

SMS turns 20 years old today

Posted At : 3 December 2012 07:09 | Posted By : Shaun McCran
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"On December 3 1992, engineer Neil Papworth sent the first SMS message to Richard Jarvis of Vodafone. It simply read "Merry Christmas", and Jarvis had no way of replying."

The Short Message Service turns twenty years old today. It's hard for us to consider a world without such common technologies as the SMS and easily accessible mobile communications but think about that statement for a second.

SMS is only twenty years old.

Only twenty years ago a technology came along that has radically changed the way people communicate, in both business and social environments. Think how much harder things would be now if SMS wasn't easily available? The most amazing thing about SMS is that is isn't all that complicated in comparison to most smartphone functionality.

SMS is accessible to everyone with a mobile, through a common interface. It doesn't require a special network protocol or data system, it is truly available to everyone, all around the world.

Think about the impact that SMS has had on changing the English language, think of how much English has changed due to the short nature of messaging, look at terms we are all familiar with now (Lol, BRB) that have come around specifically due to human interaction with the SMS technology.

From its humble beginnings things have changed. People are innovators, and they have driven the SMS message on to greater and greater things, like MMS and now modern messaging services like WhatsApp and Skype. These are all essentially driven from the SMS concept.

You can read a lot more information about the background of the SMS here, from the Telegraph:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/mobile-phones/9718336/Text-messaging-at-20-how-SMS-changed-the-world.html>

Or the Guardian:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2012/may/06/sms-text-messages-20th-birthday>

My thinking is that the mobile landscape is still a very new and exciting environment. The technology landscape is still forming and innovations like SMS are frequent and game changing.

The coolest thing about SMS technology for me? Working for the company that made SMS a reality, and that 4 billion people use every day.

