

LibraryCrunch

Bringing You A "Library 2.0" Perspective, by Michael Casey

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Easily Pushing Info Via Text Message

[TechCrunch](#) drew my attention to a service by [Teleflip](#) that allows you to [SMS](#) (text message) anyone's cell phone without needing to know who their carrier is by simply sending an email to their cell number by adding teleflip.com: 2125551212@teleflip.com. This may sound simple, but it does away with the need to know the receiver's cell carrier (Teleflip figures that out themselves), which means the sender's job is much easier.

What really got me thinking was how we could use this in libraries. Without having to purchase any additional equipment or software, we could use the customer's cell number (with their permission, of course) to send reminders about holds, late items, etc., by simply entering their cell number (plus @teleflip.com) into the email notification field in our [ILS](#) software. From that point on, all messages would arrive as SMS text messages, right on their cell phone.

But that's just the beginning. We could push small amounts of content to target audiences that sign up for our services – once a week bestsellers to our rapid readers, upcoming teen events to local teens, baby-and-me events to new moms, and all through a simple email distribution that sends the messages to the customer's cell as a text message. The possibilities are great, and certainly worth examining.

Posted by Michael on January 13, 2006 07:21 AM | [Permalink](#)

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<http://www.librarycrunch.com/mt/mt-tb.cgi/101>

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Michael,

I agree with you and I believe this is just the tip of the iceberg, however I also believe we have to think about patron alerts in a broader context that is network technology agnostic.

The best service would be one which allowed the patron to register for how they want to receive their alerts and their content with perhaps a simple wizard to help them choose and configure their service. With all the phones being shipped today capable of much richer messaging and content than SMS, the later technology may just be to wake up the appropriate service on the phone.

An RSS client (e.g. <http://www.freerangeinc.com>) in the phone might be a better solution as it supports distribution of pretty much any type of content and doesn't require the library know who is receiving it. It also easily adapts content to the capabilities of the user's device. Connecting the personal content to the user is probably solved by creating an RSS feed for individual's account.

The only reason I think you haven't seen the carriers make RSS readers a standard application is that they make so much money on SMS.

Gordon

Posted by: Gordon Fowler | [January 14, 2006 10:43 AM](#)

Please don't spam my cell phone unless I ask for the alerts, thanks. I pay a nickel a pop for SMS, and the emails are free.

Posted by: [Edward Vielmetti](#) | [January 19, 2006 02:54 AM](#)

YES YES YES! I've been wanting this for a couple of years now. Why are Americans so afraid of SMS tech? Why wasn't this done YEARS ago??

but I do agree with ed. pleasee don't send me stuff I don't want. I only get so many texts a month and the over charge is way more than i want to pay. ;)

Posted by: [maire](#) | [January 19, 2006 04:19 PM](#)

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