History of Paging

Radio paging service has been in development for decades, evolving to better serve its users as electronic and digital technology has improved. Today, tens of millions of users rely on pager communication for personal, business and critical information transmission.

1921 First one-way AM paging system adopted by Detroit Police Department, followed by government agencies, military, emergency workers and other law enforcement. FM technology introduced in late 1930’s.

1949 First wireless pager (used vacuum tubes).

1950 Hospitals in New York & London adopt non-consumer-type pagers. First commercially available pager service. 400 subscribers within two years.

1952 Motorola and Texas Instruments actively adopt new semiconductor technology using transistors to replace heavy, power-guzzling vacuum tube equipment.

1955 Motorola introduces Handie-Talkie pocket pager. Selectively delivered message to one particular unit. Paging begins to replace Public Address systems in many applications.

1974 Motorola unveils Pageboy I, a smaller, more portable unit. Could notify wearer that page had been received, but could not store or display messages. Because of the sound the unit made when addressed, became known as a “Beeper.”

1980 Numerical pagers introduced. Allowed hundreds of numeric data messages to replace just a few voice messages. This facilitated further development of area-wide systems, greatly expanding the usefulness to customers who previously used local systems within their plants, hospitals, etc. 3.2 million pagers now in use worldwide.

1986 Motorola introduces Bravo numeric pager, which becomes world’s best seller.

1988 SkyTel introduces first nationwide alphanumeric paging system. More than 22 million pagers are in use by 1990.

1994 Personal pagers become popular. 61 million units sold.
1996  Motorola introduces world’s first full-text, two-way pager. Allowed users to receive and respond to paging messages, and to communicate with e-mail accounts, fax machines and other pagers. SkyTel introduces two-way messaging and guaranteed message delivery.

Pager service has a long history of innovation and reliability. Pager coverage is substantially greater than cell phone coverage, and a pager’s batteries last longer. If you need consistent, reliable communications in your profession, business or personal life, nothing replaces Telepage service. Contact us for more information.