data network usage kept adoption of smartphones mainly to business professionals and "early adopters".

The Palm OS smartphone was introduced in 1996 by Ericsson, whose distribution channels focused primarily on enterprise customers. Main article: Microsoft PocketPC By the mid-2000s, most major mobile phone manufacturers had begun releasing smartphones. Microsoft's Windows Mobile and BlackBerry devices dated at the time. From 2002 onwards, Nokia started producing consumer-focused smartphones, popularized by the entertainment-focused Nseries. Until 2010, Symbian was the world's most widely used smartphone operating system.[34] The touchscreen personal digital assistant (PDA)-derived nature of adapted operating systems like Palm OS, the "Pocket PC" versions of what was later Windows Mobile, and the UIQ interface that was originally designed for pen-based PDAs on Symbian OS devices resulted in some early smartphones having stylus-based interfaces. These allowed for virtual keyboards and handwriting input, thus also allowing easy entry of Asian characters.[35] By the mid-2000s, the majority of smartphones had a physical QWERTY keyboard. Most used a "keyboard bar" form factor, like the BlackBerry line. Windows Mobile smartphones, Palm Treos, and some of the Nokia Eseries. A few hid their full physical QWERTY keyboard in a sliding form factor, like the Danger Hiptop line. Some even had only a numeric keypad using T9 text input, like the Nokia Nseries and other models in the Nokia Eseries. Resistive touchscreens with stylus-based interfaces could still be found on a few smartphones, like the Palm Treos, which had dropped their handwriting input after a few early models that were available in versions with Graffiti instead of a keyboard. The LG Prada with a large capacitive touchscreen introduced in 2006 The original Apple iPhone; following its introduction in 2007, the common smartphone form factor shifted to large touchscreen software interfaces without physical keypads[36] The late 2000s and early 2010s saw a shift in smartphone interfaces away from devices with physical keyboards and keypads to ones with large finger-operated capacitive touchscreens.[36] The first phone of any kind with a large capacitive touchscreen was the LG Prada, announced by LG in December 2006.[37] This was a fashionable feature phone created in collaboration with Italian luxury designer Prada with a 3" 240 x 400 pixel screen, a slide-out camera lens, and a multitouch-capable touch-sensitive screen. The screen was made up of three layers: a glass layer, a transparent conductive polymer layer, and a plastic substrate. The screen was controlled by a microcontroller unit (MCU) that processed signals from the touch sensor, which allowed gestures such as "pinching" to zoom in or out on photos, maps, and web pages. The iPhone was notable as being the first device of its kind targeted at the mass market to abandon the use of a stylus, keyboard, or keypad typical of contemporary smartphones, instead using a large touchscreen for direct finger input as its main means of interaction.[38] The iPhone's operating system was also a slight shift away from older operating systems (which older phones supported and which were adapted from PDAs and feature phones) to an operative system powerful enough to not require using a limited, stripped down web browser that could only render pages specially formatted using technologies such as WML, XHTML, or XHTML and instead ran a version of Apple's Safari browser that could render full websites[44][45][46] not specifically designed for mobile phones.[47] Later Apple shipped a software update that gave the iPhone a built-in on-device App Store allowing direct wireless downloads of third-party software.[48][49] This kind of centralized App Store and free developer tools[50][51] quickly became the new main paradigm for all smartphone platforms for software development, distribution, discovery, installation, and payment, in place of expansive developer tools that required official approval to use and a dependence on third-party sources providing applications for multiple platforms.[36] The advantages of a design with software powerful enough to support advanced applications and a large capacitive touchscreen affected the development of another smartphone OS platform, Android, with a more BlackBerry-like prototype device scrapped in favor of a touchscreen device with a slide-out physical keyboard, as Google's engineers thought at the time that a touchscreen could not completely replace a physical keyboard and buttons.[52][53][54] Android is based around a modified Linux kernel, again providing more power than mobile operating systems adapted from PDAs and feature phones. The first Android device, the horizontal-sliding HTC Dream, was unveiled in October 2008 and was similar in appearance to a candy-bar style flip phone. It had a 2.8-inch WVGA TFT-LCD screen with a resolution of 320x480 pixels. The device was powered by a Qualcomm MSM7225 processor and came with a rear-facing camera. The HTC Dream was the first Android phone to introduce a front-facing camera and smartphone, releasing the Galaxy S4 Zoom and K Zoom, each equipped with integrated 10× optical zoom lens and manual parameter settings (including manual exposure and focus) years before these were widely adopted among smartphones, instead using a large touchscreen for direct finger input as its main means of interaction.[55] The iPhone's operating system was also a slight shift away from older operating systems (which older phones supported and which were adapted from PDAs and feature phones) to an operative system powerful enough to not require using a limited, stripped down web browser that could only render pages specially formatted using technologies such as WML, CHTMLE, or XHTML and instead ran a version of Apple's Safari browser that could render full websites[44][45][46] not specifically designed for mobile phones.[47] Later Apple shipped a software update that gave the iPhone a built-in on-device App Store allowing direct wireless downloads of third-party software.[48][49] This kind of centralized App Store and free developer tools[50][51] quickly became the new main paradigm for all smartphone platforms for software development, distribution, discovery, installation, and payment, in place of expansive developer tools that required official approval to use and a dependence on third-party sources providing applications for multiple platforms.[36] The advantages of a design with software powerful enough to support advanced applications and a large capacitive touchscreen affected the development of another smartphone OS platform, Android, with a more BlackBerry-like prototype device scrapped in favor of a touchscreen device with a slide-out physical keyboard, as Google's engineers thought at the time that a touchscreen could not completely replace a physical keyboard and buttons.[52][53][54] Android is based around a modified Linux kernel, again providing more power than mobile operating systems adapted from PDAs and feature phones. 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