

COM477::Mobile Technologies and Cultures

Dept. of Communication
NCSU, Spring 2012
TU-TH 10:15 - 11:30 a.m.



Cell phones are among the most relevant communication media today. They are communication interfaces that not only allow us to talk to other people, but also to access the internet, and find information and people in physical spaces. The number of cell phones has largely surpassed the number of PCs worldwide, and for many people in the world cell phones are not only their first phone, but also their first computer and location-aware device. Mobile technologies are in the 21st century what the PC was in the 20th century: A computer that allows us to connect to the Internet and to socialize with other people.

This course explores mobile technologies' influence on communication patterns and social behavior. We will analyze the use of different mobile and locative interfaces, such as smartphones, RFID tags, GPS technologies and pads in different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

The course will engage students to address issues such as:

- The history of mobile interfaces,
- Cell phones' and locative technologies' influence on our perception of location, space and place,
- Educational uses of mobile technologies,
- Locational privacy and urban sociability,
- Mobile phones, privacy and security.
- Youth behavior, location tracking, and cell phones,
- Mobile communities, and location-based networks,
- Mobile annotation, mapping and gaming.
- Basic concepts of cellular technologies and cell phone generations,
- The use of mobile phones in the developing world (case studies in Africa, Asia and South America).

In summary, the course provides a general overview of the state of mobile communication technologies today, focusing on history, current uses and social appropriation of technology.