

MOBILE PHONE TERMINOLOGY

3G

3G Stands for 3rd-generation. Analog cellular phones were the first generation. Digital marked the second generation.

3G is loosely defined, but generally includes high data speeds, always-on data access, and greater voice capacity. The high data speeds are possibly the most prominent feature, and certainly the most hyped. They enable such advanced features as live, streaming video. There are several different 3G technology standards. The most prevalent is UMTS, which is based on WCDMA. (WCDMA and UMTS are often used interchangeably.)

Bluetooth

A wireless personal area network (PAN) specification that connects phones, computers, appliances, etc. over short distances without wires by using low power radio frequencies. Bluetooth allows you to leave your phone in your pocket, while talking on your phone with a Bluetooth headset - with no wires. You can also exchange contact or scheduling information with other Bluetooth-enabled phones you of upcoming events.

CDMA

Code Division Multiple Access. A type of digital wireless technology that allows large amounts of voice and data to be transmitted on the same frequency. CDMA is second-generation cellular technology (or 2G) and is available in Canada, the United States, Pacific Asia, and Latin America. Most CDMA service providers will migrate to a high-speed data technology called 1xRTT. The CDMA phones are not listed on GSMarena.com.

Dual-band

Phones that can switch between two different bands of frequencies.

In Europe Dual-band usually means GSM900/GSM1800 capable phone, while in USA it might mean GSM850/GSM1900 or and 3G data rates up to 384 Kbps. The standard is based on GSM standard and uses TDMA multiplexing technology.

EMS

Enhanced Message Service. An extension of SMS that enables the sending of a combination of simple melodies, images, sounds, animations and formatted text as a message to another EMS-compatible phone

GPRS

General Packet Radio Service. A packet-switched technology that enables high-speed wireless Internet and other data communications. GPRS offers a tenfold increase in data speed over previous technologies, up to 115kbit/s (in theory). Typical real-world speeds are around 30-40 Kbps. Using a packet switching, subscribers are always connected and always on-line.

GPRS is considered a 2.5G technology.

GPS

Global Positioning System. A system of satellites, computers, and receivers that is able to determine the latitude and longitude of a receiver on Earth by calculating the time difference for signals from different satellites to reach the receiver.

GSM

Global System for Mobile communications. The international digital radio standard created by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute. GSM is currently the dominant 2G digital mobile phone standard for most of the world.

IMEI

International Mobile Equipment Identity. A unique serial number used on digital mobile phones.

Infrared port (IrDA)

Allows cell phones, PDAs, and other devices to connect to each other for various purposes. Infrared is a wireless technology that uses a beam of invisible light to transmit information.

Java (J2ME)

Java 2 Micro Edition. A feature that allows the device to run specially-written applications. J2ME applications can provide specific functions such as a tip calculator, they can be games, or they can be custom-written corporate applications. Some phones allow you to download new applications directly from Internet while others require a data cable to transfer the applications from a PC.

LCD

Liquid Crystal Display. LCD displays utilize two sheets of polarizing material with a liquid crystal solution between them. An electric current passed through the liquid causes the crystals to align so that light cannot pass through them.

Monochrome LCDs in phones usually have both a backlight and a reflective backing, allowing them to be equally usable in both bright light and complete darkness.

Color LCDs come in many types. STN, TFT, and TFD are several common technologies used.

MMS

Multimedia Messaging Service. A further extension of SMS and EMS. MMS is designed to make use of newer and quicker mobile transmission methods such as GPRS, HSCSD, EDGE and UMTS, involving the attachment of multimedia extensions to messages, such as video and sound.

Polyphonic Ringtones

Polyphonic ringtones can create multiple tones simultaneously. This produces a more natural and realistic sound for melodies.

Predictive Text Input

A technology which allows you to enter text by pressing only one key per letter. The phone will automatically compare all of the possible letter combinations against a built-in dictionary of words. The current Predictive Text Input implementations are T9, iTAP and eZiText.

SIM

Subscriber Identity Module. The smart card used in digital phones. It carries the user's identity for accessing the network and receiving calls and also stores personal information, such as phone directory and received SMS messages.

SMS

Short Message Service. A service that enables subscribers to send short text messages (usually about 160 characters) to and from mobile phones.