

The creator of Android is working on a smartphone that answers your texts for you

The creator of Android is planning a new smartphone that sends messages on its user's behalf so that they don't have to constantly check it, reports have claimed.

Andy Rubin, who helped create the Android operating system that Google acquired in 2005, is said to be working on an AI-powered device intended to fight the smartphone addiction he once helped foster.

Insiders told Bloomberg that the new phone would book appointments, respond to emails and send texts on its own, and be primarily controlled using voice commands.

"If I can get to the point where your phone is a virtual version of you, you can be off enjoying your life, having that dinner, without touching your phone, and you can trust your phone to do things on your behalf," Mr Rubin told Bloomberg in an interview last year.

"Over time, you're reinforcing it by giving it the right response, and it becomes aware of your taste and your preferences, it's not going to ask you anymore."

A truly reliable virtual assistant would be a holy grail for smartphone developers, and is seen in Silicon Valley as the next frontier in consumer software.

Apple and Amazon have both invested heavily in their Siri and Alexa virtual assistants, while Microsoft has attempted to do the same thing with Cortana.

Google's new Pixel 3 phone, unveiled in New York on Tuesday, will incorporate a new technology called Duplex which can imitate the user's voice and book a table at a restaurant by phone, even inserting artificial "ums" and "ahs" to sound more realistic.

That feature sparked debate about the ethics and etiquette of asking other humans to speak to your AI assistant.

By Laurence Dodds, adapted from *www.telegraph.co.uk*, October 2018