



**Using  
Mobile  
Technology  
on Your  
Campus**

By  
**Shawn Radley**  
OnCampusText (MA)

**CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**   
**Programming**™

[www.naca.org](http://www.naca.org)

**SEPTEMBER 2012**

Vol. 45, No. 3

**I**N TODAY'S WORLD, STUDENTS ARE MORE ON THE GO THAN EVER BEFORE AND NEWS IS SHARED INSTANTLY VIA FACEBOOK AND TWITTER. Most students' lives revolve around their cell phones, which are now much more like computers that happen to be able to make phone calls.

According to Symantec, more than 85% of all email received in the US is spam (Schwartz, Nov. 12, 2010). Students have started to tune it out or delete it altogether if it isn't something they are expecting.

According to Mailer/Mailer, the average open-rate for emails sent in 2012 was about 19% (media@mail, July 2012, and O'Malley, July 23, 2012). This means that 81 out of every 100 emails you send out are never even opened, and that is scary.

At the other end of that spectrum, according to a variety of industry sources, 97% of all text messages sent are read by the recipients (Wagner, V., July 20, 2011, and Technology and Marketing, Dec. 14, 2011). When was the last time you deleted a text message without reading it? On most smartphones, the body of the text even appears in the preview screen. Texting is instant and direct communication with your students in the way they communicate most often.

During the past 18-24 months, mobile technology has reached a point where affordability and simplicity of use have allowed just about anyone to use texts to reach their fans or customers. What would have cost tens of thousands of dollars a month just a few years ago and was used only by huge entities like *American Idol* and Coke® now costs less than an order of color posters for an event.

There are a variety of ways any campus programming organization can use mobile technology to engage students where they spend a good portion of their day—on their smartphones! Have you considered ways to include mobile technology in your marketing mix so you can reach students more effectively and better promote your campus events, such as:

- **Text messages?**
- **Polling students?**
- **Contests?**

As with anything you use to promote events on campus, these are just part of your marketing strategy and can be used in conjunction with posters, social media, email, word-of-mouth, etc. Mobile technology is just another effective tool you can use to maximize the impact of your events on campus.

### **Text Messages**

For today's college students, text messages are the primary way they communicate. The average student sends and receives almost 2,500 texts per month. Compare that to less than 500 minutes a month talking on their phones (which is what the devices were originally created for, right?) (nielsenwire, Dec. 15, 2011).

Here are a few ways your program board can incorporate texting into its marketing:

#### **1. Start a text list.**

In 2012, this may well be the easiest way to reach your students. The available software programs make running a text list as simple as writing an email. Your students text a keyword (for example, SCOPE, LSUCAB, SAPB, URISec) to a short code and they are automatically opted in to your list. It's that easy. You then include your text list info, TEXT COLLEGE to 63566, for example, in all of your on-campus event marketing materials (posters, newspaper, radio, etc.) for the entire year in order to drive signups.

#### **2. Send your students relevant, timely information.**

Don't overload or spam them. Start out by sending a message once a week and gauge your unsubscribe rates. When your students get in the habit of seeing a text from the program board every Tuesday listing that week's events, they will start to look for and expect it.

#### **3. Send specific texts about events.**

For example, you have a great comedy show on Wednesday night. Which do you think will get more reaction—a poster hanging in the student union with the comedian's picture and name on it or a text message with a clickable YouTube link showing a two-minute clip of the comedian's stand-up routine? It is much easier to know if someone is funny when you can watch a performance sample. The same applies to music. Ask the band that is performing on campus if you can give access to an mp3 for your text list of students before the event. Send everyone a link to download the free song the day before the show and they will have a better idea if they want to attend.

Students today are used to immediacy in everything they do. They live their lives in real time, deciding what to do on a particular night an hour or two in advance, based on what their friends are doing. Most have the technology available to watch video and listen to music on their smartphones, so why not use this technology to help familiarize them with the artists you bring to campus? Students now decide what to do on Wednesday night on that very day, not two weeks prior when they see your posters hanging in the student center. Using the instant delivery of text messages can help inform your students and create more success for your events.

### **Quick Texting Facts**

- 97% of all texts are read, most in the first 15 minutes after being sent (Harris, J., Feb. 16, 2012).
- The average person in 2012 checks their cell phone 100–150 times per day (Harris, J., Feb. 16, 2012).
- In a recent survey of college students, 90% admitted to sleeping with their cell phones and 92% said they had their phone within arm's length 24/7 (Lenhart, A., Sept. 2, 2010).
- More people in the world own a cell phone than a toothbrush (Mobile Marketing Association, April 14, 2010).
- More than 95% of students say they text every day (Factbrowser.com).
- 62% of those surveyed would rather lose a wallet full of money than their cell phone (TeleNav).
- 2.5 BILLION texts are sent every day in the US and, by 2015, that number is expected to grow by 50%. (CTIA Blog, May 17, 2012)

### **Polling**

We all remember the days of polling students by taking out an ad in the school newspaper with a "cut-out" poll students would complete and drop off in the program board office. Okay, maybe current students don't, but many advisers surely remember them. Believe it or not, there are still some schools that use this "technology," as well as newer versions such as Survey-Monkey, etc.

Why not use mobile technology to poll your students in real time via text message? You send out a question to your list, including multiple-choice answers, and recipients respond via text. Sounds easy, right? Well, with today's mobile technology, it is. You get almost instantaneous, real-time feedback/results as your students text their responses. Most of your students grew up in the *American Idol* generation and they are accustomed to using their cell phones for voting and polling.

Do you have a "Campus Idol" or Battle of the Bands you hold on campus every year? If so, you can now use mobile technology to run text-based voting for your events, just like your students are used to seeing on TV. It happens in real time, is accurate, and you can watch as the votes come in on any computer.

## NACA's Use of Mobile Technology

At the 2012 NACA® National Convention in Charlotte, NC, NACA used text message technology to send daily schedule updates to delegates. Approximately 30% of the overall delegates opted into the program.

A poll was sent to the 407 people on the list asking that if an educational session, "Using Texts to Promote Your Campus Events," was added, would they or someone from their delegation attend?

Within 20 minutes, 174 people (43%) responded. Consequently, an educational session that did not appear in the Convention Program, on Facebook or in a Twitter feed, etc., a session that was announced only via text message, was added to the schedule on 40 minutes' notice and attracted nearly 50 people. In fact, it was one of the better-attended sessions during that block. The session did not exist at noon, yet by 2:15 pm, almost 50 people had changed whatever prior plans they had to attend the session based on a text message.

A similar session was offered this spring at the NACA® Northern

Plains Regional Conference, and an even higher percentage of delegates responded. This illustrates the power of and immediate results that can be gained using text message technology. By delivering an educational session that interested delegates via mobile technology, the regional conference was able to create a successful event with less than an hour's notice.

NACA's use of mobile technology in these examples resulted from a partnership with OnCampusText. This partnership will also be in place during the 2012 fall regional conferences. Delegates attending the conferences can get daily text updates by using the following texting instructions:

**NACA® South: TEXT NACASOU to 63566**  
**NACA® Central: TEXT NACACEN to 63566**  
**NACA® Mid America: TEXT NACAMAM to 63566**  
**NACA® Mid Atlantic: TEXT NACAMAT to 63566**  
**NACA® Northeast: TEXT NACANE to 63566**  
**NACA® West: TEXT NACAWST to 63566**

## Contests

We have all seen "text to win" type contests and promotions, as they have become a very effective marketing tool for companies like Coke®, Pizza Hut and McDonald's to drive brand loyalty and acquire new customers. Again, why can't your program board use these technologies, as well? Actually, you can use a variety of contests and prizes to help drive students to join your list. Some of the ideas we have seen schools successfully use include:

- 1. Ticket upgrades:** Hold a pair of front-row tickets or meet-and-greet passes (if you can arrange them) for your big spring concerts. Put up signs for people to read as they enter the venue to say, "TEXT SCOPE to 63566 for the chance to Win Front Row Tix tonite!!" Right before the show starts, the winner gets a text notifying them how to get their ticket upgrade, and everyone has been opted into your text list.
- 2. Free stuff:** We all know how much students like free stuff. Free pizza at events, cupcakes, etc. Help drive students on to your list by using your text list for giveaways. When students text in at an event, they get an auto response telling them to "show this text for your free \_\_\_\_." You can also include these in your text blasts promoting an event: "First 25 people to show text get a free \_\_\_\_." Your students get free stuff, you get their number opted in to your list and it's a win-win.
- 3. Orientation:** Work with your orientation leaders to make sure they include your text list marketing in their orientation events. When you have a room filled with 100 incoming freshmen and the orientation leader tells them to "TEXT SCOPE to 63566" to get weekly texts about all the program board events happening on campus all year, it is much easier to opt them in then than waiting until they arrive in September and trying to track them down at that point.

## Mobile Technology Not Going Away

Mobile technology and cell phones aren't going away. They are not a fad. In fact, it's likely almost every single one of your students will have the same cell phone number at graduation as they did when they first got to campus. Once you have them opted in to your list, you can keep them informed about events for all four years! It will take time to grow your list and opt students in, though.

By including mobile and text technology in your marketing mix, you can keep your students better informed about events, as well as get their feedback about them, and that helps your program board in creating a more successful presence on campus!

## References

- CTIA Blog. (May 17, 2012). CTIA wireless industry indices report: Now available. Retrieved from <http://blog.ctia.org/2012/05/17/indices-report/>.
- Factbrowser.com. Facts tagged with texting. Retrieved from <http://www.factbrowser.com/tags/texting/>.
- Harris, J. (Feb. 16, 2012). Average person glances at their phone 150 times per day. Techcraver.com. Retrieved from <http://techcraver.com/2012/02/16/average-person-glances-at-their-phone-150-times-per-day/>.
- Lenhart, A. (Sept. 2, 2010). Cell phones and American adults. Pew Research Center: Washington, DC. Retrieved from [http://pewinternet.org/%7E/media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP\\_Adults\\_Cellphones\\_Report\\_2010.pdf](http://pewinternet.org/%7E/media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Adults_Cellphones_Report_2010.pdf).
- mailer®mailer. (July 2012). Email Marketing Metrics Report. Retrieved from <http://www.mailermailer.com/resources/metrics/2012/open-rates.rwp>.
- Mobile Marketing Association. (April 14, 2010). Industry leaders discussed possibilities of more consumer centric mobile marketing campaigns. Retrieved from <http://www.mmaglobal.com/news/industry-leaders-discussed-possibilities-more-consumer-centric-mobile-marketing-campaigns>.
- nielsenwire. (Dec. 15, 2011). New mobile obsession: U.S. teens triple data usage. Retrieved from [http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online\\_mobile/new-mobile-obsession-u-s-teens-triple-data-usage/](http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/new-mobile-obsession-u-s-teens-triple-data-usage/).
- O'Malley, G. (July 23, 2012). Email: Open rates down, CTR trend up. MediaPost News. Retrieved from <http://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/179347/email-open-rates-down-ctr-trend-up.html>.
- Schwartz, M.J. (Nov. 12, 2010). Spam down in October: Symantec. Dark Reading. Retrieved from <http://www.darkreading.com/security/news/228200813/spam-down-in-october-symantec.html>.
- Technology and Marketing. (Dec. 14, 2011). Text SMS open rates are impressive. Retrieved from <http://textsmscellphonemarketing.blogspot.com/2011/12/text-sms-open-rates-are-impressive.html>.
- TeleNav. (Aug. 3, 2011). Survey finds one-third of Americans more willing to give up sex than their mobile phones. Retrieved from <http://www.telenav.com/about/pr-summer-travel/report-20110803.html>.
- Wagner, V. (July 20, 2011). Opt-in text marketing – What's not to love? E-Commerce Times. Retrieved from <http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/72904.html>.

## About the Author

**Shawn Radley** is the owner of **OnCampusText (MA)**, a marketing company that assists program boards in reaching students via mobile technology. Involved in NACA for almost 20 years, Radley has worked in the college market as an agent at Don Law/Live Nation (MA), as well as serving as a partner in Developing Artist Booking (MA), before launching OnCampusText in 2011.

