



# CHESTER GOULD Father of the Cellular Phone?

The comic book that you are reading contains a complete reprinting of the Dick Tracy newspaper strips which ran from  
5 January 7, 1946 to March 23, 1946. The story therein contained represents a significant chapter in the history of Dick Tracy, in that it contains the first appearance of the  
10 two way wrist radio," a contrivance which was to become synonymous with the Tracy legend over the years to come. With the "invention" of the wrist radio, Tracy creator  
15 Chester Gould was actually predicting the advent of today's familiar cellular phone, nearly forty years later. As former Federal Communications Commission  
20 Chairman, Robert E. Lee said in

1981: "Dick Tracy comes true?" An interesting sideline to Gould's concept of the wrist radio is its power source. The young inventor  
25 of the wrist radio, Brilliant, explains in the story that his device is powered by the element lithium, a substance that holds much promise today for the manufacture of small  
30 but powerful batteries; the type of batteries that would indeed be required by the subcompact wrist radio. So where did Gould come up with the idea of the wrist radio?  
35 Was it through hours of painstaking research through scientific and engineering texts? Gould himself, in an interview conducted in mid 1944 by Stuart Crump Jr.,  
40 confessed that he got the idea "right out of my little head." Gould said, "When you're in the business, there is no such thing as 'I couldn't get an idea: It's your business to get ideas.  
45 I made myself do that. All of my ideas, as far as I know, were original. When I first decided to introduce the two-way wrist radio my assistant said to me, 'Come on,  
50 Chester, that's ridiculous: " But ridiculous or not, the concept of the wrist radio caught the imaginations of thousands of readers and remained a mainstay of the strip  
55 until the introduction of the two-way wrist television in 1967, which Tracy uses to this day. Apparently, Gould conceived of a wrist television as far back as the inception of the wrist  
60 radio, but kept the idea on hold for twenty one years. Current Tracy

standards RST.6-8.1, RI.6.1, RI.6.2  
lexile level 960

writer, Max Allan Collins, in an interview with Crump, said, "[Gould] had the idea of putting a television in Tracy's wrist radio almost since the beginning because he knew television was coming. But he decided that the radio would be much more easily grasped by the reader [in 1946]. Chet tended to be just a step ahead. He didn't want to be so far out that the readers couldn't grasp it.' If forty years can be considered as being a step ahead in technology, then Gould certainly was there, like his popular contemporary Lester Dent (Doc Savage) and his literary predecessors, Jules Verne and H. G. Wells. With the lithium-powered wrist-radio, Gould has certainly carved himself a niche with these visionaries of popular fiction.

*This article comes from The Original Dick Tracy Comic Album No. 2 - The Origin of the Wrist Radio - published by Gladstone Publishing Ltd., Prescott, AZ - copyright 1990*



parent signature \_\_\_\_\_  
name \_\_\_\_\_  
class \_\_\_\_\_ team \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

How did Gould come up with the idea of the wrist radio?

Why is Chester Gould called the "father" of the cell phone?

In the comic how was the radio discovered?

cite evidence for answers