

# NEW AGE OF COMMUNICATIONS

## TELEPHONE MAY SURPASS POPULARITY OF THE TELEGRAPH

By our technology editor

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**A** Boston professor has invented the first practical telephone that promises to revolutionize communications in America and the rest of the world. Alexander Graham Bell made the historic breakthrough yesterday: he shouted into a mouthpiece in his Boston laboratory and successfully spoke to Thomas Watson on the receiving end of a telephone in a different room. Bell reportedly said: “Mr. Watson, come here—I want to see you,” and to his delight, Watson came in and declared he had heard and understood what was said, repeating the words back to the professor.

The Scottish-born inventor has succeeded in electrically transmitting the human voice by wire. His telephone offers the prospect of people in different places having conversations with each other, perhaps even over long distances.

The mechanics of speech and sound have dominated Bell’s

education and upbringing. Bell developed a “finger language” to “talk” to his mother, who lost her hearing. His father was a celebrated teacher of elocution, or speech, in Edinburgh, Scotland. Today, Alexander Graham Bell describes himself as “a teacher of the deaf,” and has trained instructors at the Boston School for Deaf Mutes. He went on to repeat the program at schools for the deaf in Northampton and Hartford, Connecticut.

Bell’s invention is not the only big advance in communications to come out of Massachusetts. Charlestown-born Samuel Morse helped to develop the electric telegraph that spans America today, sending messages in Morse code. One day, Bell’s invention may surpass the popularity of the telegraph.

Bell has received some financial support for his telephone experiments from a Boston lawyer as well as a Salem businessman, whose deaf son is Bell’s student. The professor has also filed a patent to gain exclusive rights to



his invention and prevent others from copying it. For now, he appears to have beaten inventor Elisha Gray of Ohio, a major rival.

Experts predict that Bell’s backers will naturally want to promote his invention by quickly establishing telephone companies.