



Mobile Phone Basics

Make your mobile phone work for you!



As mobile phone usage continues to increase, we're seeing astronomical leaps in the number of things you can do beyond making a phone call. Use this guide as your introduction into the wild world of mobile technology.

Choosing a Phone

Mobile technology is like the Wild West: a free-for-all among the hardware choices, the optional software and apps, and the service providers, with few standards among them. As you work to make sense of the hundreds of available options, it's a good idea to keep these things in mind:

Features: Which mobile add-ons are absolutely essential? Would you prefer a full Web browser? How about downloadable applications? Would you like to listen to music or watch video on your phone? Or do you just want something that makes calls? Each of these factors can play a part in the type of phone and network you shop for.

Network: Each wireless provider has its own strengths and weaknesses in terms of its coverage area, variety of phones offered, and track record for customer service. No one plan is perfect, so it's a good idea to shop around to see which one will give you the most bang for your buck.

Price/Service Plan: Most mobile providers will offer a considerable discount on the phone itself if you agree to a contract. Make sure to add up the costs - including extra features like text messaging and Internet access - to make sure you can make the commitment. If you're unsure about signing up for such a contract, you may want to consider a pay-as-you-go option. While this limits your options in terms of the available phones, the ability to forgo any extra strings may be worth it.



Ratings and Reviews:

www.phonescoop.com and www.phonearea.com are constantly updated with news and product reviews. Phonescoop even has a "Phone Finder," which can present you with a list of phones based on your chosen options.

In print, **Consumer Reports** does comprehensive reviews of current phones in its January issue. This is available on the Magazine shelves, as well as at the Reference Desk.

PC Magazine recently released a handy guide to non-smartphones: www.tinyurl.com/findaphone



It's also important not to underestimate the "feel" of a given device. Before you make any sort of decision, definitely visit the store and take the selected phone for a test drive. Many of the "big box" electronic stores have display models of phones from a variety of providers.

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Text Messaging

Most cell phones now offer text messaging as a built-in feature. Using a protocol called SMS (Short Message Service), you can send brief notes to other cell phone users. Here are a few suggestions for becoming an expert texter.

Know your plan: Depending on your wireless plan, you may incur certain charges or restrictions governing the use of your phone's text messaging features. Some plans offer unlimited messages, while others only give you a specific allotment of messages per month. (Sometimes, this allotment counts received messages as well as sent messages, so be careful.) If you're not sure, double-check your contract to avoid unnecessary charges.



Learn T9 and Let Your Fingers Do the Talking!

Getting the hang of T9 can be confusing at first. The trick to using it is to ignore the word displayed on your screen until you've finished typing it out. As you add letters, T9 selects the most common word that uses that combination of keystrokes. The more letters you type, the greater the likelihood that T9's entry matches up with your word. If there are multiple words matching that number combination, you can cycle through the list by pressing the "Next" key on your keypad (typically "0").

Let's say you want send a text to your friend George. To say "Hi George" on your phone's regular "multi-tap" mode, you would type:

H I _ G E O R G E
44 444 # 444 33 666 777 4 33

If you happen to hit one key too many times, you'll have to cycle through the letters again. If you switch your text-entry mode to T9, the same message is spelled:

HI_GEORGE
44#436743

By only having to hit one key for each letter, you save yourself a great deal of time and frustration. T9 does have a steep initial learning curve. With some practice, you'll be texting like a pro in no time. For more practice using T9, visit www.t9.com/us/learn/ and follow the interactive lessons.

Texting to an Email Address

Did you know your phone has an email address? This makes it possible to send and receive email on your mobile device without using a direct email gateway. Your phone's email address will start with the 10-digit phone number and a suffix specific to your provider. For more information, refer to the instructions at the end of this handout.

Here are a few examples:

Alltel: [number]@message.alltel.com

AT&T: [number]@txt.att.net

Sprint: [number]@messaging.sprintpcs.com

T-Mobile: [number]@tmomail.net

Verizon: [number]@vtext.com

Virgin Mobile: [number]@vmobl.com

Other providers are listed at www.SMS411.net.

Remember that **text messages have a maximum of 140 characters**, so anything with more than that will appear in multiple text messages.



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Texting for Information with Google SMS

We all use Google for quick answers on the Web. But did you know you can also use Google to get information through your phone? By sending a text message to 466453, you can look up addresses, phone numbers, weather and traffic reports, sports scores, movie times, and much more!

Visit www.google.com/mobile/sms for the complete list of services Google offers through text messaging. You can try it out for yourself by entering your question into the “phone” displayed on the page.



Using the Library with Your Mobile Phone

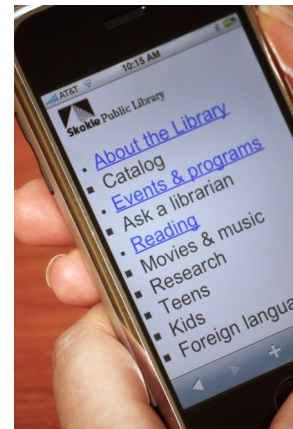
Of course, the real reason to get a powerful new phone is to make using the Library easier and more convenient. With the help of a Library Services and Technology Act Grant (provided by the Illinois State Library and the Institute of Museum and Library Services), we're proud to provide these three services.

Use Your Phone to Access the Library Website

Use your phone's Web browser to access a Library website specially formatted for small screens. Just point your browser to m.skokiellibrary.info.

Once there, you'll find:

- Library hours and directions
- Contact information
- Loan policies
- Upcoming events
- New item listings

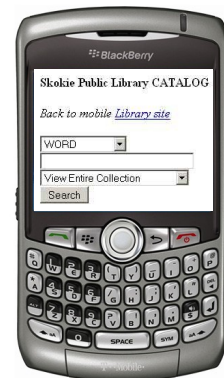


The Library Catalog on Your Phone

If your phone has a Web browser, you can now access AirPAC, a version of the Library catalog specifically modified for small screens. Visit catalog.skokiellibrary.info/airpac to get started.

Use the mobile catalog to:

- Browse the collection
- Reserve titles
- Check your account
- Renew items



Text Message Notifications

Never miss a change to your library account!

Register for this free* service and have the following notices texted to your phone:

- Hold notices
- Courtesy notices (“pre-overdue” warnings)
- Renew eligible items
- Overdue and fine warnings

Sign up for text message notifications by sending the message SIGNUP to skokie@shoutbomb.com. Or scan the code at right with your cameraphone.



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Not sure how to send a text message to an email? It's easy:

1. Select the Text Messaging option on your phone.
2. Highlight the Message Recipient field. Some phones have separate fields for phone numbers and email addresses. Type skokie@shoutbomb.com in the email field.
3. Other phones have one field for both phone numbers and email addresses. If you see a "123" option on your menu, you can change it to "ABC" by clicking the relevant menu button. Send the message to skokie@shoutbomb.com.
4. You will receive a confirmation message. Follow the prompts to complete the registration process.
5. Add skokie@shoutbomb.com to your contact list. This will make it easier to receive catalog notifications in the future.

Text messages will appear in addition to your regular phone or email notifications. If you get stuck, contact the Library for more assistance.



Once you're signed up, these are the commands that are available.

SIGNUP: Register your phone for text message notifications.

ADDCARD: Add a second library card to your phone. You will receive a PIN for each card you have.

DROPCARD: Remove an added library card from your account.

HL: Sends a list of the items you have on hold.

OL: Sends a list of overdue items to your phone.

HOLDS: Turns hold notifications on or off. Default setting is On.

RENEW: Turns renewal notifications on or off. Default setting is On.

OVERDUE: Turns Overdue notifications on or off. Default setting is On.

QUIT: Opts you out of text message service and deletes your registration.

New Mobile Features:

Ask us a Question: Text your question to skokie@shoutbomb.com. Be sure to start the message off with the word ASK.

Check the Shelves: Text an ISBN to skokie@shoutbomb.com, and we will check if the item is available, and place it on hold for you. Format your message in the following manner:
ISBN ##### FORMAT (choose BOOK, AUDIOBOOK, or EBOOK)



Image credit: gizmodo.com

*While text message notifications are a free service of Skokie Public Library, you may incur charges from your wireless provider based on your messaging plan. Check with your provider for more information.

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