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SMS messaging has a bright future

Businesses confidence in SMS messaging continues to increase as messaging industry revenues are forecasted to grow despite the global downturn in the markets.

This was the general consensus voiced at the 2009 Global Messaging congress held recently in London. The congress hosted mobile industry players from across the globe and looked to the future of mobile messaging.

“As an electronic communications medium SMS’ing has revolutionised how businesses get their message to customers, clients, suppliers and staff. We are encouraged to see that the consistent uptake we have been experiencing is set to continue,” says Dr Pieter Streicher, managing director of BulkSMS.com, a global mobile messaging company headquartered in Cape Town.

Today, SMS messages can be sent to more than three billion people worldwide. In 2008 a total of six trillion SMS messages were sent globally. According to statistics put out by the Mobile Message Analyst, an Informa Telecoms & Media research service, the revenue from standard and premium rated SMS messaging was \$82 billion in 2008. This mobile messaging revenue is forecasted to grow and reach \$110 billion by 2013.

According to Streicher, “The sustained growth of SMS messaging attests to its key role in modern daily life where it is used for personal and business communications. To date, it has been the most successful communications medium since e-mail came on the scene in the 1990s.”

Much of the SMS messaging revenue forecasts are attributed to person-to-person (P2P) messaging where consumers send an SMS from their cellphone to another. However, there is a trend toward the growth in the application-to-person (A2P) industry which focuses on providing communication solutions to large and small enterprises as well as NGO and public sector organisations.

These A2P solutions are driven by third parties who offer a wide range of customised or self-service applications for the sending and receiving of SMS messages. Their messaging solutions link directly to the mobile network operators. Unlike, P2P messaging, these solutions allow for the sending of SMS messages from a computer over the Internet to a cellphone, and vice versa where an incoming message can be sent from a cellphone to a computer programme.

Streicher concludes that, “In our current economic climate, businesses looking to send bulk SMS messages using an application service provider like ourselves have much to gain in quickly getting their message out to targeted contacts and saving on their telephone bill. And as market research has indicated, with SMS messaging still on the up there is much room for businesses to grow their use of this ubiquitous communications channel.”