



Buying a Smart Phone

TECHNOLOGY LEARNING CENTRE



Topics

- Is a smart phone even needed?
- Basic types of Smart Phones
- Checklist of considerations for buying
- What kind of cell plan?
- Consumer reviews of smartphones
- Online/further resources



Smartphone or not?

- If all you need to do is make mobile phones calls, maybe do some occasional texting and very little else, you may want to look at purchasing a Flip Phone instead. They are cheaper and smaller.
- Example for capabilities and price -
https://www.walmart.ca/en/ip/packard-bell-fully-unlocked-24-flip-phone/6000199911762?cmpid=sem_google_en_pla_none_869128796_99432194575_None&gclsrc=aw.ds&&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIxNnm8LWw7QIVmwytBh3cughEEAQYAiABEgJbCPD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds

Basic Smartphone Types

- iPhone with iOS
- Android OS phone (Nokia, Samsung, Motorola, Google, Huawei, LG, etc.)
- Windows Phone (Microsoft, LG, Nokia, HTC).
Windows phones are more of a fringe player in the smart phone market. Don't buy one.
- Linux Phones??? www.pine64.com – still at “early adopter” stage. Only for those who have patience and consider themselves real nerds.



Checklist

- iPhone or Android device?
- What is your price range?
- Unlocked device?
- What SIM cards/carriers will phone work with?
- Storage (drive size and SD card)
- Battery (how important is charge life to you?)
- Connectivity (WiFi & Bluetooth)
- Media capabilities (camera, mic)
- What techies say (reviews)





Checklist – iPhone?

- If you already have other Apple devices
- Slightly more expensive than some Androids
- Many believe it's more user friendly
- Better integration of hardware and apps
- Family sharing of content -
<https://www.apple.com/family-sharing/>
- <https://www.cheatsheet.com/gear-style/reasons-people-buy-iphones-instead-of-android-phones.html/>



Checklist – Android?

- More common mobile OS
- Overall, less expensive than iPhones
- Lots of apps/content
- Integration with Google cloud services
- Family sharing of content -
<https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/7007852?hl=en>
- <https://www.zdnet.com/article/11-things-my-android-phone-does-way-better-than-your-iphone/>



Checklist – Price Range

- Under \$250.00?
 - Tougher to find capable smart phones under 300, but they are out there. More searching.
- \$250.00 - \$500.00?
 - Decent range of Android phones. Entry level iPhones
- Over \$500.00 – iPhones & higher end Androids
- Comparison site - <https://www.cellphones.ca/cell-phones/>
- Big shopping sites like Amazon have price filters to search the site for smart phones.



Checklist – Unlocked

- All new smart phones sold in Canada are supposed to be unlocked.
- If you intend to shop online for a new smart phone, always good to make certain that the phone comes unlocked. Should be in product details.
- IMEI - <https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/how-to-check-your-imei-number>

Checklist – cards / carriers

- SIM cards are physical mini cards provided by your cell phone plan carrier that allows your smartphone to work as a phone.
- What kind of SIM cards do smartphones take? - <https://www.whistleout.com/CellPhones/Faqs/218195558-What-are-the-different-SIM-sizes-and-which-phones-use-which-SIM-size->
- What cell carriers will phone work with? Phones will work with many carriers, but sometimes some models will not be compatible with certain providers. This is usually listed in product details.





Checklist – Storage

- Most modern phones will have at least 32-64 GB of local storage for files, photos, movies, etc.
- Most phone OS only require 8-10 GB, the rest is for apps and files
- Not as critical of a spec as long as you are not taking and storing large numbers of photos, etc.
- You might want to look at the details around whether a phone has additional SD card slot for additional storage of files depending on what kind of a user you are.



Checklist – charge life

- In my opinion, worth investigating when buying a new phone.
- A decent charge life for a phone would be a battery you can go at least 2 days of regular daily use without having to recharge. My phone can go about 3-4 days before needing recharge.
- Article comparing and rating phone battery charge life based on make/model - <https://www.tomsguide.com/us/smartphones-best-battery-life,review-2857.html>



Checklist – connectivity

- These are things like wifi. Bluetooth, and things like screencasting to wifi capable TVs. etc. Look at product details.
- For direct physical connections, USB-C is emerging as the industry standard.
- Apple (iPhones) are still resisting the USB-C connection standard and use their own lightning cables.



Checklist – media / camera / mic

- Most modern phones are video meeting capable which means they have cameras and mics built in.
- You may want to see if the phone has an audio mini-plug port in it for headphones. If the phone has Bluetooth you can use wireless headphones.
- Unless you are doing professional level photos for business, you don't need a particularly skookum camera in terms of the megapixels it is capable of.



Checklist - Reviews

- Best Android Phones - <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-android-phone/>
- Sortable phone reviews - <https://www.phonearena.com/reviews>
- <https://www.cnet.com/topics/phones/products>
- <https://www.gizbot.com/mobile/reviews>
- <https://www.trustedreviews.com/reviews/mobile>



Cel Plans

- There is a variety of these from different providers. I do not recommend signing up for 1 or 2 year phone included plans. Many of these are wasting your money.
- Buy a phone and cel plan separately.
- There are many cel plan providers. All are unlocked as per Canadian laws.



Cel Plans (cont'd)

- www.publicmobile.ca
- <https://mobility.petro-canada.ca/plans.aspx>
- <https://www.whistleout.ca/CellPhones/Guides/best-cell-phone-plans>
- Whistle Out is a pretty comprehensive online tool for Canadians wanting to compare different cel plans that are available and to just find out more about them.



Further Resources

- <https://www.cellphones.ca>
- <https://www.wirelesstraveler.com> – for travellers and their mobile devices
- <https://www.whistleout.ca>
- Smart Phone Buying Guide - <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/buying-smartphones/smartphone-buying-guide/1/>