



# A Postphenomenological Inquiry of Cell Phones: Genealogies, Meanings, and Becoming (Postphenomenology and the Philosophy of Technology)

*By Galit Wellner*

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**A Postphenomenological Inquiry of Cell Phones: Genealogies, Meanings, and Becoming (Postphenomenology and the Philosophy of Technology)** By Galit Wellner

Why does the announcement of a new cellphone model ignite excitement and passion? Why do most people return home when they forget their cellphones, while only few would return for their wallets? How did the cellphone technology become so dominant for many of us? This book offers an analysis of the historical evolution and of the meanings of this technology in the lives of billions of people. The book offers a unique point of view on the cellphone that merges genealogical analysis of its development since the 1990s and philosophical insights into a coherent analytical framework. With new concepts like "histories of the future" and "memory prosthesis," the book aims to explain the excitement arising from new model announcements and the ever-growing dependency on the cellphone through the framing of these experiences in wide philosophical contexts. It is the first philosophical analysis of the important roles the cellphone plays in contemporary everydayness.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

A quick scan of the comprehensive bibliography points toward only six female authors who have made interventions into (post)phenomenology; evidence that Wellner's work is both a rarity and a necessity in such a burgeoning field. This book reflects and demonstrates an expanding reach in the philosophy of technology. Robust and layered, Wellner's *A Postphenomenological Inquiry of Cell Phones* could serve as a critical text for expanding the intersection of phenomenology and mobile media, highlighting a relationship between cell phones, users, and the environment. (*Mobile Media & Communication*)

How did the cell phone come to be the multitalented and indispensable object it is today? Galit Wellner, in a technologically well-informed account, has singled out three major steps taken in the development of this artifact.... Wellner's three-step development model gives a fine overview of a very recent history of technology. (*Icon*)

Do not be fooled by the name "cell phone," or by its modest size and weight. This device is a networked supercomputer, whose effect on the world's economy and culture is as great as that of the Personal Computer in the 1980s, the Mainframe computer in the 1960s, or broadcast television in the 1950s. It may even be more: a cybernetic appendage to the human body and mind, beyond the imaginings of even the most far-seeing science fiction writers. Galit Wellner's book tells us how this came to be, why this device is so game-changing, and into what strange new worlds it might be taking us. (Paul E. Ceruzzi, Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum)

Galit Wellner has written a book that uses cell phones as an exemplary case for presenting a very clearly structured and excellently presented postphenomenological methodology of how to analyze technology. Through a well thought out use of Don Ihde's I-technology-world triad the author presents an analysis of four historical variations of cell phones and their impacts (concerning voice, texts, multimedia applications and perhaps most interesting how cell phones move into a future realm of sensory exploration). From these variations the author extracts three invariances which in an innovative way add to our general understanding of philosophy of technology (the cell phone as wall-window, quasi-face and memory prosthesis). This is a book I will recommend to all with an interest in postphenomenological methodology and philosophy of technology. (Cathrine Hasse, University of Aarhus)

#### About the Author

**Galit Wellner** is a post-doctoral researcher at Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

### Users Review

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**Michael Beebe:**

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