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Smartphone: Mobile Revolution at the Crossroads of Communications, Computing and Consumer Electronics

Majeed Ahmad
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Four Stars (out of Five)

More than any other piece of technology, the smartphone has revolutionized communication in recent years. By 2008, smartphones outsold notebook computers and also paved the way for the emerging tablet market.

Majeed Ahmad, former editor-in-chief of *EE Times Asia* and a technology journalist for more than fifteen years, is eminently qualified to write about the smartphone. In his comprehensive book, Ahmad traces the rise of the device, offers details about its development, and includes an in-depth discussion of mobile technology and "the making of the mobile Internet." In addition, Ahmad writes authoritatively about computing in general, networking, tablets (most notably Apple's iPad), and cloud computing.

Ahmad provides valuable insider insight into the various companies competing for smartphone dominance. For the most part, writes Ahmad, the smartphone can be attributed to three "juggernauts": RIM's BlackBerry, the first truly successful convergence of a mobile phone and a handheld computer; Apple's iPhone, which created a firestorm and set the bar for smartphones; and Google's Android operating system, embedded initially into Motorola's Droid, which Ahmad says "was the first smartphone to really challenge the iPhone." Only later did Microsoft make a run at the market with its Windows Phone.

Given Apple's exceptional success and the recent death of its visionary leader, *Smartphone: Mobile Revolution at the Crossroads of Communications, Computing and Consumer Electronics* is nothing if not timely. Ahmad spends considerable but legitimate time discussing Apple's key role in the computing, smartphone, and tablet markets; there can be no denying that Apple is at the heart of the consumer electronics revolution. Still, the book is broad enough in scope that it does not focus solely on Apple.

In the epilogue, Ahmad hypothesizes about the future of smartphones, concluding that "no one developer or manufacturer has come up with the perfect shape, size or input method yet." Ahmad asserts that in the next few years, the growth and evolution of smartphones will be influenced primarily by "broadband everywhere, digitization of all content, and pocket computing power."

Smartphone covers both the developmental and technical aspects of the smartphone in depth. As a result, the book offers a lengthy and detailed description of operating systems, applications, phone manufacturers, and mobile technologies, all of which may make the average reader a bit glassy eyed. This is not a book for the person who is looking for a cursory overview; it is a work more appropriate for those with some technology background who are keenly interested in the evolution of this particular device.

Barry Silverstein