

brunswickanopinion

Surviving in the wireless trenches

the brunswickan

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The Brunswickan relies primarily on a volunteer base to produce its issues every week. Volunteers can drop by room 35 of the SUB at any time to find out how they can get involved.

About Us

The Brunswickan, in its 142nd year of publication, is Canada's Oldest Official Student Publication.

We are an autonomous student newspaper owned and operated by Brunswickan Publishing Inc., a non-profit, independent body.

We are a founding member of the Canadian University Press, and love it so. We are also members of U-Wire, a media exchange of university media throughout North America.

We publish weekly during the academic year with a circulation of 10,000.

Letters

Must be submitted by e-mail including your name, letters with pseudonyms will not be printed. Letters must be 400 words maximum. Deadline for letters is Friday at 5 p.m. before each issue.

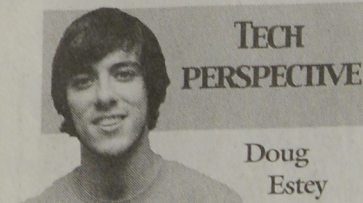
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TECH
PERSPECTIVE

Doug
Estey

Hate them or love them, chances are that you probably own a cellphone. The often annoying and very breakable pieces of plastic have worked their way into our daily lives to the point where if you don't have one, you're more than likely the odd one out.

Now that having a mobile squawkbox is commonplace, wireless carriers have had an increasingly important impact on our lives, and as such, choosing which one to go with isn't just a walk in the park any more. This ain't no MP3 player. If you aren't careful, you can easily get stuck with a poorly put together piece of technology that will cost you an arm and a leg – especially if it breaks.

Someone living in Ontario or Quebec has a seemingly endless list of options, but here in our beloved Atlantic Canada, it's a different story. As Maritimers in the 21st century, where do we stand? Which carriers are out to rip us off and which ones can be trusted? Which phones serve better as paperweights?

The answers may frighten you, but if mom and dad aren't interested in looking after your cellular bill, then it's time to start shopping.

Aside from the catastrophic problems that can arise from buying an LG Chocolate slider (and the handful of other nightmares that are bound to happen if you don't do some Googling about your phone first), your major concern is which carrier you're going to put your trust in. You're signing a contract with these people, and it's



Andrew Meade / The Brunswickan

New Brunswick has a relatively slim number of cell phone carriers in comparison to other provinces – but that doesn't mean you can't shop around for a deal that's not a ripoff.

not something that can be taken lightly.

Here in the Maritimes, our choices are few and far between. CDMA/HSPA carriers like Bell and Telus have reached out from their central Canadian cores. Your other option is a GSM carrier, but if you go that route, your only move is to go with Rogers, which is infamous for its inhuman treatment of Apple iPhone wannabe customers and confusing data rate plans.

One of the more obvious options in New Brunswick is Bell Mobility (formerly Aliant Mobility/NBTel), a subsidiary of Bell Canada Enterprises. Yes, Alexander Graham Bell started the company way back when. No, you won't be paying your bills in cents, but you'll

get generally better coverage in out-of-town areas (not to mention a much wider selection of phones than could be found in the early 1900s).

Telus, the third guy, is a more recent addition to the fray in New Brunswick, stumbling in to the competition between Rogers and Bell but offering something that the other two carriers have yet to bring out east: a discount brand carrier, Koodo.

The advertisements for it on TV might be more annoying than you can handle, but Telus-owned Koodo offers a limited selection of smart, contract-free phones that pay themselves off each month. Rogers' Fido and Bell's Solo attempt to do the same thing, but are currently unavailable to Atlantic Canadians

and therefore (in my book) cease to exist.

By far the worst obstacle you'll face in the whole process of actually acquiring a cellular phone is dealing with the middleman. Consumer electronics chains like Future Shop and Cox Electronics are exactly what I'm talking about.

In August, when I finally got away from my parent's family plan and bought my HTC Touch, I discovered that you can actually walk in to a Cox Electronics in Fredericton and pay over two hundred dollars (plus tax) for a phone that is listed as free (\$0) with an identical contract on the carrier's website.

Unbelievable. Some day, we might live to see things like hidden charges, scams,

and flat-out rip offs die out in the Atlantic wireless marketplace. But until the giants like Rogers and Bell are forced to step it up in the face of stiffer competition, it's pretty clear that we have to fend for ourselves.

It's something that often goes unnoticed, especially if your parents are fronting the bill, but the amount of money you spend on your phone each month can range anywhere from the cost of a pizza delivery to the cost of rent. So do your homework. You might find yourself living in a place – or at least going out to eat instead of stacking up the pizza boxes.

Doug Estey is Arts Editor of the Brunswickan. He can be reached at arts@thebruns.ca.

letters to the editor.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Josh O'Kane's opinion piece from Sept. 24 entitled "Know your hand before you play it," in regards to the lead up to the upcoming by-election for the VP external position vacated last spring by Tim Ross and currently held by Jon O'Kane. While Mr. (Josh) O'Kane made some reasonable points, I feel the need to add some information that he either missed or misrepresented. In the interest of brevity I will limit myself to a few main points.

Firstly, while serving on the SU executive does generally require an extension of one's time at UNB, it is important to note, that in the case of Renaissance College (RC) students, merely running for an executive position may force such an extension. An RC internship involves commitment to the partner organization months before the internship begins, as well as various commitments to familiarize oneself with the culture of the internship

destination and language preparation. A RC student can neither delay the planning of an internship till after an election, or back out of an internship once it is planned. Therefore an RC student would be delaying the completion of their degree even if they were unsuccessful in their bid for an executive position. As I understand it, this is not the case in other faculties. This serves as a serious deterrent to RC students to run for an executive position as they would need to delay their degree even if not elected. If elected a RC student, like any other student, would likely need to take on a reduced course load, thus prolonging their degree – I have no qualms with this.

Further, it is important to note that internships are integral to the RC program, indeed they are a compulsory element (whereas summer courses and co-ops are not necessarily). Second year courses are designed to build on experience from the Canadian internships, and third

year courses are designed to build on experiences from the international internships. While the occasional student does not follow this pattern exactly, doing the course elements in proper sequence is central to fully engage the academic material put forward in RC.

Mr. O'Kane seems to hold the status quo as sacred. He fails to consider ways in which students can fulfill academic obligation, stay on track in their program and serve in an executive position. One possible change that could be made to our current status quo is that students with a central academic commitment for part of the summer could run with a proxy who would serve in their stead while they were away. Students would be aware of this and be able to weigh the efficacy of such a situation in deciding how to vote.

When it comes to student government we need a system that recognizes the diverse requirements of various programs.

Sincerely,

Matthew Abbott

Dear Editor,

Growing up in the Fredericton area, I have witnessed the slow deterioration of Fredericton's York Train Station, a heritage railway station that was once known for not only its historical significance, but also for its superb architectural design. As one of the few buildings of its type remaining in New Brunswick it has been sad to watch it transform into nothing more than a health hazard and an eyesore. Recent talk of owners J.D. Irving Ltd. and their willingness to restore the station leaves me with hope, and an agenda. As your local Federal NDP candidate for the upcoming election, I want to make sure that the Irvings follow through. At the moment they propose to pay for the material costs involved in this restoration and foot labour costs on tax payers' dollars. As a hard working tax payer, I see the responsibility that they have and I say "That's not good enough." I want to see the York Train Station restored into something that I won't feel ashamed to walk by or afraid to stand too close to. And I want the Irvings to stand up and take responsibility for a job that is theirs and a job that they owe, not only to the people of Fredericton, but to the city's own historic roots. Together, we can continue to voice this message

to the Irvings until they recognize it and respond. Let's get development plans rolling and save York Train Station.

Sincerely,
Jesse Travis
NDP Candidate,
Fredericton Riding

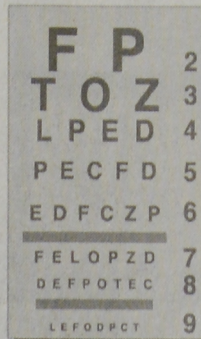
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room 35.



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