

IBM Simon

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The **IBM Simon Personal Communicator** (simply known as **IBM Simon**) was a handheld, touchscreen cellular phone and PDA designed and engineered by International Business Machines Corp. (IBM) and assembled under contract by Mitsubishi Electric Corp. BellSouth Cellular Corp. distributed the Simon Personal Communicator in the United States between August 1994 and February 1995, selling 50,000 units. The Simon Personal Communicator was the first cellular phone to include telephone and PDA features in one device.

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History

IBM debuted a prototype device, code named "Angler," on November 23, 1992 at the COMDEX computer and technology trade show in Las Vegas, Nevada, United States. The Angler prototype combined a cell phone and PDA into one device, allowing a user to make and receive telephone calls, facsimiles, emails and cellular pages. Not only did the prototype have many PDA features like a calendar, address book and notepad, but also demonstrated other visionary apps like maps, stocks and news. COMDEX show attendees and the press showed notable interest in the device. The day after Angler's debut, *USA Today* featured a photo on the front page of the Money section showing Frank Canova, IBM's lead architect and inventor of the smartphone,^{[5][6]} holding the Angler prototype.^{[1][7][8]}

BellSouth executives gave the finished product its final name, "Simon Personal Communicator", before its public debut at the Wireless World Conference in November

IBM Simon Personal Communicator



The Simon Personal Communicator shown in its charging base

Brand	BellSouth Designed by IBM
Developer	IBM
Manufacturer	Mitsubishi Electric Corp.
Compatible networks	AMPS
First released	August 16, 1994
Availability by country	United States August 16, 1994 (BellSouth Cellular)
Discontinued	February 1995
Units sold	50,000
Predecessor	Angler (code name)
Successor	Neon (code name)
Type	Smartphone
Form factor	Brick
Dimensions	8 in (200 mm) H 2.5 in (64 mm) W 1.5 in (38 mm) D

1993.^[1] BellSouth Cellular had planned to begin selling Simon in May 1994, but due to problems with the device's software, the Simon did not become available to consumers until August 16, 1994. BellSouth Cellular initially offered the Simon throughout its 15 state service area for US\$899 with a two-year service contract or US\$1099 without a contract. Later in the product's life, BellSouth Cellular reduced the price to US\$599 with a two-year contract.^{[2][9]}

BellSouth Cellular sold approximately 50,000 units during the product's six months on the market.^[1]

Although the term "smartphone" was not coined until 1995, because of Simon's features and capabilities, it can be referred to as the first smartphone.^{[1][10][11][12]}



The IBM Simon Personal Communicator included a custom-fit, protective, leather cover

Features

In addition to its ability to make and receive cellular phone calls, Simon was also able to send and receive faxes, e-mails and cellular pages. Simon featured many applications including an address book, calendar, appointment scheduler, calculator, world time clock, electronic note pad, handwritten annotations and standard and predictive stylus input screen keyboards.^[13]

Accessories

Each Simon was shipped with a charging base station, two nickel-cadmium batteries and a protective leather cover. Optional was a PCMCIA pager card designed by Motorola, an RS232 adapter cable for use with PC-Link to access files from a personal computer, and an RJ11 adapter cable to allow voice and data calls to be made over POTS land-lines. The RJ11 adapter helped users reduce expensive cellular phone bills or make calls where cellular coverage didn't exist in 1994.

Operating system and applications

The Simon used the file system from Datalight ROM-DOS along with file compression from Stacker. IBM created a unique touch-screen user interface for Simon; no DOS prompt existed.^[2] This user interface software layer for Simon was known as the Navigator.^[14]

Weight	18 oz (510 g)
Operating system	Datalight ROM-DOS
CPU	Vadem 16 MHz, 16-bit, x86-compatible
Memory	1 MB
Storage	1 MB
Battery	7.5V NiCad
Data inputs	Microphone Touchscreen with stylus
Display	4.5 in × 1.4 in (114 mm × 36 mm), 160px x 293px monochrome backlit LCD
Connectivity	2400-bps Hayes-compatible modem 33-pin connector 9600-bps Group 3 send-and-receive fax I/O connection port PCMCIA type 2
References	^{[1][2][3][4]}

The Simon could be upgraded to run third party applications either by inserting a PCMCIA card or by downloading an application to the phone's internal memory.

Atlanta-based PDA Dimensions developed "DispatchIt", the only aftermarket, third-party application developed for Simon. It was an early predecessor to "Remote Desktop" software.^[15] The DispatchIt application costs were US\$2,999 for the host PC software and US\$299 for each Simon software client.^[16]

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