

SJRLC Mobile Information Services: Reference by SMS

SMS

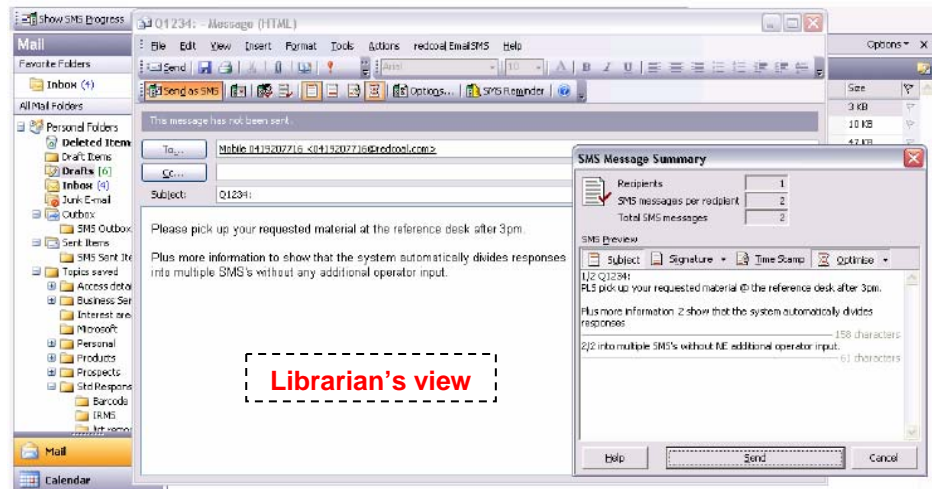


Stands for Short Message Service, known popularly as text messaging. The transmission of short text messages to and from a cell phone or handheld device. Messages must be no longer than 160 characters and contain no images or graphics.

Widely adopted in Europe and Asia. Taking off in the United States: 63% of Generation Y (ages 18 to 27) cell phone users and 31% of Generation X (ages 28 to 39) cell phone users use SMS. SMS is popular with all income levels.

Compared to other mobile devices and communication methods, SMS via cell phone is practically universal, inexpensive, and requires no download or installation.

Ask Us by SMS



User sends a text message (using natural language) to library's cell phone number.

Librarian receives message and sends answer to user's phone via a Windows email client interface. (Communication is asynchronous, not real-time.)

Interface keeps track of message length and divides message into 160-character blocks. (Answers may span multiple messages.)

Best suited for short-answer questions such as circulation information and fast facts—for quick turnaround and concise answers.

Caveat for Customers: Messages received will be charged or deducted from the user's allotted messages.

Sample SMS Reference Services:

Southeastern Louisiana University Text a Librarian service:
<http://www.selu.edu/Library/ServicesDept/referenc/textalibrarian.html>

Curtin University of Technology (Australia) SMS a Query service:
<http://library.curtin.edu.au/contact/sms.html>

Google's doing it.*



Get a feel for answers by SMS – try out the Google SMS service.

See <http://www.google.com/sms>.

Google SMS allows you to send queries (in specific query formats) that trigger specific results by sending text messages to 46645 (GOOGL). Results usually come within a minute or less and contain text only.

Currently, specialized queries are limited to business and residential listings, movie show times and theater locations, weather conditions, stock quotes, product prices, and dictionary definitions.

For example,

- when you're on the road and want to know what's playing near you, send the message 'movie: theaters 08026'
- if you're out shopping and want to see if you're getting a good deal, send the message 'price dvd players'
- if you're at a meeting and want to know what they're talking about, send the message 'define SMS'

Answers are in fixed formats and results may provide partial answers.

Google SMS also accepts very basic Google searches that return what it calls "snippets", or excerpts. (Type "G" before your search terms.) You won't get the full results, but sometimes you can get an answer to your question. This feature is suited to questions with precise answers, such as the population of New Jersey.

***So is Yahoo!** Yahoo launched its SMS search service in July 2005. (Google got there first, in October 2004.) It works much like Google SMS. Send an SMS to 92466 (YAHOO) and get information about the weather, stocks, local restaurants, and more. E.g., type "w" and a zip code to retrieve a short weather forecast. The service is rolled out to Cingular, Sprint and Verizon. T-Mobile is expected on board soon (and probably Nextel). For query shortcuts, go to <http://mobile.yahoo.com/search/smsshortcuts>.

