

## Text Messaging Fools

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Ever since some friends of mine got iPhones, and my wife and I got Blackberries, we've been doing a lot more text messaging than before. It's easy, convenient, and a good way to communicate in a not-so-interruptive manner.

A text message is actually called a *SMS (short message service) Message*. It was originally designed for user alerts (e.g. you have a new voicemail). A SMS message has a maximum size of 140 bytes. Given a 7 bit character set, that means the maximum length of an SMS message is 160 characters. If your message is longer than 160 characters, you'll get dinged for two.

SMS has become a great revenue builder for wireless phone service providers. .20 per message? You can spend a couple bucks just figuring out where you want to eat dinner tonight. With the number of messages surpassing **2 trillion**, that's a lot of money to be made off of us suckers. Good thing we have a package plan.

Text messages are convenient, but I think they're overpriced. Think about it. 160 bytes, max. So for .20 per message, you're being charged at least **\$1,310 per megabyte** by your service provider! That's ridiculous.

The solution, at least for internet-enabled phones (e.g. iPhone, Blackberry) is IM! If you're already paying for internet service, why should you have to pay for text messages, too?

My Blackberry came with several IM clients, which I use often. However, I can't use them with my iPhone friends, because their iPhones didn't come with an IM client. True, they could get a third party app, but I doubt any of them will do it.

I just find it a little irritating, that's all.