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# The first call from a cell phone was made 40 years ago today

In the past four decades, the world has gone from monster handsets to pocket-sized portable computers.

by Roger Cheng @RogerWCheng / April 3, 2013 7:13 AM PDT

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## The Wow of Mobility

Since the first cell phone call, 40 years ago, we've seen many "wow" moments in mobility. From talking cars to augmented reality, where will mobility take us next?

- 1973**: First Cell Phone Call Made From a 2 Lb Phone
- 1982**: Talking Cars Appear on TV
- 1989**: Saved by the Bell's Zack Morris Introduces the Cellphone to the Young Teen Masses
- 1992**: LOL, The First Commercial SMS Text Message is Sent
- 1994**: Tetris Becomes the First Game on a Mobile Phone Enhancing Commutes Everywhere
- 1997**: Mobile Payments Emerge - First Time Someone Bought a Coke with Their Phone
- 2005**: [Milestone]
- 2004**: [Milestone]



Cisco

Martin Cooper changed the world when he made the first cell phone call 40 years ago.

The former Motorola vice president and division manager made the call on the company's DynaTAC phone **while standing in front of the New York Hilton on Sixth Avenue**. His first call: to the head of research at Bell Labs, a company that also was attempting to build the first cell phone.

Cooper's call did more than untether people from their fixed phone lines; it opened the door to true mobility and continues to affect virtually every aspect of our lives.

Long gone are the clunky phones, such as the DynaTAC, or the large cell phone famously used by Zack Morris on the television sitcom "Saved by the Bell." In their places are sleek smartphones and **tablets** with massive brains and access to a super-fast wireless connection. People don't just use their mobile devices to make phone calls. In fact, they do a lot less of that now. They use their phones to browse the Internet, order delivery food, play word games with each other, and keep up with the ever-increasing tsunami of e-mails and text messages.

Cooper remains a revered figure in cell phone history. He had another **moment to**

introduced him, the throngs of jaded bloggers and reporters stopped their typing to pay their respects for his accomplishments.



Martin Cooper and his Motorola DynaTAC.

Kent German/CNET

A lot has changed since Cooper worked at Motorola and the company was a world-beating giant in the telecom industry. Now, what's left of the Motorola cell phone division largely has been swallowed up by Google, which now dominates the industry with its **Android** mobile operating system. What hasn't been gobbled up by Google and its partners (primarily Samsung Electronics) is left to Apple, the other major player in the field.

As part of the 40th anniversary, Cisco put together an infographic (above) that highlights some of the milestones that got us from Cooper's first call to today's **Google Glass** and beyond. In 1992, the first commercial text message is sent ("LOL"). Two years later, Tetris makes its debut as the first cell phone game. In 2004, the first Wi-Fi-certified cell phone is introduced and is now a commonplace feature as the wireless carriers look to unload as much traffic as possible on Wi-Fi.

**FROM BRICK PHONES TO POCKET COMPUTERS IN 40 YEARS (PICTURES)**

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The graphic also highlights the introduction of Apple's App Store in 2008, marking the first of a new generation of application stores and inspiring legions of developers.

Looking ahead, the advent of cellular technology has enabled wholly new

the infographic. The carriers, meanwhile, are looking to connect everything from cars to dog collars and medicine pill bottles. Cisco projects by 2017 there will be more than 10 billion mobile devices around the world, with video accounting for 66 percent of all traffic.

But it all goes back to that first phone call.

**Tags:** Mobile, TVs, Tablets, Tech Culture, Laptops, Phones, Google Glass, Cisco, Google, Motorola

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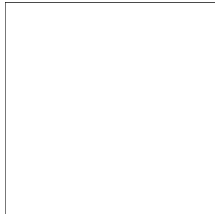
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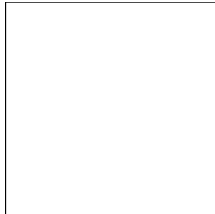
### Roger Cheng /

Roger Cheng is the executive editor in charge of breaking news for CNET News. Prior to this, he was on the telecommunications beat and wrote for Dow Jones Newswires and The Wall Street Journal for nearly a decade. He's a devoted Trojan alum and Los Angeles Lakers fan. [See full bio](#)

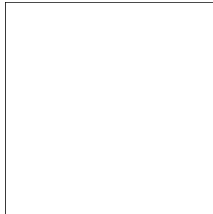
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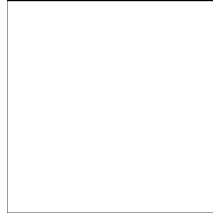
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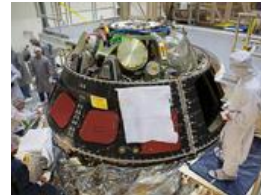
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