

NEO Talk – “On A Leash”

by ChazK on October 29, 2021

In the beginning, the phones were stuck to the walls and the humans moved freely about with the rest of their lives. When we used the phones we were limited. Tethered. On a leash. You had to give up your freedom to use these things.

Longer cords meant more freedom. You could move around the house a little. Maybe keep cooking in the kitchen with the handset cradled between your chin and shoulder. You paid a price for using these devices but at least it was apparent what that price was. Shoulder pain. Ouch.

As teenagers, we hoped the leash was long enough to let us move out of the room for some privacy. To run the cord under the swing of a door, shrouding our plans to play poker, wrangle beer, talk about girls (not me, I was too introverted), complain about parents and whatnot. But, although that kind of talk happened in low tones with a hand cupped over your mouth, mostly what we did was make plans to see each other so we could have the real conversations without the fear of eavesdropping.



Well, you could still be “bugged” but that type of microphone and transmitter tech meant the bug would be the size of a rhinoceros beetle and there would have to be a warrant involved.

That type of straight cord shown in NEO #1, above, was improved with a coiled cord that stretched and contracted like a spring. It looked like this.



I grew up with one of those and it was like 20 feet long, unstretched. Probably 30 feet stretched. This was not as cool as it sounds because usually the cord looked more like this:



You would spend a lot of time trying to un-knot the blasted thing. Often this would be

done during a conversation as a kind of early form of mindless phone app entertainment. I expect I could have ranked pretty high on the leaderboards.

Eventually we got cordless phones. We still had to be within about 50 feet of the wall where the base station was connected, but this was a MUCH longer, tangle-proof leash than before.

At first there was fear about nearby strangers listening in because it was simply a radio-frequency broadcast from the base station to the remote handset. Holy Moly! That signal could get to nearby houses or to an FBI van parked on the street in front of your house!



People soon forgot about any misgivings because of the great convenience to be able to be on a call and still get up and change the channel while watching tv, or go into a bedroom or bathroom and close the door. Headsets could be plugged into the cordless phones and now you had your hands free so you could multitask. That was the beginning of the end of paying attention to the conversation and worrying about privacy. It was the water temperature being raised on the frog.

Most people today can't tell any difference between no leash and the veeeerrrrryy loooooonnnnggg leashes that our present phones provide.

Until you ask the question: "Whats on the other end?"

www.fateward.com