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# LIFESTYLE DIARIES

## Pocket revolution: Smartphone convergence in the 21st century



you had to find it in a book. Now though, with the internet maturing into what it is today, and smartphones evolving enough to take full advantage of it, smartphones have become an unrivalled learning platform, becoming our pocketable private tutor.

With a smartphone, you can access and enrol in innumerable online courses, programmes, and degrees, or learn new skills, languages, and subjects, using various apps and websites, such as Duolingo, Khan Academy, and Coursera.

The days of lugging around heavy textbooks have almost faded into oblivion, thanks to e-books and educational apps that transform our smartphones into portable libraries. Learning a new language, mastering a musical instrument, or even delving into the intricacies of astronomy and astrophysics has never been more accessible.

Smartphones did not just revolutionise education, they also reinvented business. Smartphones are the key reason for the remote working opportunities we take for granted. No longer being tethered to your desk, and the ability to transform your immediate surroundings, be it a café table, park bench, or comfy bed in a hotel suite, into your workspace does not just boost morale, but productivity as well.

Smartphones have also enabled the rise of small independent businesses through the use of dedicated sites or apps. Promotion has also been made easier because you no longer have to rely on a third person. You can promote your business/service the way you wish and appeal to an audience of your choosing.

Smartphones have also given rise to the 'gig' economy, connecting freelancers with clients across the globe, while entrepreneurs launch businesses with nothing more than a smartphone and a vision.

The smartphone-driven gig economy has also given rise to on-demand service platforms. These platforms connect customers with various services, such as transportation, food delivery, and more, using technology and a network of workers. Sounds complicated? Well, the food that is being delivered to you as you read this, is part of this new business opportunity that smartphones created.

While online shopping has been around for some time, it really took off during the COVID-19 pandemic when you could not go outside for dear life. This taste of unlimited power of ordering whatever you need through your smartphone, having it delivered to your home, and paying for it digitally has been nothing short of a revelation for shoppers. Plus, with 'big brother tech' constantly listening and watching your internet activity, it can even suggest products you did not know existed but now cannot live without.

Smartphones are also becoming increasingly responsible for our general well-being. Hard to imagine? Not really. Start counting the number of smartwatches and fitness bands on people's hands and that should give you a rough idea.

These smart devices, in conjunction with smartphones, monitor and provide ways to improve our physical health by tracking our steps, calories, heart rate, blood pressure, and sleep patterns. They also provide us with fitness suggestions, such as exercises, yoga, and meditation, that can be done anywhere, saving you a monthly gym membership.

Smartphones are also essential in telemedicine, allowing doctors and patients to connect, and share information and treatment advice from great distances. They can also connect us to health professionals faster than ever before in cases of emergency.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

This is perhaps a smartphone's true claim to fame these days, and something that nearly all smartphone users spend most of their time on. It is genuinely

difficult to explain social media, especially to an alien if one were to land today, but the simplest explanation would be that it's another plane/platform of interacting with the people around you and the world in general.

Platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram have created a digital world and every user, its digital citizen. These platforms allow us to find communities where we would fit in, news we would be interested in, make friends we'd never find otherwise, and now, create a career, be that by becoming an influencer, entertainer, content maker, or simply running a digital business without any added cost.

Social media has its downsides, many of which are now finally coming into light, such as addiction, depression, anxiety, and so on, most of which are fuelled by the very algorithm designed to keep us on these platforms. However, I still maintain that while there are negatives to social media, the positive, for now, outweighs the negatives.

The smartphone's transformative impact on society is hard to argue against. These pocket-sized marvels have transcended beyond being mere gadgets; they can be safely called extensions of ourselves, enriching every aspect of our modern existence. With the big boom of AI just around the corner, the smartphone is about to go through another revolution, and its place in our lives will further converge as we go further into the 21st century. It may not look like a metal and glass slab, but rest assured, it will very much be here.

By Intisab Shahriyar  
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

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FROM PAGE 46

Remember digital cameras or camcorders? Once tools for enthusiasts, smartphones have enabled the everyman to experience the joys of capturing their most treasured moments, or the freedom to chase after their creative passion for photo/videography, leading to all new careers and forms of content that we consume.

Were you a gamer in the '90s? Do you fondly look back on memories of playing Pokemon on a Gameboy in school during recess? Well, if you were unlucky enough to not own one, do not worry. Future generations will not have to go through this trauma, because smartphones are capable of playing games so vividly real, it makes old consoles look like a joke.

Did news of the Apple Vision Pro dominate your feed recently? Well, if it did, it did so for a good reason. With a resurgence of interest in VR/AR devices, after Google's

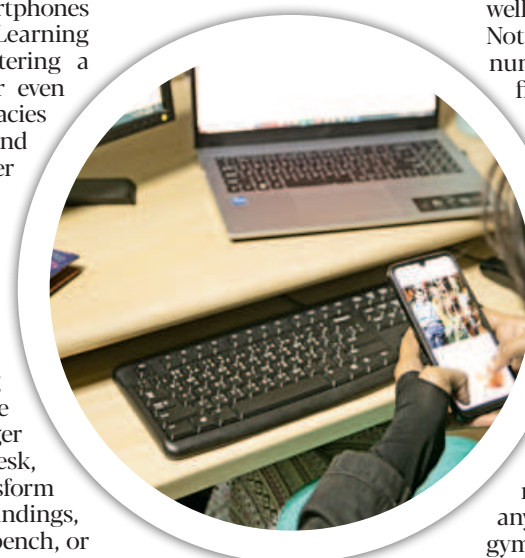
spectacular fumble with the tech despite introducing them first, ordinary people will get a taste of an immersive technological showcase.

Picture this; you sit on your sofa, put on the headset and connect your phone to it. Suddenly, your entire vision is dominated by virtual screens while you see the real world. Feeling like watching a movie? The headset will create a virtual movie theatre-sized screen. Feel like playing a game? Well, the headset will make you feel like you are IN the game. And the possibilities haven't even been realised yet.

### BUSINESS AND EDUCATION

Are you someone who whips out their phone the moment they come across something unfamiliar and Google it to find out? That is but a small demonstration of how powerful of a learning tool a smartphone is.

Once upon a time, if you needed to look something up,



### SHOPPING AND LIFESTYLE

For those of you unaware of how we did things in the "dark ages" here's an example: if you wanted a packet of crisps, you had to walk to your local 'mudir dokan,' talk to the shopkeeper and buy one yourself. Well, rejoice Gen Zs and Alphas, for your need to avoid facing humans and doing illogical labour has been largely granted through online shopping via smartphones.

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