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Cell phones close to campus invasion

■ The new millennium has brought with it an influx of the sometimes annoying phones on campus

By Simone Ripke
Oregon Daily Emerald

They are available in many different shapes, colors and with a variety of different rings. They have slowly found their way into many people's purses, pants' pockets and backpacks, including those of University students.

Cellular phones have become almost as common as umbrellas on campus, enabling students to make and receive phone calls from virtually anywhere, even class.

Chris Wade, a senior accounting major, received his cell phone as a gift from his family to let him know if his younger brother's soccer practice changed or if the family dinner had been postponed.

He said although it can sometimes feel clumsy, he carries his cell phone everywhere but makes sure he turns it to the silent mode during class and movies.

A few weeks ago, however, Wade said he forgot to turn the switch off, and his cell phone did ring in class.

"I just felt like an idiot," he said.

Although he managed to turn the phone off after only one ring and the professor pretended not to have noticed, Wade said the incident taught him a lesson.

"I'll never forget again," he said.

Wade said he is always on the go, and his cell phone makes it easier for him to reach people, as well as for his friends and family to reach him. He said the cell phone especially comes in handy when he works on projects and he has a question.

Marla Meadows, a sophomore majoring in psychology, received her cell phone as a birthday present. Meadows said she was doing a lot of driving between her hometown in Saint Helens and Eugene, and her mom thought it was a good idea for her to have a cell phone so she could call for help if she ever got stuck on the road.

"I think it's really helpful," Meadows said.

She said she usually carries her cell phone everywhere, but turns it off during classes and leaves it in her car when she goes to a movie. Only her close friends and

Mobile phone facts

How many people use cellular phones?

As of June 1999, there were 76,284,753 cell phone users in the United States.

How does wireless technology work?

When you talk on a wireless phone, it transmits low energy radio waves to a local antenna site, which sends signals back to your wireless phone.

SOURCE: The World of Wireless Communications

family have the number.

Meadows said apart from having the convenience of receiving and placing calls anytime and anywhere, she saves money by using her cell phone for long-distance calls.

When Amy Nickerson, a freshman, looks around her circle of college friends, she sees about four students who have cell phones. Nickerson said she does not have a cell phone but is considering purchasing one in the summer.

Cell phones ringing in class are far from foreign to Nickerson. She said a cell phone rings in one of her classes about once a week.

"It doesn't really bother me," she said.

She said, however, she might feel differently if she were the professor being interrupted by a ringing cell phone in the middle of lecturing.

"I would imagine that they [professors] think it's kind of rude or disrespectful," she said.

To avoid exactly such a situation, Robert Haskett, an associate professor of history, said he asks his students to turn off their cell phones during his class. Haskett said no cell phone has ever rang during one of his classes, but said he has heard from fellow professors that ringing cell phones during class are not uncommon.

"I think it would disrupt things," he said.

To prevent interrupting class, freshman business major Brandon Schmidt, always turns his cell phone off during classes and in situations where a ringing phone would be improper.

"I'm pretty good about turning it off when it's appropriate," he said.

Like Wade and Meadows, Schmidt said he likes the convenience of being able to make a phone call anytime and anywhere.

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Calendar

Thursday, Feb. 3

Backcountry skiing and camping clinic: Outdoor Program Coordinator Dan Geiger will present information on the equipment, techniques and destinations of backcountry skiing and camping. This free program will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the EMU Outdoor Program Office. For information call 346-4365.