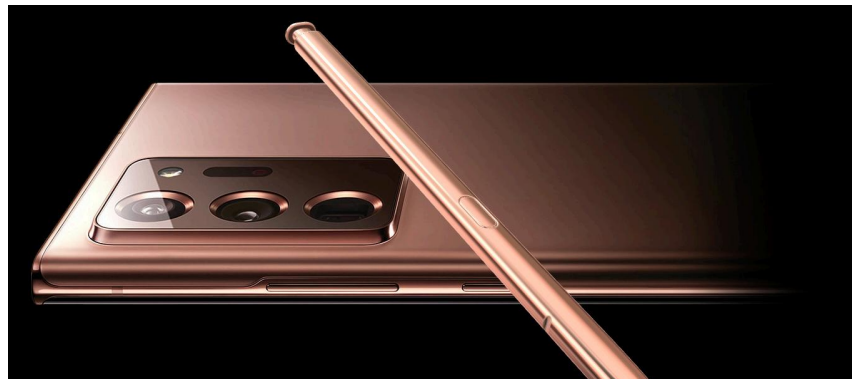


 DEATH TO PLASTIC SIM CARDS

Years after Google and Apple, Samsung finally gets eSIM working in the US

If you have the Note 20 and T-Mobile, you can finally ditch your plastic SIM card.

RON AMADEO – APR 19, 2021 11:03 AM |  73



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Credit: Samsung

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Samsung is finally starting to support eSIM in the US. [XDA Developers](#) reports the first working combo is the Galaxy Note 20 and Note 20 Ultra on T-Mobile. You'll need [an update](#) to enable the feature, but then you'll be able to throw off the shackles of your ancient plastic SIM card. Samsung flagships began shipping with eSIM starting with the Galaxy S20 in March 2020, but it never got US carrier support. With T-Mobile now supporting the Note 20, hopefully other carriers and models will follow suit.

Samsung has been pretty slow on the eSIM uptake overall. The world's first eSIM phone was the Google Pixel 2, which launched in 2017 and was quickly supported on Google Fi. Apple [started supporting eSIM](#) with the iPhone XS in 2018, and carriers [quickly enabled support](#).

eSIM removes the need for plastic, physical SIM cards that link your phone to your phone bill and get you up and running on the cellular network. Physical SIM cards are one of the many ways carriers cling to outdated technology. In order to be identified for service, carriers demand we reserve space in our phones for a 12x9 mm plastic card that holds 256KB of information. This might have sounded like a good idea in the '90s when carriers cooked up the SIM card standard. But today, when a similarly sized (15x11 mm) MicroSD card can hold 1TB of data—or about 4.2 million times more data—SIM cards seem laughably out of date.

eSIM, if the mobile industry would just adopt it and abandon SIM cards altogether, would allow for easier carrier switching, since you would only have to download an app to switch service instead of having to buy a physical piece of plastic. It would let manufacturers save space inside a device, since an on-motherboard eSIM chip is much smaller than a SIM card, a SIM card tray, and an ejection system. Eliminating the slot entirely would result in one less place for dust and water ingress, too.

For phones with both eSIM and a physical SIM slot, eSIM often leads to "dual-SIM" support, allowing users to subscribe to two carriers at once. This is good for people who want to juggle multiple numbers or for someone who wants to combine the best coverage of two carriers. This is enabled on the Note 20 on T-Mobile, by the way, which lists "Dual SIM Dual Standby (DSDS) support," meaning you'll be on both networks at once.

Listing image: Samsung



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Ron is the Reviews Editor at Ars Technica, where he specializes in Android OS and Google products. He is always on the hunt for a new gadget and loves to rip things apart to see how they work. He loves to tinker and always seems to be working on a new project.

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