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Signals Received at St. John's, N. P., from Cornwall, Eng.—Most Remarable Scientific Triumph—Seventeen Hundred Miles Came Message Without Use of Wires.

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## The Daily Telegraph, Saint John, New Brunswick (Canada) Monday December 16, 1901

he first time I saw a mobile phone was in May 1989 in Tian An Men square, in Peking, in the middle of popular uprising against corruption and abuse of power by the Communist leaders. A Reuters correspondent had one just in the centre of the square. I was reporting the events for a less important news organisation and had only a frustrating walkie-talkie. My colleague's gadget was like a black shoe box with a handset attached to it. It was quite heavy and, he said, not 100% reliable.

Much that I admired -and enviedthat supreme technological advance for a journalist, I had doubts about its practicality. You could not go along covering news with such a heavy piece of equipment, and you had to be near a base station.

Obviously, I failed to foresee the speed by which the size will reduced drastically in no time. One year later, I saw another one in Hong Kong. This time it had shrunk to the size of a shoe. You could still not keep it inside your pocket, though. And you had to shout

to be heard at the other end. (Well, for some people it looks like things have not changed much). Stock Market traders and busy businessmen used the talking shoe on a non-stop basis. It looked like it could be useful and practical for journalists too.

The other day I was travelling by train in the middle of he afternoon. I was becoming used to the whispering of that teenage girl talking for hours to somebody at the other end. No problem. But when I was falling into deep siesta, suddenly, a middle aged woman in front of me could not find her mobile in her purse. The loud music sounded like a screaming cat.

It all started back in 1901.

That year, I read in the Daily Telegrpah of Saint John, Canada, that "signor Marconi announced...the most wonderful scientific experiment of modern times, in stating that he had received electrical signals across the Atlantic Ocean from his station in Cornwall, England" without wires.

The first reactions talked of that phenomenon as "a new era in the history of the world". And so it proved to be.