

# *GenTxt*

in search of a narrative

*“Overcome time and all you have  
is now. Overcome space and all  
you have is here.”*

Jonathan Livingstone Seagull

and sometimes, in the midst of here & now...

- A single product can so profoundly change the lives of men and women on our planet, that it can be said to define an era
- If the 19th century was shaped by the wonder of electricity, the 20th century has been moulded by the automobile

**THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WILL BE THE CENTURY OF WIRELESS**

- In a tiny object weighing under 100 grams  
*which*
  - Will evolve beyond recognition*and*
  - Touch and change the life of every world citizen
- Wireless telephony transits from an expensive gadget to a mass consumption consumer product

**Which it will be impossible to imagine life without**

- And as the prophetic powers of Moore's law “**power of microchip doubles every 18 months**” prevails...we can already visualise the day, when...

e-Commerce



Multimedia



Data



Internet



Voice Chat



- Voice will be just one application of the phone
- Leading people to question **why it was ever called a phone**

And this revolution is led by a phenomena known as the  
**Short Messaging Service**

*Communication is the one truth that drives every aspect of our lives*

Smoke signals and jungle drums...*the bookworms...* Gutenberg Bible (1430)...*radio hamers...*Mr. Marconi (1897)...*couch potatoes...*Soaps & the MTV*generation...*cyber junkies... internet, the hotmail &cyber chats...& now SMS...

*We've come a long way baby...*



...*gentxt*

*Each generation has its own language of expression, influenced by the medium*

L8R = later

ROTFL = rolling on the floor laughing

LMAO = laugh my a\*\* off

LOL = laugh out loud

POS = parent over shoulder

PU = that stinks

MYOB = mind your own business

KOTC = kiss on the cheek

GAL = get a life

RTFM = read the f\*\*ing manual

KIT = keep in touch

WWJD = what would Jesus do

M8 = mate

KISS = keep it simple. stupid

WUCIWUG = what you see is what you get

*“Medium is the message...global  
village”*

Marshall McLuhan

A prophetic statement.

# Short Messaging Service

## Quite an accidental discovery

The first message...believed to have been sent in December 1992 from a PC to a mobile phone in UK

# The World on your Finger-tips

Period	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Volume(Billion)	1.9	10.5	58	230	300	450

- 1 out of 3 SMS sent is in Chinese
  - contributes 27%
- Canadians SMS usages passes milestone
  - More than 32 million p2p text messages sent during Sept '03
- Italians do it differently
  - Juventus soccer updates; Kamasutra sex tips; dating services
- UK text messaging reaches 2.1 bln in Mar '03
  - Increase over Feb, nearly 80 mln. New Year day topping 111 mln.
- Germans are world SMS champs
  - Whopping 200 mln. messages / year

**Global average is 375 SMS per subscriber per year**

# The World's Crazy Texting

- Outbound SMS in India grew by 200.8 %, year to year to reach 7.39 bln. in 2003
- Equivalent to 35.8 outbound messages / connection / month
- China records 60 outbound messages, Philipines @ 189
- Indonesians are crazy – 66% check their phones, if no message or calls for some time. 42% SMS-ed love messages thro' out the day.

**The penguins of tomorrow?**

**No fingers. Only thumb and flippers as hand**

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# Factors influencing SMS use

- General Factors:
  - Costs – cheaper than voice calls
  - Age & income of users – an young person's medium
  - Familiarity of the instrument
  - Content quality
  - Promotion of SMS thru' TV shows
  - User friendly features – short codes

# Factors influencing SMS use

- Cultural Factors:
  - Modes of commuting and related free time
  - Written vs. oral communication
  - Special occasions like NY; Diwali; anniversaries; etc.
  - Sense of personal space & privacy
  - Time to react to messages
  - Marital status – e-living study findings
  - Largeness of friends and house-hold circle



But, the biggest factor is that unlike most other mediums, the mobile phone is a personal product. It affords a sense of space (privacy) like no other medium.

This sense gets accentuated with a silent revolution called SMS

# Shanghaid...Bangalored...SMSed

- I'll SMS u ltr; I am SMSng my grlfrnd; etc.
- The virtual new language – has the edge of e-mail for small talk. Is it a concern?
- 1000 new words in last edition of Collins English Dictionary,
- Concise Oxford Dictionary – mass media & celebrities, 2 of the biggest influence on evolving the English language

*Smeeze – the new language?*

## Student lifestyles – a new way to go

- By nature, young people are not often at home.
- It costs in time & money for a person to be in college to be out of the communication loop.
- Under 25s spend 5 times as much of their disposal incomes... 'Britain's youth would rather spend money on mobiles than the latest band...'
- 20% of primary school children own mobiles...under 10s represent the fastest growing segment (Britain)... over 80% college students carry cell phones

P2p & entertainment... downloads...jokes...sex & romance

## The mobile workforce – a reality

- The new CYA medium
- Job interviews... job termination... appointments... daily reports...
- M-commerce... flight schedules...
- 'British Gas staff told...use text messages to cut phone time.' will allow 360,000 customers a year to get thru' to its phone lines – scotsman.com

## A potent social tool

- Stalker sends terrifying messages to a Brisbane woman
- 70% increase in threatening behaviour by SMS
- Teenage bullies use SMS... seems to incite a deeper level of meanness. Girls were identified as major culprits

## Activists – bringing protest into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- 100,000 anti war protestors – the day after coalition forces invaded Iraq, in San Francisco, out smarts hundreds of police
- Joseph Estrada's ouster in Philipines, where alternate media like SMS force mainstream media to do their job
- One subscriber sent ave. 2580 text messages a day in May to protest telecom hike rate...New Zealand
- Campaign targets cellphone bullies

Flash mobs... swarms... buddy groups

# Interesting tidbits

- 2 Italians barred from using cellphones... own / others'... to contact previous girlfriends
- Addicted schoolboy from Birmingham clocked up a 38 page, 216 pounds mobile bill... sends more than 2,500 in one month
- 95% messages delivered within 10 secs.
- UK survey... reasons for texting... of sexual nature... dumping a partner... mistaken identity
- Olympic spirit sees SMS soar... 97K SMS sent to Greece by Telstra cutomers
- Dial A Story... Chinese author Quian Changfu has raked in \$ 21,765 for his SMS novel, 'Outside the Fortress Beseiged' ... Hindustan Times

- SMS dating to SMS divorce
- Godhra Riots to Ganesha drinking milk
- Revealing the climax of thriller movies (Bhoot; Kante; Gupt)
- SMS for safe driving – Hyderabad initiative



# gentxt...v r lk tht nly

- Mobile communications like SMS can de-humanize communications, but can also bring people together
- *“In some ways...we have become a more impersonal society where social meeting is being replaced...text messaging – with a language of its own – replaces the human voice”* – Rev Ian White

*“An invasion of armies can be resisted,  
but not an idea whose time has come.”*

Victor Hugo