

Incredible Shrinking Technology

Today's communication and entertainment technology is often small enough to fit in your hand or in your pocket. However, earlier versions of today's useful gadgets were often quite large.

One of the first computers was built in 1946. It was big enough to fill an entire 30-foot-by-50-foot room. It had blinking lights and six thousand manual switches. Computer operators used the switches to enter commands. It was capable of adding five thousand numbers in a second—relatively slow compared to the speed of today's much smaller laptops.

Today people download, store and carry thousands of songs on gadgets no bigger than credit cards. However, during the early 1900s, music fans might turn on a chair-sized radio to listen to a live musical broadcast. Or they might open their large tabletop phonograph (record player) to play one of their favorite records.

The first handheld cell phones were heavy, awkward and the size of a man's shoe. Today's cell phones are tiny and light.

It is amazing to think how much gadgets can shrink!

