

20 years of SMS

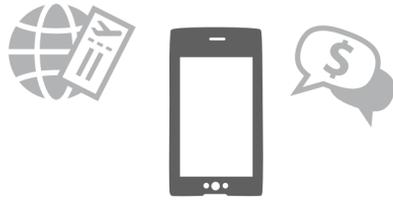
Did you know that SMS is 20 years old? The first text message was sent on December 3, 1992 in the UK. Real-time charging systems played a key role in helping mobile telephony – and SMS – take off; the systems allowed operators to offer prepaid subscriptions that deducted credits as services were used. The same technology is used today in both prepaid and postpaid subscriptions to handle a wide range of services including mobile broadband.

2012

More than **2 billion** subscriptions are served by Ericsson charging and billing solutions. After voice, SMS is the service used most.

2011

10
trillion
SMS



2.8 billion
prepaid users

Globally, **53%** of mobile phones use prepaid subscriptions. In South Africa, the figure is 86% and in India **92%**.

2008

5
trillion
SMS

It becomes common for users to receive appointment reminders via SMS from the dentist, doctor and hair salon, as well as to pick up tickets and boarding cards.



2007



Young people start to establish new communication behaviors, coordinating their everyday lives and cementing relations with their peers.

2006

2005

The uptake of SMS among young people is driven by a sense of belonging, control and immediacy. Mobile phones get media players and ringtones.



New text-input methods are introduced, making it quicker and easier to type, and a new texting language is created.

2004

1
trillion
SMS



Feature phones appear with cameras, MMS, alarm clocks and mobile internet. Screens become bigger and battery time increases. Prepaid subscriptions become as common as postpaid.

2002

0.3
trillion
SMS

2001

Young people start to drive the SMS market.



Ericsson introduces real-time charging for SMS. Prepaid is mainly used by young people, as a way for them to obtain a mobile phone without having a bank account or needing to provide ID.

1998



45,000
prepaid users

1. sms /sms/
Abbreviation: SMS stands for Short Message (or Messaging) Service – a system that enables mobile-phone users to exchange text messages.
Noun: a text message sent via the SMS system.
Verb: to send a text message via the SMS system.

1992

On December 3, 1992, the first text message is sent with the greeting “Merry Christmas.”