**OMG, the text message turns 20. But has SMS peaked? - CNN.com**

By Heather Kelly , CNN

updated 11:39 AM EST, Mon December 3, 2012 | Filed under: Mobile CNN.com

OMG, the text message turns 20. But has SMS peaked?



Heather Kelly, CNN

(CNN) -- It's been hailed for its succinctness and blamed for everything from sore thumbs to the decline of conversation. Love it or hate it, the text message is 20 years old.

The first-ever text message was sent December 3, 1992, by software engineer Neil Papworth, to Vodafone director Richard Jarvis, who received the message on his husky Orbitel 901 cell phone. It read simply, "Happy Christmas."

As of Monday, the text is no longer in its teens -- the age group it's probably most associated with. In fact, it's more of a senior citizen in technology years.

At just 190 bytes and 160 characters, the modest text message isn't the most glamorous or elaborate form of communication, and that's a major reason it's become so pervasive.

Texting is popular around the world, across age groups and cultures, because it is simple, concise, and compatible with every mobile device, whether it's a $500 smartphone or a disposable flip phone.

 

Mobile society leads to bad manners? Church: Go forth and tweet

Six billion SMS (short message service) messages are sent every day in the United States, according to Forrester Research, and over 2.2 trillion are sent a year. Globally, 8.6 trillion text messages are sent each year, according to Portio Research.



Teen is fastest texter in United States

It seems tacky to bring this up on its birthday, but this may also be the year the text message peaks. After two decades of constant growth, text messaging is finally slowing down as people move to smartphones and use third-party messaging tools to circumvent wireless carriers' costly per-text charges.

SMS messaging is expected to be a $150

billion-a-year industry in 2013, with carriers charging set monthly fees for unlimited texting, or as much as 20 cents per text. The actual cost to carriers for sending a text message is about 0.03 cents.

By using popular apps and services, including Apple's iMessage, Facebook messages, GroupMe and WhatsApp, smartphone users can send all the texts they want over

Wi-Fi or cellular networks without paying per message. But smartphones still only account for 50% of all cell phones, so text messaging is likely to be around for years to come.

Since a birthday is a day of celebration, LOLs and HBDs, let's take a look at some fascinating text messaging trivia.

• In the United States, 75% of teenagers text, sending an average of 60 texts a day. According to Pew Internet research, texting is teens' most common form of communication, beating out phone conversations, social networks and old-fashioned face-to-face conversations.

• Women are twice as likely to use emoticons in text messages, but men use a wider variety of emoticons, according to a recent study by Rice University. :-)

• The practice of exchanging sexual messages or photos (yes, "sexting") isn't just for single people and politicians. It's also popular among committed couples. According to a study by psychology professor Michelle Drouin, 80% of young adults in relationships sent or received naughty texts, and 60% upped the ante by exchanging photos or videos.

• Some emergency response call centers are beginning to accept text messages sent to 911. There are still lingering concerns about the practice, including lack of location information, confirmation that the message was received, and timeliness of

messages. Verizon plans to launch limited SMS-to-911 services in early 2013.

• The world of competitive texting can be lucrative for the fastest thumbs. At this year's fifth annual National Texting Championship in New York City, 17-year-old Austin Wierschke was crowned the winner for the second year in a row, taking home

$50,000 in prize money.

• According to Guinness World Records, Melissa Thompson set the record for fastest text. In 2010, she took 25.94 seconds to type and send, "The razor-toothed piranhas of the genera Serrasalmus and Pygocentrus are the most ferocious freshwater fish in the world. In reality they seldom attack a human."

• Text messages have a dangerous side. Texting while driving is a risky activity, and sending or reading a single text can distract a driver for approximately 4.6 seconds, according to the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. Thirty-nine states have banned text messaging while driving. Distracted texters have also been injured or killed while biking and walking.

• Text messaging technology has popped up in some fascinating places over the years, including cows' reproductive organs. Swiss dairy farmers have implanted sensors in cows to detect when the cows are in heat. A second sensor with a SIM card in the cow's neck sends a text message to the farmer, who can then inseminate the animal, according to The New York Times.

• Text messaging has been used in medical fields to improve treatment for malaria, depression, diabetes and addiction.

READ THE ARTICLE!

1. How much are you attached to texting?
2. Which stats about texting surprised or interested you? (And yes, you were surprised and interested by something)
3. What do you see for the future of texting? What creative ways could texting be used in the future?
4. What do you think is next in communications after texting?
5. Can you believe texting has been around for 20 years?