

Communication Technology: A Look Back

Haven Daley:

The Tech Museum in the heart of California's Silicon Valley is hosting a new Star Trek exhibit, complete with all the famous objects from the fictional '60s TV universe. One of those gadgets, the "communicator," looks a lot like the modern flip phone. But now that design also seems a bit dated.

Rick Osterloh:

So this is very typical of a phone that was cutting-edge that we would ship at the beginning of the 2000s. And you can see here, it's a flip phone, um, which we're famous for, and it's got an external antenna and a numeric keypad. It was totally optimized around making phone calls and being durable and rugged.

Haven Daley:

Ten years later, phones got much smarter and are more like handheld computers.

Rick Osterloh:

It's just been a dramatic change in what people are doing with them. And I think, for most people, the ch-the most important change has been this is probably the most important item they have with them all the time.

Haven Daley:

Over the past decade, mobile phones have also become commonplace in the developing world. And thanks to developments in communication technology, the planet feels like a smaller place.

Pete Friess:

Using the telephone is not anymore a cost factor. We're using Skype, and we're talking around the world for free. I'm living in the United States. I'm a European, and there are days I communicate more with people of my hometown, for no cost, than I'm talking to people here.

Haven Daley:

Popular social networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter, didn't even exist ten years ago. Ten years from now, mobile devices will do even more and do it much quicker. Some predict that communication technology will eventually, literally be part of us.

Pete Friess:

You know, there's people who are inventing technology which gets actually implanted into our bodies, and they will control certain points of machinery around us and parts of-dysfunctioning parts of our body. This is very exciting.

Haven Daley:

Who knows? In the future, maybe the Star Trek "transporter" will be a reality too.

Haven Daley:

Haven Daley, The Associated Press, San Jose, California.

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