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Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, and Sam Altman Announce the End of Smartphones

Four tech giants are moving to replace the smartphone with devices that sound straight out of science fiction. From brain chips to digital skin, the future may already be underway. One major player, though, is refusing to let go.

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© CEO of Apple Tim Cook gives a presentation as Apple holds an event at the Steve Jobs Theater on its campus in Cupertino. Credit: REUTERS/Manuel Orbeago

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In recent months, a quiet shift has taken shape across **Silicon Valley**. Some of the most powerful voices in **technology** are floating a vision for the future that excludes the very device that has defined the digital era for more than a decade: the **smartphone**. For **Elon Musk**, **Mark Zuckerberg**, **Sam Altman**, and **Bill Gates**, the next wave of innovation doesn't involve a sleeker phone — it replaces it altogether.

Each of them is backing different technologies that promise to [render smartphones obsolete](#). From **brain implants** to digital tattoos and **augmented reality** glasses, their ambitions suggest a world where humans interact with devices not through touchscreens, but directly through thought, vision, or even skin. It is a radical break from the present — one not everyone is ready to embrace.

Neural Links and Digital Tattoos

[Elon Musk](#), the founder of **Neuralink**, is advancing the concept of brain-computer **interfaces**, which allow users to communicate with machines using only their thoughts. According to the company, two human subjects have already received [implants](#). The aim is to remove the need for physical interaction with devices entirely — no tapping, no swiping, not even speaking. Instead, thought would drive action.

Bill Gates is championing a different kind of interface. He is backing **Chaotic Moon**, a Texas-based company developing electronic tattoos. These devices, worn directly on the **skin**, are designed to collect and transmit data through nanosensors. Their applications range from [health tracking](#) to communication and **geolocation**. The tattoos effectively transform the body into a digital platform, without the need for handheld devices.

Vision-First Computing

Meta's chief executive, **Mark Zuckerberg**, is placing his future on [augmented reality glasses](#). He predicts that by 2030, these glasses will take over as the primary computing **device**, replacing the smartphone. The concept is to overlay digital content directly onto a user's field of **vision**.

Instead of looking down at a screen, people would experience notifications, navigation tools, and communication features through transparent **displays** worn on their faces. This strategy aligns with [Zuckerberg's broader ambitions in the AR and metaverse space](#). The goal, he has said, is to “step beyond screens” and redefine the way people engage with the internet and each other.

Apple's Alternate Path

While competitors set their sights on revolutionary tech, **Apple's CEO, Tim Cook**, is sticking with what works. The company recently released the iPhone 16, a device that incorporates advanced [artificial intelligence](#) to enhance usability but maintains the familiar form factor. Cook continues to emphasize refinement over reinvention, arguing that smartphones remain central to everyday **life**.

Apple's strategy focuses on incremental **innovation**, improving existing products while introducing new technologies like AR and AI gradually. Cook's philosophy diverges from his peers in that he views the smartphone not as something to be replaced, but as a core **platform** to build upon. "We're committed to improving what people already use," Cook has indicated in public remarks, favoring evolution over disruption.

This growing divide represents more than just product design — it's a split in thinking about how humans should interface with technology. Musk, Zuckerberg, Altman, and Gates are promoting bold **transformations** that embed technology within the body or integrate it seamlessly into our surroundings. Apple, on the other hand, is reinforcing the smartphone's role by adapting it to emerging demands without altering its core.