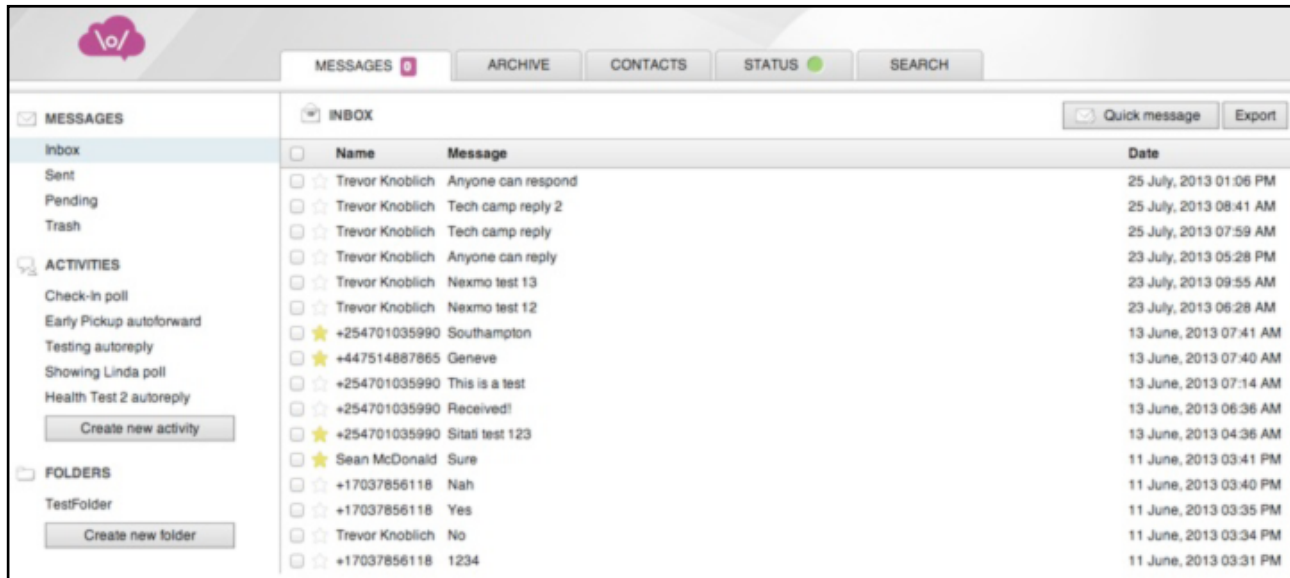


FrontlineSMS and FrontlineCloud in the Philippines Response to Typhoon Haiyan

Social Impact Lab are the makers of FrontlineSMS and FrontlineCloud, technology that makes it easier to do powerful things with SMS. Our platforms let you send, receive and manage messages, collect data, organise contacts into groups, run polls and surveys, and run your organization.



FrontlineSMS is free, open-source and downloadable from our [website](http://www.frontlinesms.com). It uses a USB modem to send and receive messages via the mobile network and does not need the Internet.

Good for:

- Quick set-up in places without an internet connection or mobile data
- Inexpensive - you just pay for the USB modem and the SMS you send

Limitations:

- Sends and receives up to 8 messages per minute, as it uses a device
- Runs on your laptop, so make sure you back up your data
- No easy remote access

Updates to come:

- A new version including support for SMSSync due out in the next 2 months

FrontlineCloud is our [web platform](http://www.frontlinecloud.com). It connects to the mobile network using an Android phone running SMSSync, or a web-based service like Twilio or Clickatell.

Good for:

- Quick set-up with an Android phone
- With a web-provider, you can message at scale, instantly
- Access your messages anywhere - good for HQ colleagues
- We securely host your data

Limitations:

- Web services can be more expensive, some charge you to receive. Our \$10 per month charge covers hosting & support
- Need internet to use the interface, although messages will continue to be received and automated functions carried out while you're offline

Updates to come:

- We are still working on a good two-way connection for the Philippines.

How FrontlineSMS and FrontlineCloud can be used

Local and national humanitarian organizations all over the world struggle to communicate with staff and manage information, particularly where connectivity is poor. Information gaps cripple effective management, staff performance and situational awareness. Supporting low-cost data collection, community engagement, operational management and accountability mechanisms could make a transformative difference:

- Improved community engagement and feedback mechanisms
- Staff coordination
- Information-gathering and management
- Alerts



A woman in Isiolo, Kenya checks her phone as a distribution carries on in the background. Credit: ActionAid Kenya

Case study: In Isiolo, Kenya, ActionAid Kenya staff

responding to drought found that communicating with staff and beneficiaries via SMS saved everyone time, made staff more productive, built stronger relationships with communities and reduced field trips in an insecure context. Children no longer have to leave school to search for their parents when relief trucks arrive. The community warned ActionAid when they were displaced by conflict, and relief distributions were able to continue. Communities are enabled to take charge of the services provided for them, and organizations can do more, and be closer to the people they help.

A community member says, "There's a big change now. Long before, food used to stay overnight because there was no communication. Now we get information immediately, even when the trucks are still in Isiolo. We are aware that food is arriving soon, and we get ready for distribution." (ActionAid/FrontlineSMS case study, forthcoming)

Support for users of FrontlineSMS in the Philippines

- Let us know who you are on [this forum thread](#) or by emailing info@frontlinesms.com.
- If you need information on the status of the mobile networks, let us know and we'll get you the information or put you in touch with the right person. Keep an eye on the [GSMA's disaster response page](#), too.

What we need

- People to translate FrontlineSMS into Tagalog
- We are looking for a good two-way connection via a mobile network operator or web-based SMS provider (like Twilio) for FrontlineCloud. WorldText offers virtualized SIMs but the pricing is likely to be prohibitive and the turn-around times are lengthy. We are already integrated with Twilio. We would be up for integrating with any relevant provider (i.e. with an affordable service and coverage in the affected regions, network functioning permitting) with an API. No revenue share required. Services we'd ideally like, in order of priority:
 - 2-way local number messaging
 - Short codes
 - Reverse billing

FrontlineSMS users in the Philippines

The Philippines is home to the third-largest group of FrontlineSMS users in the world, according to the data from this year's annual survey. Some of you have told us who you are:

- Monitoring of the National Elections in 2007
- Philippines Red Cross was using to coordinate some disaster responders right before the Typhoon - no word since
- Molave Development have been supporting expectant mothers in Roxas, on Mindoro, with information about safe motherhood since 2010
- The United Methodist church has run FrontlineSMS training workshops for their community
- Environews.ph are already working to support improved information getting to communities hit by the storm.
- The World Vision Speed Evidence platform is using FrontlineCloud
- We know there are others we're not aware of – if you'd like to be listed here please let us know in the thread or by emailing info@frontlinesms.com.

Case study: *Radio is still the 'killer app' in much of the world and is often used in disasters to reach large numbers of people with familiar voices, cheaply. In the Haiti earthquake, local DJs like Carel Pedre were a crucial source of information. First Response Radio has deployed FrontlineSMS in many emergencies to turn radio from a one-way medium to a two-way medium. In one 6-week response, they got 1800 calls and texts.*

Resources

- **Our Data Integrity Guide** is intended for FrontlineSMS users designing, implementing, and monitoring their programs with data integrity concerns in mind. An increasing number of users transmit sensitive information using SMS, which makes questions of data quality and integrity more important than ever. This guide addresses the resulting data integrity considerations of confidentiality, authenticity, availability, and usability of information transmitted using FrontlineSMS. http://www.frontlinesms.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/frontlinesms_userguide.pdf [pdf link]
- **Case study on Strengthening Participatory Organizations'** work in Pakistan to improve service delivery through beneficiary feedback mechanisms: http://www.frontlinesms.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/frontlineSMS_Pakistan_Floods_280513.pdf
- **Evaluations from Infoasaid** of the three FrontlineSMS projects they rolled out in Kenya in 2012: <http://www.infoasaid.org/research> and a **draft case study** on the ActionAid Kenya programme
- **Humanitarian blog posts and writing from the FrontlineSMS team and users:** <http://www.frontlinesms.com/category/sectors/humanitarian/> and <http://www.frontlinesms.com/category/sectors/disaster-response-and-recovery/>

Case study: *In the 2010 southern Pakistan floods, aid agencies fresh from Haiti response and remembering using SMS in the NWFP in 2008 noted almost no use of SMS by the local population - because of low literacy levels, and also because the local dialect was written in a script whose character set wasn't present on most cellphones. One organization, PEPL, successfully used FrontlineSMS in that emergency by consulting the community to create a number-based feedback system that would work for them.*