

Cell Phones for Communication and Enjoyment

Cell phones have become an essential communication tool for almost everyone today. Their diverse functions have made them more than just a tool of communication. How are cell phones used among students in elementary school, junior high school, and high school?

Reported by Karino Ayako



This mark indicates that more related information is included on the "Click Japan" website. <http://www.tjf.or.jp/clicknippon/>

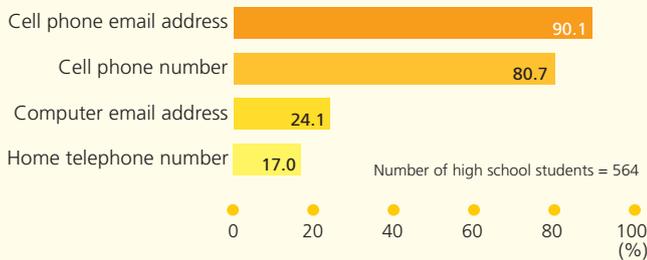
* The articles "Spread of Cell Phones Throughout the World" and "A Cell Phone History in Japan" may be found on the "Click Japan" website.

Communication

Spreading Friendships with a Cell Phone

Forty-five point nine percent of Japanese junior high school students own a cell phone, and the percentage is as high as 95.9 percent for Japanese high school students. Due to the high cost of talking via cell phones, junior high school and high school students often send text rather than call. They now start friendships by exchanging cell phone email addresses. The average number of email addresses listed in the device's direc-

Information children give when they make a new friend

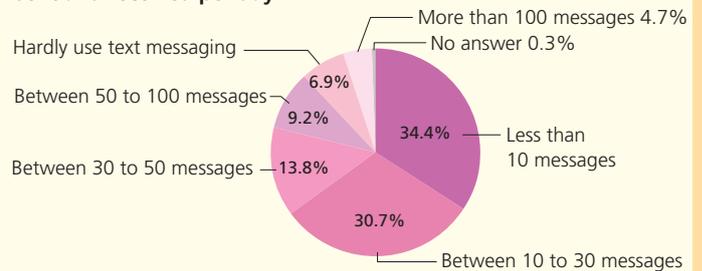


Source: "Survey of Parents and Children on Children's Cell Phone Use." (2007, Mobile Society Research Institute)

tory is 48 for junior high school students and 72 for high school students. As they grow older, students collect more friends as their relationships with people expand.

The largest number of both junior high school and high school students send less than 10 messages a day, and the second-largest number send between 10 and 30 messages a day. Many high school students use text messaging to communicate about important matters, meaning that for high school students cell phones have become a crucial device for communicating with friends day to day.

Average number of cell phone email messages sent and received per day



Source: "Survey of Children's Use of Cell Phones, Etc." (2009, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

Reasons Children Start Using Cell Phones

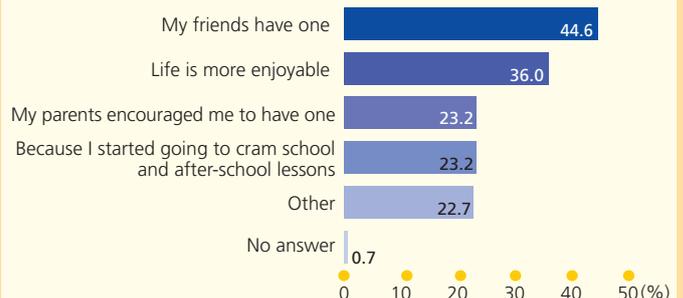


According to the 2008 "Survey of Children's Use of Cell Phones, Etc." conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 24.7 percent of sixth grade elementary school students use a cell phone, a figure that testifies to the increasingly lower age of cell phone users. Among reasons children start using cell phones, the most common cited is "my parents encouraged me to" and because "I started going to cram school and after-school lessons." In the case of elementary school students, parents most often obtain cell phones for their children out of concern for their safety. By giving them a cell phone, parents can check in often with their children, whose spheres of activity have extended to attending extra-school classes and after-school lessons. The most common use

of cell phones among elementary school students is to communicate with family members.

Meanwhile, what reasons do junior high and high school students have for owning a cell phone?

Reasons for owing a cell phone (Second-year high school students)



Source: "Survey of Children's Use of Cell Phones, Etc." (2009, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

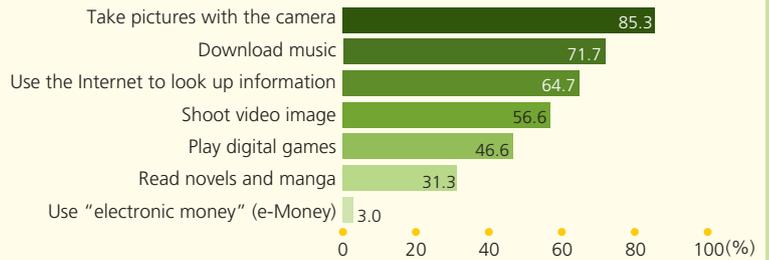
Enjoying the Cell Phone

Most Often-used Cell Phone Functions

Other than communicating by phone and text message, junior high and high school students frequently use the cell phone's camera, Internet-access, and music and ring-tone download service functions.



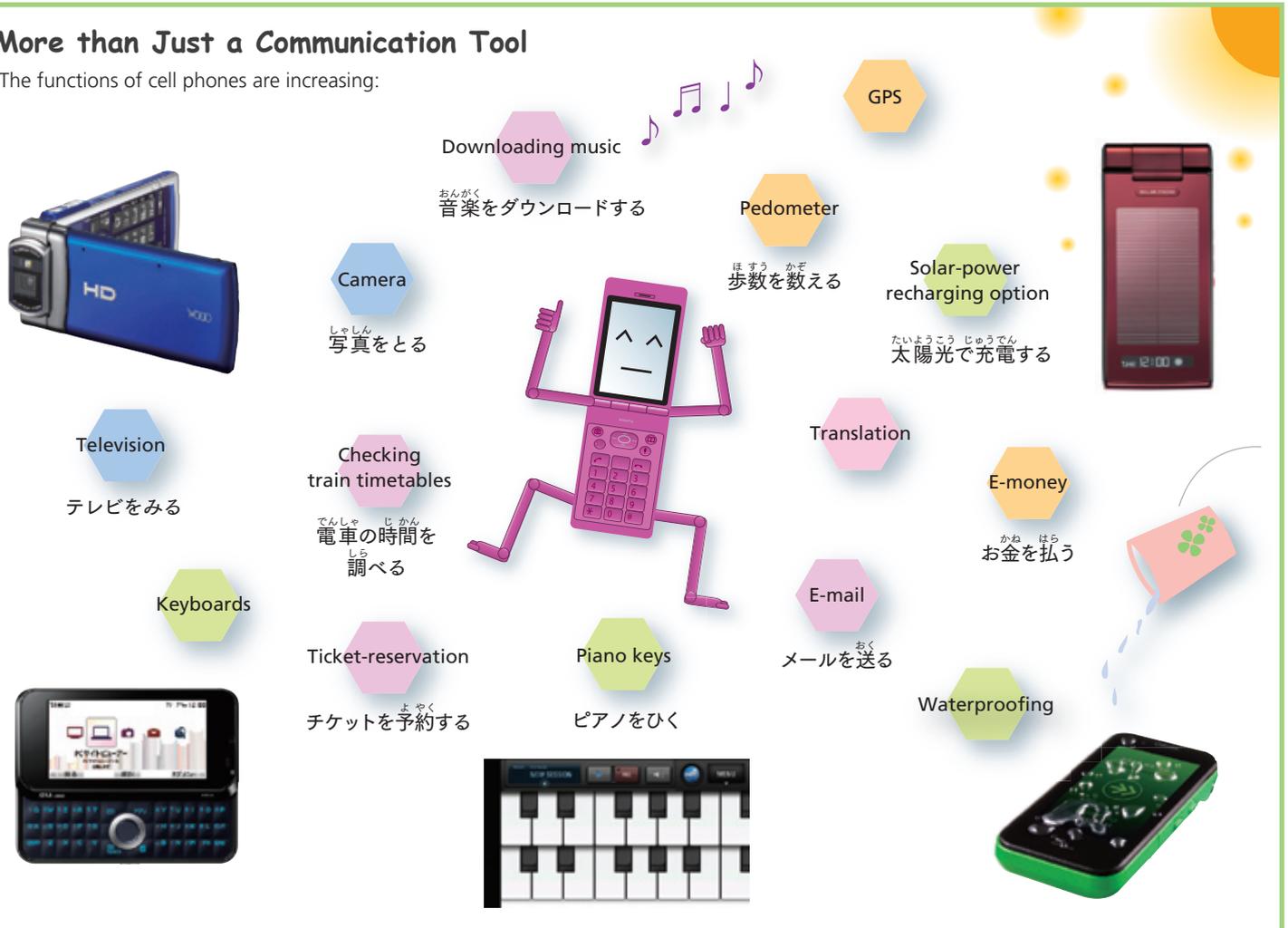
Cell phone functions used by high school students



Source: "Survey on Children's ICT Use" (2005, Benesse Educational Research and Development Center)

More than Just a Communication Tool

The functions of cell phones are increasing:



Choosing a Cell Phone by the Design

What are the criteria by which junior high and high school students choose their cell phones? According to a monitor survey published by Oricon, Inc. in October 2008, 50.5 percent of junior and senior high school students choose their cell phones "by the design." Other generations give "calling rates" as the major criterion for choosing a cell phone. Next, after design, junior high and high school students value most "the amount of memory" (48.5 percent) because they often use functions that require ample memory, such as taking photos, listening to music or shooting videos. Many users enjoy adding "デコシール deko-shiiru" (decoration stickers)

and beaded appliques to decorate their cell phones ("デコ電 deko-den")—and choose various straps and accessories to make their phones unique and original.

Deko-den shop:
Decorate ☞ <http://www.decorate.co.jp>
Edo-X ☞ <http://k-taicustom.com>



Art Editions: Kusama Yayoi

Expressing Yourself

絵文字 *Emoji* (Emoticons): A Useful Way to Express Feelings

Today, not only young people, but members of other generations as well, use “emoji”—picture characters (“e” meaning “picture” and “moji” meaning “letter”). *Emoji* are used when you want to set the tone of a message that’s comprised of just words, or when you want to soften what you want to say, or when you want



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to fully express emotions of joy, anger, or sadness. *Emoji* are very useful tools that can express your emotions and feelings.

All sorts of *emoji* are available, some are symbols, others are illustrations, or “dekome” (decoration mail). Some are included in the cell phones from the start, but others, such as *dekome*, can be downloaded as desired. *Dekome* are more colorful and many of them are animated.



ケータイ小説 *Keitai-Shosetsu*: The Emergence of the Cell Phone Novel

With the functions of cell phones ever expanding and the number of the cell phone subscribers increasing, a new cultural genre called the “keitai-shosetsu” (cell phone novel) has emerged in Japan. The *keitai-shosetsu* first caught attention in 2000, it is said, when a writer named “Yoshi” began publishing a novel via his cell phone. *Keitai-shosetsu* are novels written on a cell phone and read by cell phone.

One example of a *keitai-shosetsu* is “Koizora” (Sky of Love), a story that has been accessed by an estimated 12 million readers, mainly junior high and high school students, who circulated news about the novel among them. “Koizora,” which features a high school girl whose life changes dramatically when she meets a certain high school boy. It was published as a book in 2006 that sold over 2 million copies, and was adapted for film that was a box-office hit earning 3.9 billion yen. Many other *keitai-shosetsu* were turned into books in 2007, producing a small boom. Cell phone novels are made up of short and rhythmical sentences, due to the limited number of words one can write in a line on a small cell-phone screen and written in the casual language of teenagers.

Some criticize *keitai-shosetsu*, however, saying that they are not fiction, and far from conventional literature. Japan’s well-known Buddhist nun and writer Setouchi Jakucho, 86, too, was critical of *keitai-shosetsu* in the beginning, but in order to understand the medium that had so successfully captured the attention of young people, she wrote a cell phone novel called “Ashita no Niji” (Tomorrow’s Rainbow) under the penname “Purple.” In doing so, she realized the potential of *keitai-shosetsu*, which can move people deeply by expressing the subtle, conflicting emotions of young people using the simplest language. She later reappraised *keitai-shosetsu*, calling it “a type of literature,” and encouraged young people to use it to freely express themselves.

Due to the emergence of this new medium, there are now more opportunities for people to see their fiction writing published. The annual Japan Keitai-Shosetsu Award is now in its fourth year, as more and more writers of the medium enter the competition to make a name for themselves in the genre.



This cell phone was designed with reading of *keitai shosetsu* and electronic books in mind. Japanese text is displayed in the customary vertical-line format.

Which accessories and decorations do you like?



Designed by Matsuyama Emi



Smart Use of Your Cell Phone

Drawbacks of Cell Phones

While cell phones have become much-valued daily communication tools for junior high and high school students, various problems have emerged that cannot be ignored. Some students become so immersed in their cell phones that they do not get enough time to study and they go to sleep too late at night. Although text messaging is useful in expanding communication with friends, it can also be a source of stress for an increasing number of junior high and high school students. More than 80 percent of junior high and high school students think it is “late if you don’t get an answer within 30 minutes of sending a message,” indicating the pressure students are under to answer text messages promptly. More than 50 percent of high school students “sometimes find cell phone messaging troublesome.”

Another big problem is slander and abuse generated from private blogs and “profs” (profiles) belonging to junior high or high school students, otherwise known as “cyber-bullying.” Also, there are cases where students who discover each other on “deai-kei saito” (online meeting sites) or through personal profile and Internet game sites end up getting involved in shady dealings or crime.

In order to prevent young children from stumbling into the darker side of cell phones, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology took measures in January this year to forbid elementary and junior high school children from bringing cell phones to school unless absolutely necessary, and limit high school students’ usage of cell phones during school hours. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Police Department also calls upon parents to equip children’s cell phones with filtering devices so as to protect children from harmful sites.

Think it is “late if I don’t get an answer within x minutes after sending a message.”

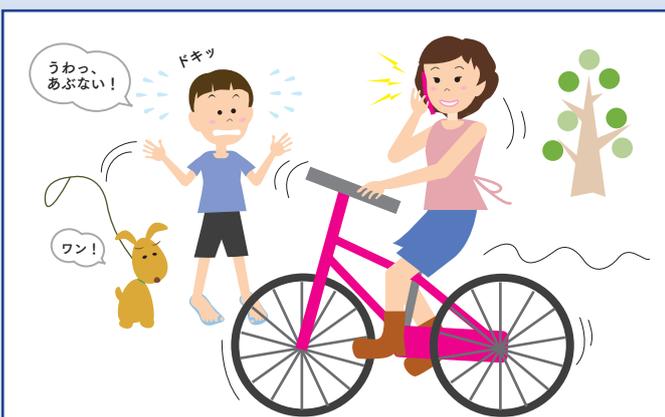
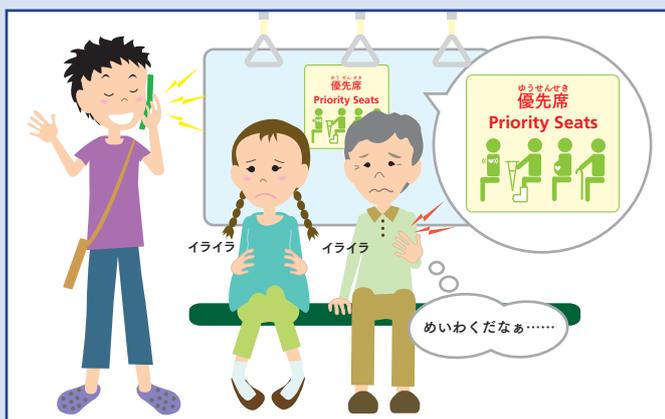
	More than 1 minute	More than 10 minutes	More than 30 minutes	More than an hour	More than 3 hours	More than 6 hours	Not in particular
High School Students (n = 549)	12.4%	65.6%	86.5%	93.1%	95.1%	95.6%	4.4%

Source: “Survey of Children’s Use of Cell Phones, Etc.” (2009, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

Cell Phone Manners

In Japan, it is widely accepted custom to turn off cell phones or put them in silent mode, called “マナーモード” (manner mode) in public places. When cell phones first appeared, many people talked loudly on the train and there were occasional conflicts when people around them reacted angrily. Today, there

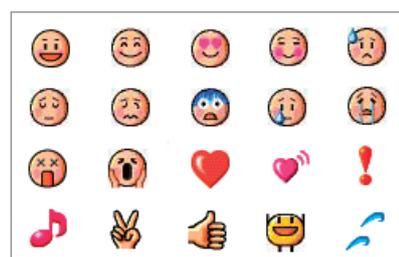
are signs as well as announcements on trains instructing passengers to refrain from talking on their phones and to put them in silent mode. People are also reminded to switch off phones near the priority seats where people, who may have heartbeat-regulation devices, are often seated. Cell phone use while driving a moving vehicle, including a bicycle, is prohibited by law.



Let's Try!

What emoticon would you choose when you feel like this?

- うれしい!
- 楽しみ!
- ドキドキ
- ワクワク
- やったー!
- こま 困った……
- かな 悲しい……
- だいす 大好き
- ショック
- はずかしい



The meanings of the words above and more emoticons can be found at <http://www.tjf.or.jp/takarabako/bi.htm>