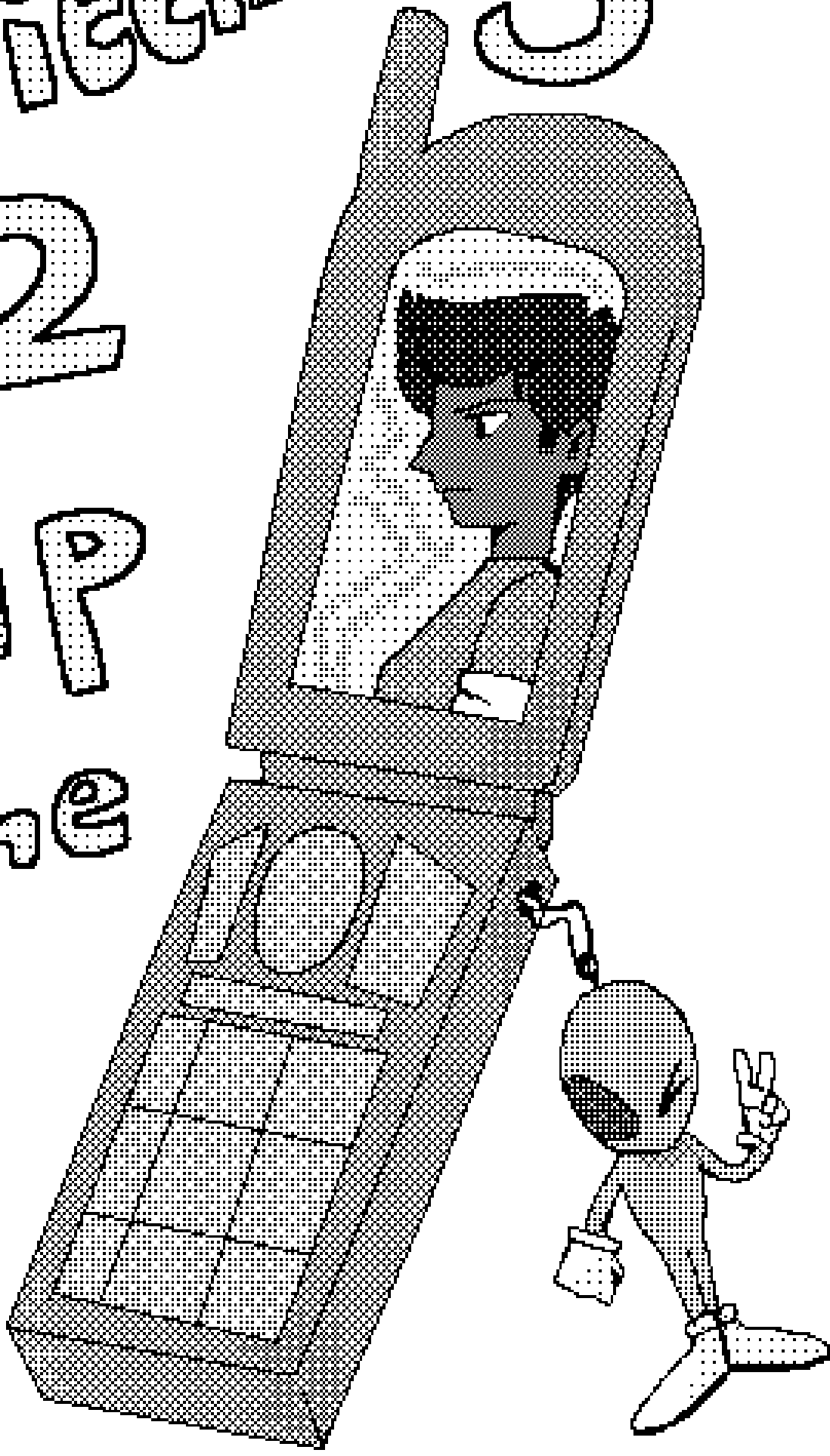
(soulmaze 2024)

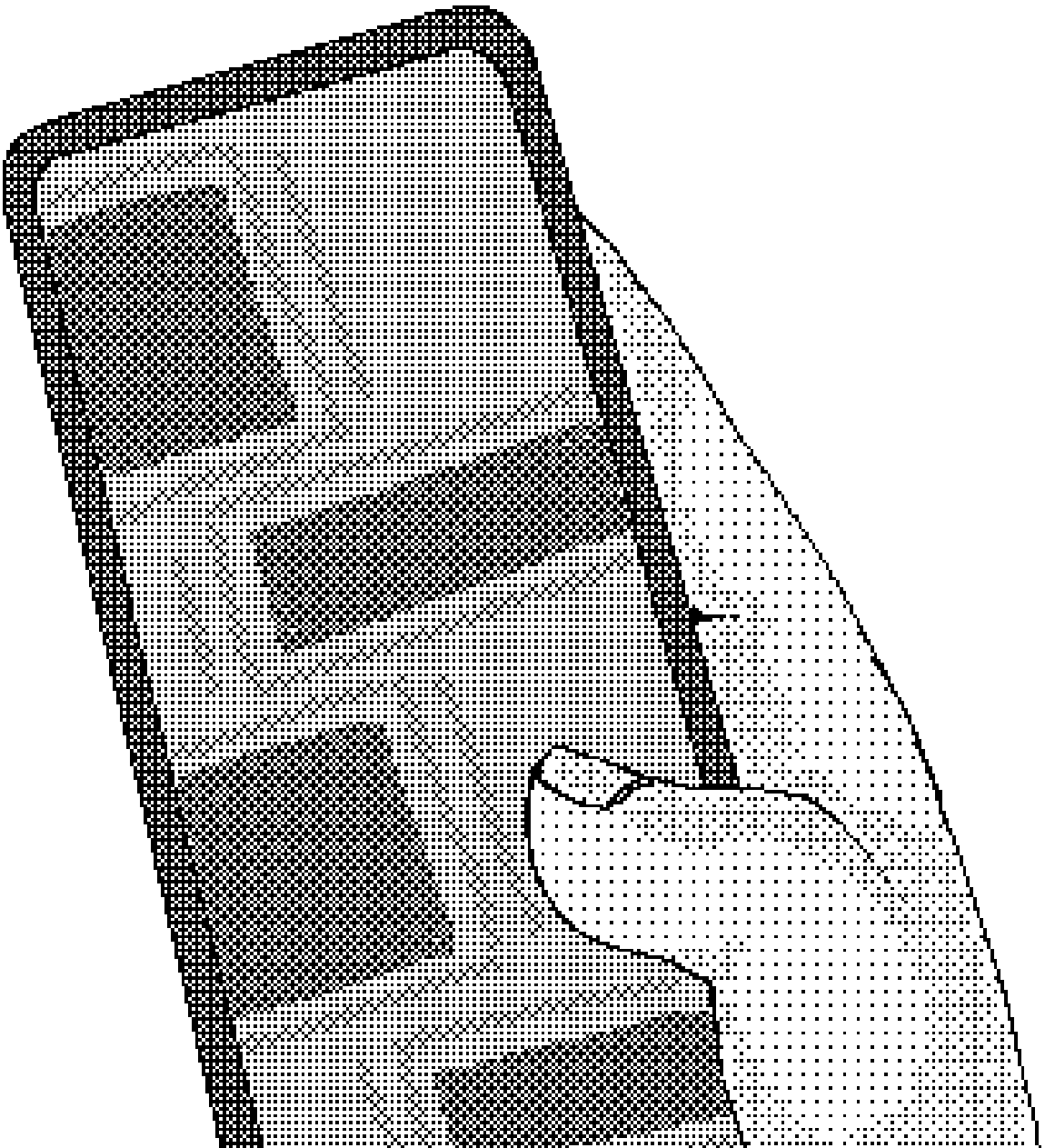
Switching 2 Flip phone



Made with alienmelon's electric zine maker

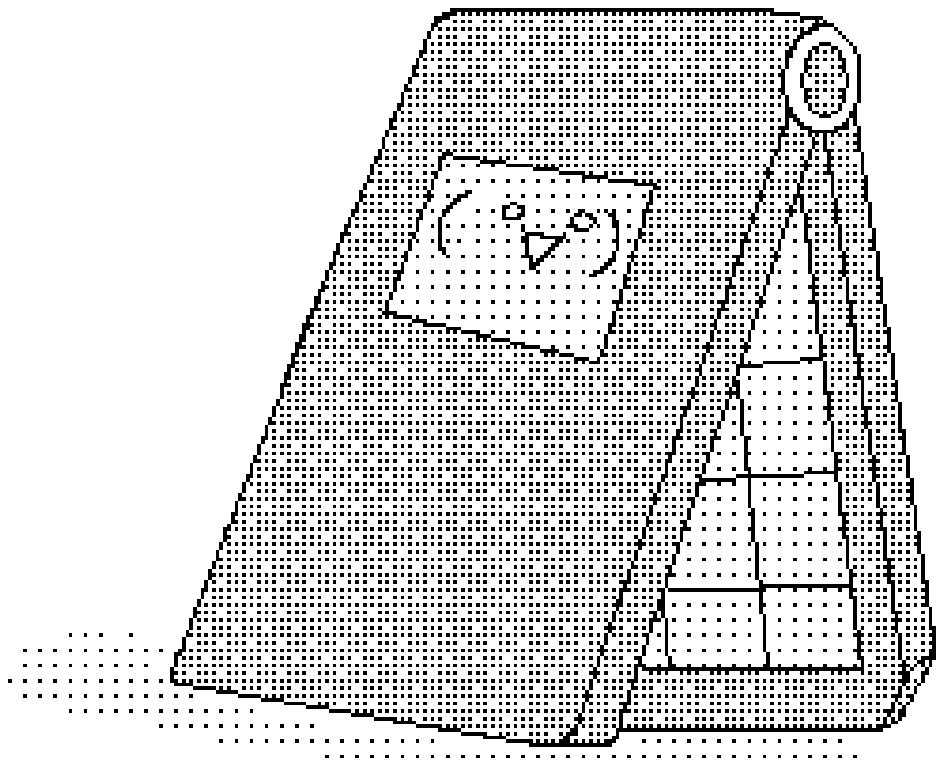
For the longest time, I have wanted to switch back to using a t9 keyboard styled phone. For me, the days where smartphones were useful tools seems to have long passed. Nowadays, every company wants you to install their bloatware onto your phone, convincing you that it is a necessity when it's only another way to get your data and deprive you of your attention span.

Furthermore, I don't like how smartphones keep becoming bigger to the point where we may as well use tablets instead. I just want my phone to be my phone.

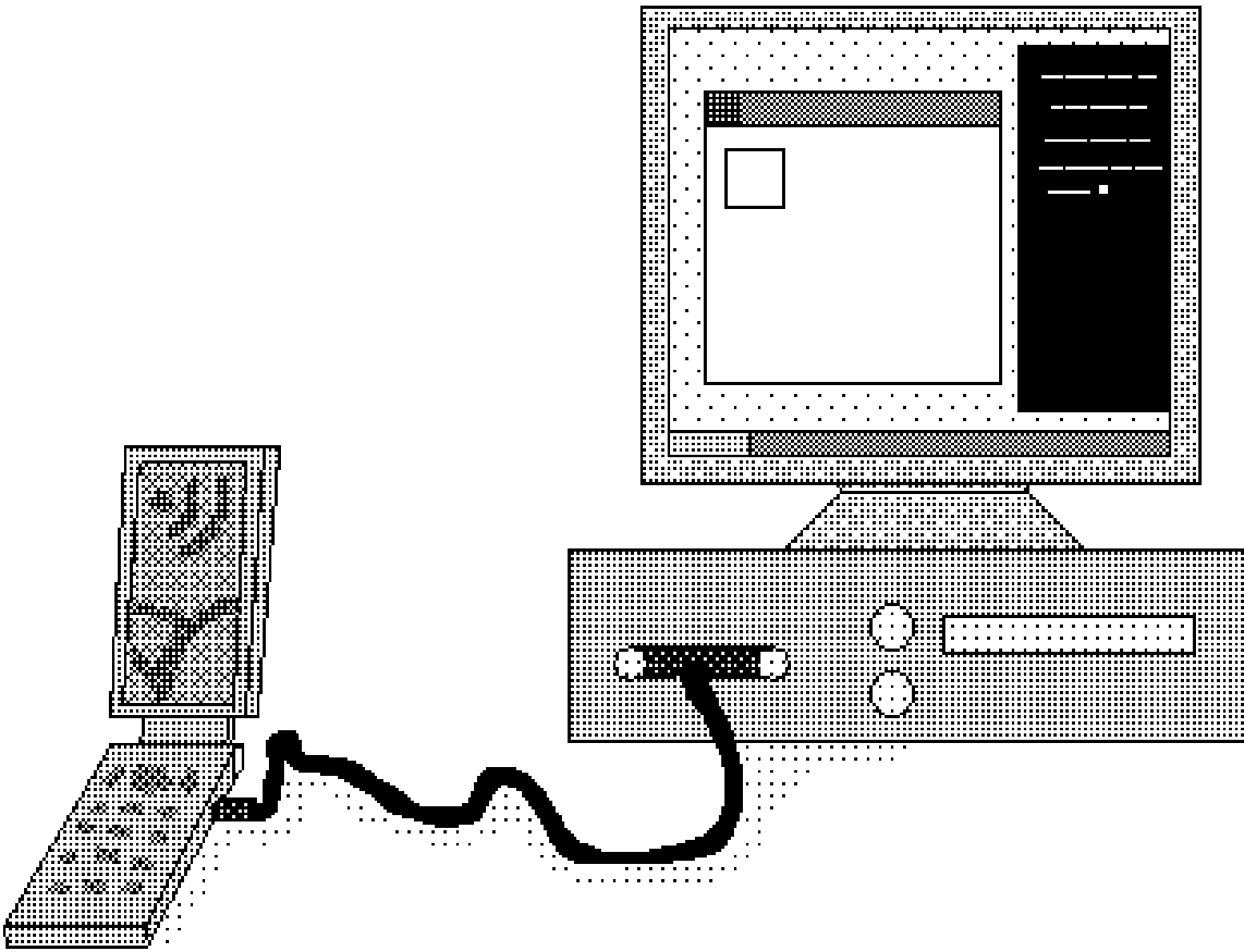


However, there aren't a lot of options out there if you want a t9 keyboard styled phone that also allows you to function in a world that requires you to use an app. I think that many companies should be required to provide users with an alternate means to use their services, such as a web based application or a number to call or text.

But I digress. I tried out a KaiOS phone since the operating system seemed promising, but developers haven't put in a lot of time into maintaining their apps so it seems to have faded away somewhat. If more developers spent the time and resources required to maintain their apps it could be a thriving ecosystem. Until that day comes however, there are android flip phones.

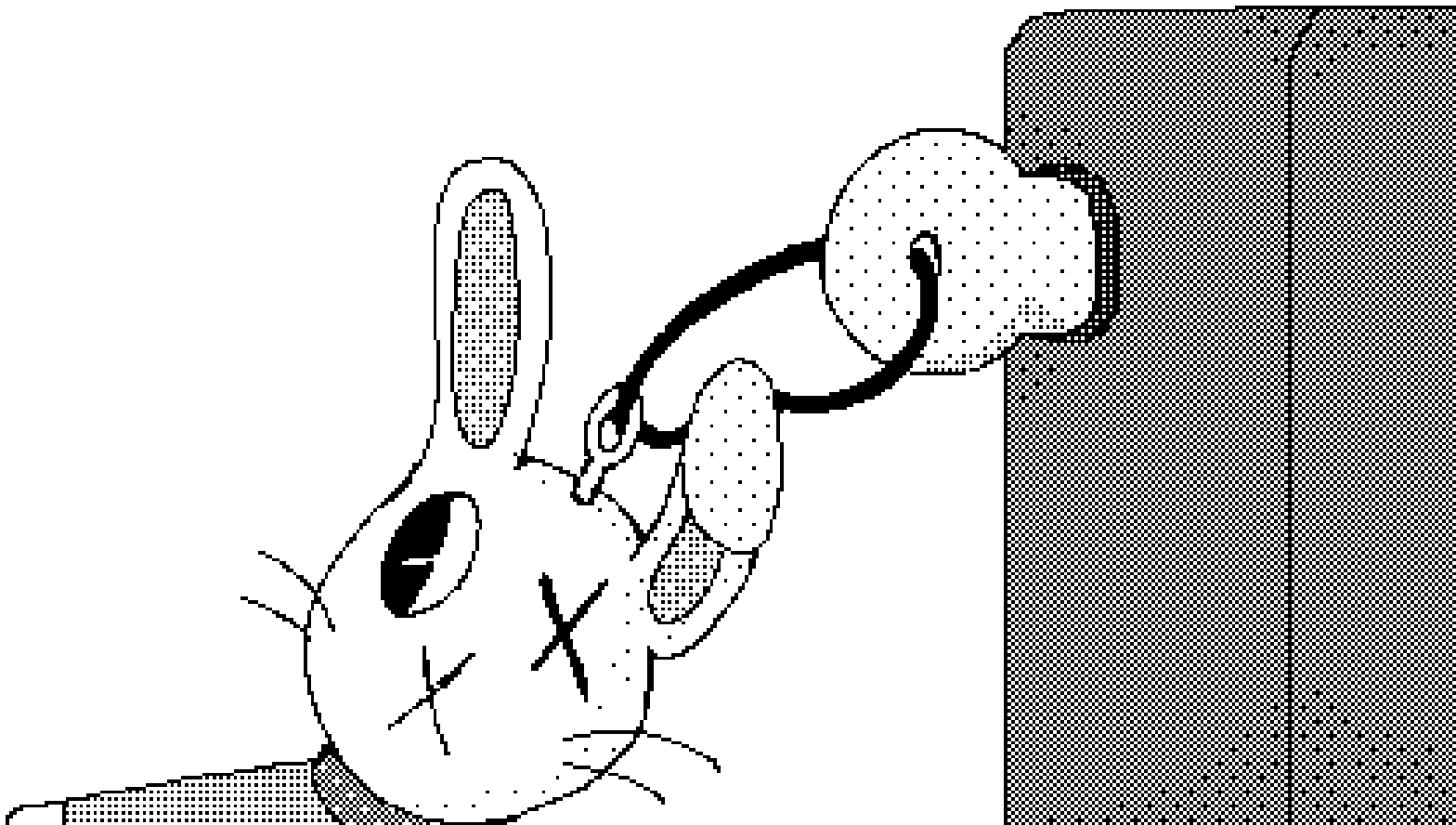


Yes, I said android flip phones. No, I am not talking about foldable smartphones. I am talking about real t9 keyboard flip phones with android OS. Granted, they run stripped down versions of android OS but they hit that sweet spot of being a useful and not being a nightmare rectangle shaped entertainment device. Additionally, these phones are a great and relatively inexpensive way to learn about android development and how android OS works.

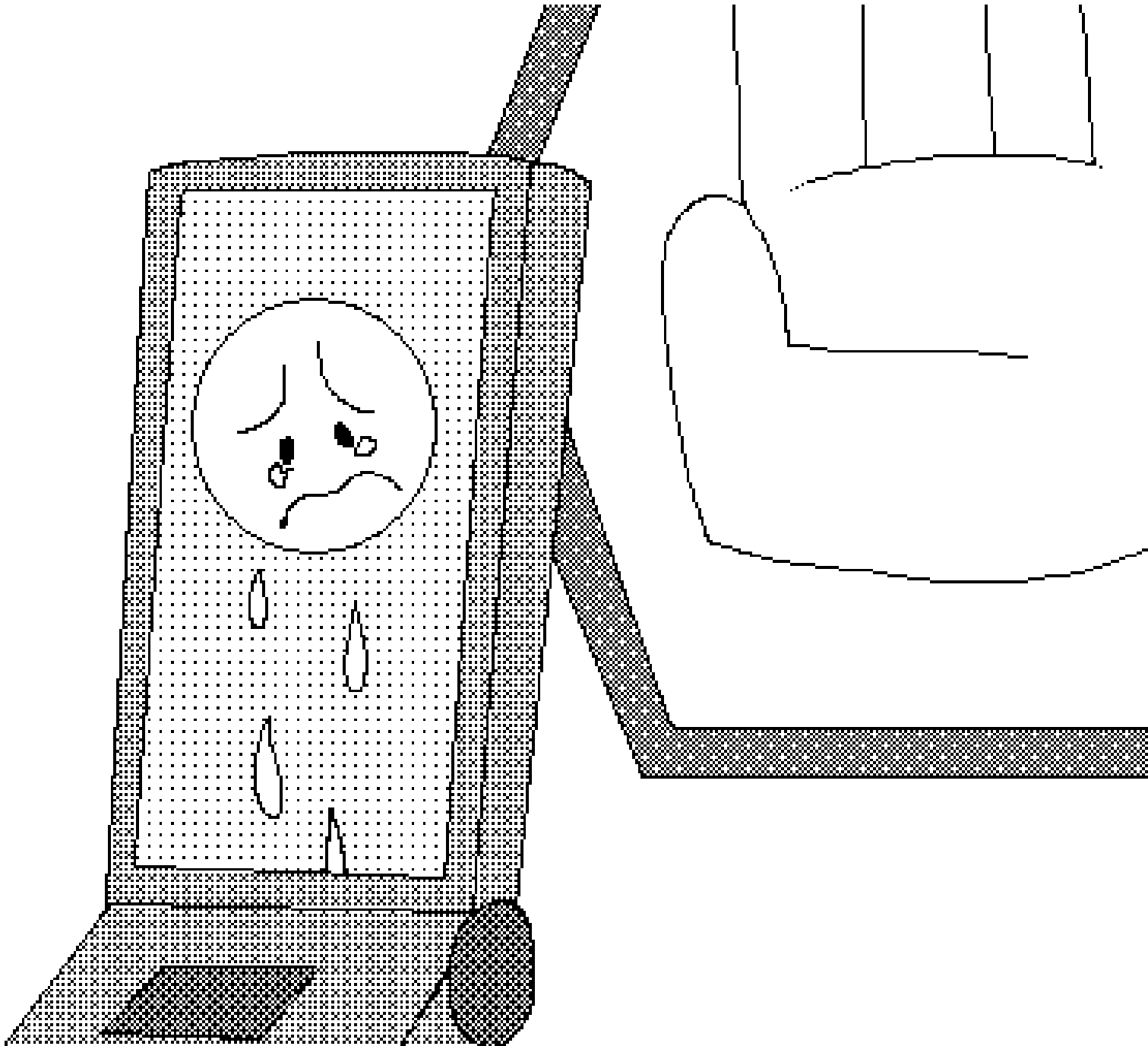


You may ask "isn't this the same as using a smartphone?" and you would be right. After all, it does run a smarthpone operating system but in a different formfactor. But the formfactor and its small screen make it less addictive to use. Also, I like having a flip phone and the ability to use google maps.

Another aspect I like is customizing my flip phone. It's a lot of fun to look at old pictures and tutorials on how people customized theirs back in the day and apply it to my own phone. I have seen that diy aspect begin to have a revival in the world of smartphones too which is nice to see.



For the most part, there hasn't been much difficulty with switching over to a flip phone. But it is annoying when an app is not supported with my device os or when an app is not configured correctly for smaller screens so it ends up being barely functional. Don't get me started on how most mainstream apps require google play services to run all because the developers use google play services for basic functions such as notifications when they could have just programmed those functions themselves.



If you're thinking of making the switch, here's some advice:

-You don't need a lot of apps that tech companies say you do. Get into the habit of looking for non smartphone based ways to do things such as listening to music on an mp3 player instead of using spotify. If there's no non app equivalent, most apps can be run on your computer using Bluestacks.
-Find new ways to spend your time that don't involve constant phone use. Rediscover the things you used to do before you had a smartphone.
-Learn how to read physical maps. Seriously. Using google maps sucks at the best of times let alone when you're using it on a simplified android device.
-Sometimes you will be sightly unprepared because of the increasingly app reliant world we live in. Don't falter, and think of a way to resolve your issue without a smartphone.
-Sometimes you will have no choice BUT to use a smartphone. This is ok too. Again, think of this as a temporary setback instead of letting yourself get hung up about it, then move on.
-Be deliberate about your phone use, think of your phone as a utility and think of how to apply that mentality to other aspects of your life.
-Learn more about the ins and outs of your phone's operating system. It's fun and it helps improve your technological literacy.
-Fdroid, apkpure (with adblock in browser), newpipe and j2me loader are your friends. Especially j2me loader, java applets are a great, storage saving way of using utilities on your phone.
-Have fun with your phone, customise it any way you see fit.

Further reading:
-dumbphones.pory.app Jose Brione's website for finding the right dumbphone for you
-www.mobilephonemuseum.com a collection of mobile phones throughout history
-disnovation.org/shanzhai.php an article about Chinese shanzhai phones
-skysedge.com/telecom/RUSP/index.html a rotary mobile phone which you can build yourself

Subreddits I found useful and interesting:
- r/dumbphones
- r/vintagemobilephones
- r/digitalminimalism

Also have a look at some of the posts I have made on my website at soulmaze.neocities.org/misc

