

'Dumbphone' fans disconnect in face of smartphone dominance

March 30 2023, by Glenn CHAPMAN



Jose Briones is among those seeking to remove stress and distraction by using 'dumbphones', which are free of attention-grabbing video, games and social media posts.

Shunning his smartphone for a "dumb" one changed the way Jose

Briones engages with the world—and he likes it that way.

The 27-year-old Colorado resident turns to CDs when he wants music, instead of streaming it.

When he has to get someplace, he prints out directions before setting out or, if needed, falls back on the sometimes-forgotten practice of asking a stranger which way to go.

Briones is far from alone in reconnecting with the analog world by relying less on finding life's solutions via the internet on his [phone](#).

He hasn't forsaken the internet entirely however: Briones helps moderate a Reddit forum devoted to so-called dumbphones, which had 17,000 thousand "enthusiasts" as members as of Monday.

"People who want to regain their time and attention, and have a deeper more purposeful life, I think that is who this message is resonating with," Briones told AFP.

Dumbphones, also referred to as feature phones, are essentially throw-back handsets without big screens and a mountain of apps.

They are reminiscent of the pre-iPhone era when mobile phones allowed users to call another line, an astounding breakthrough made when the first [mobile phone](#) call was dialed on April 3, 1973—50 years ago.

An array of handset makers cater to that market with feature or "minimalist" phones that go beyond just calls and text messages to allow for a couple of apps.

A Reddit forum member with the screen name Melanin_King0 told of finding it easier to cope with mental strain and of feeling better overall

since switching to a dumbphone about three weeks ago.

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