

SMS Hubs for Direct Action

Questions to Consider

Why SMS?
Audience
Audience Size
Cost
Limitations
Network
Functionality
Security and Privacy
Contact info collection
In the field or after?

Tools:

FrontlineSMS

Type: Phone with PC

<http://mobiles.tacticaltech.org/FrontlineSMS.html>

Who is it for: NGOs in developing countries

Investment Required: None, free to use, phone carrier's text messaging rates apply.

Requirements: PC with FrontlineSMS software & 'dumb' phone or GSM modem.

Description:

How it Works: Able to connect software to phone via USB/Bluetooth/Serial to use phone's mobile network connection and messaging plan to send messages, Does not require Internet connection

Cons: Incompatible with Android/iPhone, may require a bit of troubleshooting, fairly buggy

FrontlineSMS for Android

Type: Smartphone

<https://github.com/mathiaslin/frontlinesms-for-android/wiki>

Download: <http://www.metahealthcare.com/dl/frontlinesms-for-android-0.5a.apk>

Who is it for:

Investment Required: None, free to use, only phone's standard text messaging rates apply

Requirements: Android phone with unknown application installation enabled, Installation APK file

Description: Google-based group mass-messaging. Can create keywords which can Auto Reply, Auto Forward, Send E-Mail, HTTP Request (Web), Add users to groups, or remove users from groups.

How it Works: FrontlineSMS software readapted for the Android platform so it can run without the need of a computer.

Cons: Out of development, requires access to Google groups management unless a keyword subscription rule is set up. To send more than 100 messages per hour, requires phone to be rooted and core files modified.

*Telerivet

Type: Smartphone (Android only) and/or Web

<https://telerivet.com/>

<https://telerivet.com/page/frontlinesms>

Who is it For: Anyone: businesses, NGOs, start-ups, health clinics, media organizations, and more.

Investment Required: ~~\$2.25/week~~ \$10/mo., Phone's plan messaging fees

Requirements: Phone with Internet Connection

Description: Synced web-based service and mobile-web application for android lets you manage contact lists, set up automated services (Subscription service [contacts], Informational service [request auto-reply], general Auto-reply service, Poll/Survey service, and custom services)

How it Works: Contacts can be imported/exported to/from spreadsheets or .csv files, or manually added from the web interface, Automated services can be added, modified, and deleted through the web interface. Additional hourly text messages (beyond android phone limits) can be achieved by installing 'expansion packs':

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.rivetlabs.sms.pack01>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.rivetlabs.sms.pack02>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.rivetlabs.sms.pack03>

etc..

Cons: 10 contacts free and 100 messages per day limit with Free testing plan. \$10 plan allows up to 2,000 contacts and 1,000 messages per day.

Gather by MailChimp (have not tested)

Type: Smartphone (Android or iPhone)/Web

<http://mailchimp.com/features/sms-for-events/>

<https://blog.mailchimp.com/introducing-gather-mailchimps-sms-for-events/>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mailchimp.Gather>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/gather-by-mailchimp/id567512269>

Who is it for: Anyone

Investment Required: Message packs - \$8.99 for 175/\$18.99 for 500/\$48.99 for 2,000

Requirements: Internet connection

Description: During-event group mass text message alerts. Preserves both organizer's and participant's privacy and identity, unless otherwise opted-in.

How it Works: Application is only required by organizer. Organizer pre-pays for bundles of messages. Assigns user a temporary phone number to protect organizer, allows organizer to create a web form and send out to participants to sign up for text alerts (also provides option to subscribe to your MailChimp contact list and newsletter. Allows group messaging or messages to individual participants, and allows for participants to reply. Contact list expires after event but allows participants to register

Cons: Pricey?

Tropo

Type: Web-based service

Who is it for: Businesses

Investment Required:

Requirements: Internet connection

Description: Free to test
How it Works:
Cons: Need to spend time to develop service

Clickatell

Type: Web-based service

<http://mobiles.tacticaltech.org/Clickatell.html>

Who is it for: Commercial SMS services are good for organisations who don't wish to invest in setting up an SMS hub such as [FrontlineSMS](#) but wish to send and receive bulk SMS messages.

Investment Required: 1.3¢ per message (better rates for larger amounts of messages)

Requirements: Internet connection and Credit Card

Description: Allows bulk messages to be sent through web interface or desktop software
Communicator is our web-based application that lets you send SMS messages to your customers, members or anyone else direct from your web browser and receive replies.

Cons: More suited for larger scale communications

BulkSMS

Type: Web

<http://mobiles.tacticaltech.org/BulkSMS.html>

Who is it for:

Investment Required:

Requirements: Internet access

Description:

Cons:

Text Blast (currently down for maintenance)

Supplemental Tools

If sparse internet activity on PC would be useful, PC can use cell-phone's internet connection through USB with the following app:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.koushikdutta.tether>

and one of the following programs installed and running on PC

Mac: <http://download.clockworkmod.com/tether/tether-mac.zip>

Linux: <http://download.clockworkmod.com/tether/tether-linux.tgz>

Windows: <http://download.clockworkmod.com/tether/TetherWindowsSetup.msi>

(Requires Rooted Android Phone) HOWTO Remove Hourly SMS limit:

<http://forum.xda-developers.com/showthread.php?t=1835056>