

The arrival of mobile phones

The ancestors of the mobile phones that we carry today in our pockets were large, heavy and had very limited autonomy, but they were a necessary link in the revolution that was to follow shortly afterwards.

Telefónica played a predominant role in the history of mobile phones in Spain, offering this service to customers long before it arrived in other countries. Initially, it could only be used in cars and was exclusively available to high-ranking government officials. Over time, its use became increasingly popular.

The advent of digital mobile phones in 1994, brought about by Movistar, together with the release of ever smaller, more powerful, and affordable handsets, allowed the mobile phone to become the communication device par excellence.

Vehicle auto phone

The first step in the development of mobile phones was the automatic vehicle telephone: a terminal installed in cars that broadcast and transmitted by radio relay. Its battery, connected to that of the car, took up the entire boot. The service was inaugurated in 1975 in Madrid and Barcelona, with an almost exclusive use for government or Royal Household vehicles.

Automatic mobile phone with radio station

Mobile telephone set (car phone) that belongs to the first generation of analogue mobile phones. In 1982, Telefónica began marketing the automatic mobile telephone system (TMA), the first cellular system in Spain (prior to GSM). It was a pioneering system with wide coverage, although it still had some technical limitations, such as poor voice clarity.

Automatic mobile phone. Hotline

Hotline was a best-selling model among the first mobiles to be marketed, partly due to its successful advertising campaign. Weighing 4 kg, it needed 8 hours of charging for 30 minutes of autonomy. The model shown here was adapted for the car.

Electronic cell phone

Popularly known as "the brick" due to its bulky form and weight. It was very popular at the time despite its high price, comparable to that of a mid-range car.