Communication via Text Messaging: New Methods of Reference, Instruction and Outreach

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Abstract

- Grant funded – STF, CITI grants
- Text messaging—a new way of communicating
- Investigate instructional uses of text messaging and other handheld device technology
What is Text Messaging?

- Text Messaging is also known as Short Message Service (SMS)
- Asynchronous communication made usually between cell phones and/or other handheld devices
- Messages are limited to 160 characters and are usually typed on the keys of phones or handheld devices.
Who Text Messages?

- **Cell Phone Ownership***
  - 89% of College Students own a cell phone
  - Verizon & Cingular are college mkt leaders

- **Text Messaging***
  - 73% Teenage cell phone owners text
  - 63% Generation Y cell phone owners text
  - 31% Generation X cell phone owners text

*Data from Pew Internet & American Life Project and Student Monitor reports.*
Another way to reach out to students, faculty and staff.

An popular method of communication.

Reliable during times of emergency.

Appropriate for short precise questions requiring short precise answers.

Example: *How late is the library open tonight?*
Text Messaging Service @ Southeastern
Text Messaging Service @ Southeastern

- an integrated Email to SMS turnkey package that works with any email system
- a unique text messaging “phone” number
- a bundle of text messages
- “Send by SMS” tool
  - works with existing MS Outlook
  - simplifies creation of SMS/Chat abbreviations
How are we using text messaging?

- Student sends Text Message to Library’s Number
- Text Message goes to Server in Australia
- Text Message is converted to email
- Email arrives in Library email account
What Type of Questions Do Students Ask?

- Non-Serious Inquiries
- Library Questions
- University Questions
- Simple Short-Answer Reference Questions
- More Complex Reference Questions
Message Appears in InBox
Message is Read

From: "Mobile +19853515936" <+19853515936@redcoal.com>
Subject: +61428987358
To: askref@selu.edu
Date: Mon, 10 Oct 2005 03:10:04 +1000
X-Library: Indy 9.0.11
X-Spam-Level: **** (4.369)
X-Spam-Tests:
BAYES_00,MSGID_FROM_MTA_HEADER,MSGID_FROM_MTA_ID,PRIORITY_NC
X-WebMail-UserID: Suppressed
X-Scanned-By: MIMEDefang 2.51 on 147.174.1.85

Where can I find the RMA annual statement studies

******************************************************************************

This message was sent via the redcoal SMS gateway
http://www.redcoal.com******************************************************************************
earlier years (1982 - 2003/2004) are on the 4th Floor. Let us know if you have additional questions.
Reply is Rechecked for Size

Message Preview

- Sender: redcoal
- Messages:
  - Number of Recipients: 1
  - Messages per Recipient: 2
  - Total Number of Messages: 2

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1/2

2/2
Message 1 of 2 ... 165 Characters.

Schedule Delivery (SMS Messages Only)

Send | Cancel

12:46 PM

------------------------------Message 1 of 1 ---- 189 Characters.
Reply is Sent
Text Messaging Technology: Instruction

- A short and limited survey was conducted of LS102 students
  - 69% of students indicated that they texted
  - Cingular (51%), Sprint Nextel and Verizon were the leading providers
Learning Trends

- Generation Y
- Wireless Learning Environment
- Multi-tasking
- Motivational Teaching Tool
- Example: *Exercise in identifying key terms or phrases from an assigned article for the class to read.*
Promotional Challenges

- With 24/7 chat and email available via Web pages, the service needs to be marketed to users away from their computers and their keyboards.

- Users need to not only know about the existence of the service but also the number.
Promotion @ Southeastern

- Information Kiosk
- Text A Librarian/Taste of Australia Contest
- Campus Media
- Business Cards
- “Scrap” Note Paper
- Table Tents/Posters
Final Thoughts

- Text Messaging is relatively easy to incorporate.
- The service is inexpensive and involves little training.
- Attracts a different type of interaction with a different set of users.
- Has proven to be an effective communication tool in both the learning and reference environment.
- Motivates learning and encourages student participation by using a familiar technology.
Questions?