

# Happy birthday SMS

This week sees the 20th anniversary of the SMS, invented in 1992 by British engineer, Neil Papworth. Initially slow, the boom in SMS saw more than 150 billion SMS sent in the UK in 2011, almost triple the amount that was sent five years previously (in 2006, there were 51 billion text messages sent).

However, Simon Leps, CEO of Fontera Digital Works, a leading mobile development company, believes that text messaging as a preferred method of communication is undergoing a major shift in South Africa as well as overseas. He argues that mobile network operators have had a monopoly on the pricing structure in the last decade, but this year's SMS interconnect pricing war between the players may cause a major shift in the pricing and regulatory procedures of the SMS medium in years to come.

The high price of SMS also means that consumers are realising alternate messaging options exist, such as iMessage and What's App. Consumers are becoming better equipped and empowered to choose better priced options, such as fixed cost SMS sending and other messaging options.

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