

CELL PHONE CONFUSION



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Cell Phone Confusion

Cell phones in the United States have several different standards to transmit information and this creates confusion. 140 countries around the world (GSM) use a common standard called GSM (Global System for Mobile communications). Although Sprint and Voice Stream use GSM, it is different from the world standard. While the U.S. is a large market, it takes time for new developments to adapt to our diverse standards. As a result, we often have unique problems. For example, GSM phones operate on a digital standard that essentially prevents the eavesdropping and cloning (FAQ) that is a problem for the U.S. cell phone market.

Because of a common standard, communication is facilitated. Perhaps this is why 60% of Europeans own a cell phone compared with 40% of Americans (Brain). In the United States, switching your cell phone provider usually requires you to switch your physical phone because they are set at the factory to operate on specific frequencies.

The international traveler can purchase a SIM (Subscriber Identification Module) that will allow someone from the U.S. to use the GSM network provided you have a phone that accepts a SIM card. Several U.S. companies are considering switching to the world GSM standard. Companies are even exploring ways to use software in a cell phone to reduce the need to obtain a new physical phone each time new features become available (Shapely).

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