

### Young adults disconnecting with ‘dumbphones’

- 1 When Ryan Gleeson punches out a text message or takes a call on his cellphone at parties, he prepares to hear questions from onlookers, and sometimes snickers. That’s because the 24-year-old carries a \$50 flip phone – the Samsung Gusto 2. There’s no touch screen or apps. No Web browsing capabilities. No collection of music to enjoy through earbuds. Gleeson is among cellphone users who choose to be dialed out of the world of iPhones, BlackBerrys and Androids. In an increasingly connected and accessible culture, these stalwarts have chosen hand-held devices that offer only the basics, despite the social isolation and limitations that may come with them.
- 2 For Gleeson, hanging up the iPhone demonstrates no grand realization about humanity, he said; rather, it’s a way to tamp down his compulsive email checking. “With the basic phone it’s a lot easier to just step away and say, ‘I’m not going to work right now,’” he said. He also feels as though he has more peace of mind and is able to just sit and think, taking in his environment on bus rides to work. “I feel more free.”
- 3 According to a Pew Research Center survey some young adults who could afford the costly Web-browsing phones and the monthly fees associated with them are sticking with more basic devices. When Pew researchers recently asked these people why they didn’t upgrade, a perceived lack of need and the high price of smartphones were the two main reasons mentioned most. Some young adults using the low-tech gear see smartphones as a potential disruption. Craig Griffin, a 36-year-old freelance illustrator from Chicago said he has resisted upgrading from his 2-year-old Samsung slider, partially because of the 25 he feels seeing people glued to their screens. “It’s important for me to be there with the people that I’m with and give them my attention,” he said.
- 4 Those who don’t have a smartphone admitted there are times when they long for the power and convenience of having what amounts to a minicomputer in their pocket. Gleeson said he misses being able to look things up quickly on Wikipedia. When a couple of his league’s softball games were rained out last year, Griffin still showed up to the field on his bike because he never saw the Facebook cancellation announcement. “Everyone else on the team knew about it,” he said.



- 5 Aaron Ervin, 25, who works at a guitar repair shop, gave up his smartphone about six months ago and now carries no cellphone at all. He said he misses being able to Google unfamiliar references that come up in day-to-day conversation. “I felt like my smartphone made me, well, smarter,” Ervin said. “But once my battery died I was just as ignorant as before.” Ervin said his cellphoneless state does at times annoy his friends but that the distance and quiet that replaces constant texting and Twitter monitoring makes it worth it.
  
- 6 28 some who have resisted an upgrade said they could eventually be enticed to switch. Griffin said he foresees upgrading to a smartphone one day if applications are developed that “would totally enhance my life. It just hasn’t happened yet,” he said. For now, “a phone just needs to be a phone.”

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