# Technical Platforms for Mobile Messaging

Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action

| | What kind of messages can I send? | Where can I use it? | What will I need to get started? | How much does it cost? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Telerivet | SMS<br>MMS | Worldwide | Android phone, SIM card<br>Browser on PC or Smartphone | $10/month-$125/month |
| FRONTLINE SMS CLOUD | SMS | Worldwide | Valid email address and internet connection | $10/month |
| engageSPARK<br>SMS & Voice. Quick, Simple, Global. | SMS<br>IVR<br>USSD coming soon | Worldwide | Internet access and Android phone (optional) | TBD |
| VUMI | SMS<br>USSD<br>Gtalk<br>Twitter | Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa | Internet access and in some countries a SMS or USSD # | Free |
| VOTO | SMS<br>IVR | Worldwide with expertise in Ghana | Internet access | Pay as you go with free trial |
| InSTEDD<br>Innovative Support to Emergencies Diseases and Disasters | SMS<br>USSD<br>Voice<br>Twitter<br>Email<br>XMPP(Jabber/Gtalk)MSN Chat | Worldwide | GSM modem and computer, Android app, Skype, or SMS Gateway | Free |
| textit | SMS<br>IVR in beta | Worldwide | Android phone, SIM card, TextIt application | Free - $249/month |

Telerivet™

1. **What is Telerivet?**
   Telerivet is an innovative mobile communications platform that instantly connects businesses and organizations with their customers, employees, and community. No servers, programmers, expensive contracts, or shortcodes required. Using a cloud-based management system, Telerivet routes messages to and from any number of mobile devices, allowing you to reach anyone who has a mobile phone with SMS.

2. **What type of messaging protocols does this platform support?**
   Telerivet supports sending and receiving SMS, receiving multimedia MMS messages, and receiving notifications of incoming calls (aka "flashing" or "beeping"). You can interact with some existing USSD services (e.g. checking airtime balance, transferring airtime, etc.), but Telerivet doesn't support creating your own USSD services, and doesn't support IVR.

3. **Is the platform tied to specific geographic regions of the world or can you use it anywhere?**
   Telerivet's SMS platform works in any country and can be deployed wherever there is mobile service. Telerivet's cloud management system allows you to manage your account from any computer or Android phone, while giving your team a single point of access.

4. **Is the tool hosted or do organizations need to set up an instance of your platform on their own?**
   Telerivet hosts the service on Telerivet.com. However, in order to use an Android phone for sending and receiving SMS messages, an organization needs to set that up in house. Basically, the organization would just need to keep their Android phone turned on, charged, and connected to the internet as much as possible.

5. **Do you provide access to SMS gateways or do organizations need to negotiate with telecoms setup that infrastructure?**
   One unique feature of Telerivet is that it can turn an Android phone into an SMS gateway anywhere in the world, without needing anyone to negotiate with telecoms at all. Organizations can alternatively connect their own shortcodes with Telerivet, but in that case they would have to negotiate with telecoms themselves. In a limited number of countries, Telerivet supports using Twilio or Nexmo as SMS gateways as well.

6. **If hosted, how do participants get access to the service? Do you have any guides to help users get started?**
   Organizations can access the service by logging into the website https://telerivet.com from any browser on a PC or smartphone. The process is designed so that it's easy for most people to get started just by following the online instructions as they go along, but help is available at: https://telerivet.com/help.

7. **What are the technology requirements for using the platform? Do you need any specific hardware?**
   Telerivet's app is compatible with any Android phone on the market today (2.1 or higher, more than 99% of Android phones). Most organizations using Telerivet would need one inexpensive Android phone. Users who communicate with the organization over SMS can use any mobile phone and don't need a smart phone or internet access.

8. **How much does your service cost?**

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| Test | Free | 100 SMS/day | 10 contacts | 2#s | 200 API requests/day |
| Basic | $10/month | 1,000 SMS/day | 2,000 contacts | 2#s | 2,000 API requests/day |
| Standard | $30/month | 5,000 SMS/day | 10,000 contacts | 5#s | 20,000 API requests/day |
| Premium | $125/month | 20,000 SMS/day | Unlimited contacts | 20#s | 200,000 API requests/day |

9. **Do you have any case studies to share on how the platform can be used in the real world?**
   Yes, visit https://telerivet.com/examples for case studies.

10. **What is a realistic Time to First Message (TTFM) when using your platform?**
    About 5 minutes – you just need to register an account at https://telerivet.com/register, download and install Telerivet's Android app on your phone, and you're ready to go.

**Contact:** Website: www.telerivet.com Email: info@telerivet.com

FRONTLINE SMS CLOUD

1. **What is Frontline SMS Cloud?**
   Frontline SMS Cloud lets you easily send, receive, and manage SMS messages and data from anywhere in the world. FrontlineCloud makes life simpler with a quick set-up process, more ways to connect to mobile networks, and all of the sophisticated data management available through the cloud. It brings the convenience of the web to your text message communications, all for a low monthly rate.

2. **What type of messaging protocols does this platform support?**
   Frontline SMS Cloud supports SMS messaging.

3. **Is the platform tied to specific geographic regions of the world or can you use it anywhere?**
   FrontlineCloud can be used anywhere in the world.

4. **Is the tool hosted or do organizations need to set up an instance of your platform on their own?**
   Our hosted platform is currently integrated with three SMS gateways: Clickatell, WorldText, and Nexmo. We also expect be integrated with Twilio, and additional gateways will continue moving forward.

5. **Does the platform (hosted or not) provide access to SMS gateways or will participating organizations need to negotiate with telecoms in their regions to setup that infrastructure?**
   Currently, we support SMS. We are working to integrate additional protocols in the near future, particularly USSD for use with our Credit software.

6. **If hosted, how do participants get access to the service? Do you have any guides or information to help users get started?**
   Participants get access to the service by signing up online, we offer a free 30 day trial, and beyond that access is $10/month. Users access the platform through an online log in. We have an extensive knowledge base, also available on our website, to assist users in getting started and using the software.

7. **What are the technology requirements for using the platform (both from the organization side and the user side)? Do you need any specific hardware (dumb phone/smartphone, Android/iOS, Mac/PC, GSM Modem/Web based aggregator)?**
   Frontline SMS Cloud requires a GSM modem or cell phone and computer. Basic Frontline SMS doesn't require internet but Frontline SMS Cloud does.

8. **How much does your service cost?**

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| Nexmo Connection | $10/month | Additional charges apply |
| Clickatell Account | $10/month | Additional charges apply |
| World-Text | $10/month | Additional charges apply |
| SMSSync | $10/month | No additional charges |

9. **Does you have any case studies to share on how the platform can be used in the real world?**
   FrontlineCloud is a new platform and case studies are not yet available. A number of blog posts and case studies are available for our original platform, FrontlineSMS.

10. **What is a realistic Time to First Message (TTFM) when using your platform?**
    15 Minutes

**Contact:** Website: www.frontlinesms.com Help: https://frontlinecloud.zendesk.com/home

engageSPARK
SMS & Voice. Quick, Simple, Global.

1. **What is EngageSPARK?**
   EngageSPARK is a not-for-profit social business that will empower development organizations such as NGOs and governments to dramatically extend the reach and impact of their pro-poor programs. EngageSPARK will be the first solution that enables organizations around the world to easily and quickly launch comprehensive messaging, surveying, and decision tree programs focused on developing countries via SMS and Voice Calls.

2. **What type of messaging protocols does this platform support?**
   EngageSPARK will support SMS and IVR initially. In the coming months, EngageSPARK will add Airtime Transfer, USSD, Email, and Facebook.

3. **Is the platform tied to specific geographic regions of the world or can you use it anywhere?**
   EngageSPARK is designed to be deployed anywhere in the world.

4. **Is the tool hosted or do organizations need to set up an instance of your platform on their own?**
   EngageSPARK is a 100% self-service model. Customers sign up online and instantly start using the platform. We are in the process of building comprehensive "Help" functionality to assist our customers in using our platform. This includes having Templates that are pre-created; for example, we'll have a template for maternal health messages which will include the structure (weekly messages via SMS & IVR) and will also include sample content. We're also going to create guides, videos, and tutorials. EngageSPARK is a solution designed for those with limited to no technical experience.

5. **Does the platform (hosted or not) provide access to SMS gateways or will participating organizations need to negotiate with telecoms in their regions to setup that infrastructure?**
   EngageSPARK will include access to multiple SMS aggregators as well as telcos for Voice connectivity so that customers don't need to spend time doing that. However, our customers have the option of "BYOC" (Bring Your Own Carrier) where an organization can use their existing aggregator account, or use Android SMS Relay for SMS using their local SIM.

6. **What are the technology requirements for using the platform (both from the organization side and the user side)? Do you need any specific hardware (dumb phone/smartphone, Android/iOS, Mac/PC, GSM Modem/Web based aggregator)?**
   The only requirement for the organization is to have Internet access and be familiar with using a web browser. If the customer chooses BYOC with local SIM, then they'll need an Android for running the Android SMS Relay App. For the end user, they must have just a dumb phone that can do SMS and phone calls.

7. **How much does your service cost?**
   EngageSPARK will offer a tiered pricing plan designed to enable affordable access to non-profits and others with programs focused on scale and sustainability for social good."

8. **What is a realistic Time to First Message (TTFM) when using your platform?**
   Because the platform is hosted and we include telco connectivity, the TTFM is just a few minutes – assuming the organization has their content (SMS and Voice messages) ready.

**Contact:** Website: http://www.engagespark.com/ Email: http://www.engagespark.com/#contact-us

1. **What is Vumi?**
   Vumi is a USSD and SMS mobile messaging platform offering connectivity in Africa. Vumi serves NGOs, corporations, and entrepreneurs. Vumi Go is a software application that enables messages to be sent and received to and from mobile phones. Vumi Go can send and receive SMS, USSD, and Internet chat messages, like GTalk, Mxit, and Twitter. Vumi Go enables one way messaging from Vumi Go to mobile phone users as well as automated messaging in response to messages received from mobile phone users.

2. **What type of messaging protocols does this platform support?**
   Vumi supports SMS, USSD, Gtalk and Twitter.

3. **Is the platform tied to specific geographic regions of the world or can you use it anywhere?**
   Vumi is currently available in Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa.

4. **Is the tool hosted or do organizations need to set up an instance of your platform on their own?**
   Vumi Go is a hosted service.

5. **If hosted, how do participants get access to the service? Do you have any guides or information to help users get started?**
   There are three scenarios:
   1) In South Africa (SMS and USSD) and Zambia (USSD), organizations can use Vumi's codes
   2) In Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Rwanda, Vumi has connectivity but the organization will need to purchase their own SMS or USSD number which we'll then set up for them in Vumi
   3) In countries outside of those listed above, the organization will have to negotiate a contract with the regional aggregator. Once the agreement has been forged and numbers purchased, then we can set up the SMS or USSD numbers in Vumi.

6. **What are the technology requirements for using the platform (both from the organization side and the user side). Do you need any specific hardware (dumb phone/smartphone, Android/iOS, Mac/PC, GSM Modem/Web based aggregator)?**
   Vumi Go can be accessed by any up to date web browser.

7. **Do you have any case studies to share on how the platform can be used in the real world?**
   Vumi case studies are available at http://vumi.org/case-studies/.

8. **What is a realistic Time To First Message (TTFM) when using your platform?**
   Once you have an account, it takes a minute or two to define a message, select a recipient, and send the SMS.

**Contact:** Website: http://vumi.org Email: http://vumi.org/contact/

1. **What is Voto Mobile?**
   Voto Mobile is a suite of 3 integrated tools which facilitate mobile-based mass interaction. Voto provides a web-based, ready-to-run, pay-as-you-go service, which can be instantly accessed by any organization with internet access. Voto reaches all phones, no apps required, and offers both SMS and voice interaction (IVR). Voto may be used in any country, does not require participants to read or write or speak English.

2. **What type of messaging protocols does this platform support?**
   The Voto platform supports both IVR and SMS.

3. **Is the platform tied to specific geographic regions of the world or can you use it anywhere?**
   VOTO currently operates on two systems: our Ghana-based local service, and our international service. The Ghana service provides incoming and outgoing calls at local rates; the international service currently offers outgoing calls to anywhere in the world. If organizations outside of Ghana are interested in having access to incoming calls or local rates, VOTO could still provide two options: (a) a self-hosted platform with the same features (operational in less than one week), or (b) initiating hosted local service for long-term projects.

4. **Is the tool hosted or do organizations need to set up an instance of your platform on their own?**
   The VOTO platform is hosted and organizations do not require any set up; the only requirement is access to the internet. Organizations can access our services through our web apps (go.votomobile.org or cloud.votomobile.org). VOTO has recently launched an online forum to support our users as well as information pages on our training and community website at u.votomobile.org. In addition to these resources, our platform includes a wizard to walk new users through their first message. We have a VOTO staff dedicated to providing free, unlimited technical support to our users (via phone, email or skype). VOTO can also provide on-site training sessions to users.

5. **Does the platform (hosted or not) provide access to SMS gateways or will participating organizations need to negotiate with telecoms in their regions to setup that infrastructure?**
   VOTO's platform is ready-to-run and provides telecom connections. Organizations with their own telecom connections can request to use their own routes instead of ours.

6. **What are the technology requirements for using the platform (both from the organization side and the user side). Do you need any specific hardware (dumb phone/smartphone, Android/iOS, Mac/PC, GSM Modem/Web based aggregator)?**
   The only thing the organization requires to use VOTO's platform is internet access. On the user side, VOTO is able to make calls and send SMS to any type of phone including simple mobile phones.

7. **How much does your service cost?**
   Voto offers “pay as you go” service as well as a free trial of the platform.

8. **Do you have any case studies to share on how the platform can be used in the real world?**
   A number of case studies are available on current and past applications of VOTO including our maternal health project with Savana Signatures here: http://www.votomobile.org/portfolio/.

9. **What is a realistic Time to First Message (TTFM) when using your platform?**
   Users can send their first message minutes after creating a VOTO account with 5 minutes of free credit. In terms of beginning a project, the only delay is payment processing. Currently, our Ghana system supports online payment, whereas our international users must pay by check or bank transfer. However, we are hoping to launch an online payment system for our international platform in the coming month.

**Contact:** Website: http://www.votomobile.org/ Email: info@votomobile.org

InSTEDD
Innovative Support To Emergencies Diseases and Disasters

1. **What is InSTEDD?**
   InSTEDD has created an evolving platform of technology tools and services based on years of collaboration with our partners around the world. Our systems conform to a set of architectural principles that allow them to be used either as-is or as building blocks for larger solutions. These tools are completely free and open source, and available for anyone wanting to use them to improve the social impact and scale of their work. All our tools can be tailored to individual needs and integrated with other existing tools.

2. **What type of messaging protocols does this platform support?**
   For messaging applications, InSTEDD uniformly supports SMS, Twitter, eMail, XMPP (Jabber/GTalk), and MSN Chat. InSTEDD also supports a number of underlying protocols and proprietary vendor channels.[1]

   For voice applications a range of signaling and SIP protocols, VoIP as well as E1 lines and some cloud providers are all supported. Through the cloud we support Voxeo, Twilio, Skype, any SIP line, Callcentric, and custom gateways. For local installations (e.g. in a telco) we can process any signaling used through E1 lines. Our platform also supports USSD, and is useful when you want to have reliable transaction confirmation and not leave a trace on the phone.

3. **Is the platform tied to specific geographic regions of the world or can you use it anywhere?**
   It is being used worldwide; many countries use the cloud instance but some projects choose to have their own local deployment.

4. **Is the tool hosted or do organizations need to set up an instance of your platform on their own?**
   Organizations can choose. For SMS, cloud based services are often preferable as they yield the most reliability and scale at lower costs. This is true even for deployments where a mobile operator agreement is not in place. For voice, there are bandwidth factors to consider. If processing 3000 calls/day you may want to have that in the same datacenter as the mobile operator/distributor/IXP. Since it's the same tools that scale smoothly, we recommend to start with cloud services and then migrate as needed to self-hosted setups. Since the technology works, most customers need to iterate on the content and client interaction before scaling with good quality.

5. **What are the technology requirements for using the platform (both from the organization side and the user side). Do you need any specific hardware (dumb phone/smartphone, Android/iOS, Mac/PC, GSM Modem/Web based aggregator)?**
   Organizations can get setup with a GSM modem and a computer, Android app, Skype, or SMS gateways.

6. **How much does your service cost?**
   Using InSTEDD is free for any organization seeking to increase its social impact.

7. **Do you have any case studies to share on how the platform can be used in the real world?**
   Yes, examples of InSTEDD projects can be found here: http://instedd.org/our-work/projects/.

8. **Do you have any guides or information to help users get started?**
   Tutorials can be found here:
   http://ndt.instedd.org/2013/01/verboice-tutorials-part-1.html
   http://ndt.instedd.org/2013/02/using-verboice-with-skype.html

**Contact:** Website: http://instedd.org/ Email: info@instedd.org

[1] Channels: Clickatell, DTAC, I-POP, MSN, Multimodem iSms, POP3, QST client, QST server (including Android and Java Local Gateways), SMPP, SMTP, Shujaa, Twilio, Twitter, XMPP.

1. **What is TextIt?**
   At the core of TextIt lies Flow engine. With Flows, anybody can set up or modify a complex SMS application without the need of a programmer or expensive consulting company. Using a basic Android phone, you can launch your application instantly in any country while avoiding expensive set-up costs or external technical support.

2. **What type of messaging protocols does your platform support (SMS, USSD, IVR, etc)?**
   Currently we support SMS. Support for IVR is in beta phase.

3. **Is your platform tied to specific geographic regions of the world or can you use it anywhere?**
   TextIt can be used anywhere and works in any language and character set (e.g. Hindi, Arabic, etc..)

4. **Is your tool hosted or do organizations need to set up an instance of your platform on their own?**
   TextIt is a hosted solution, you simply pay a low monthly fee based on the volume of messages you send. We make our pricing public and transparent: http://textit.in/public/pricing/.

5. **If hosted, how do participants get access to the service? Do you have any guides or information to help users get started?**
   Anybody can create an account and test out the service for free. If they choose they want to go to scale, they can then upgrade their account instantly using any credit card. We offer videos to help organizations get started (http://textit.in/video/), and offer a variety of sample flows in every account to act as examples.

6. **Does your platform (hosted or not) provide access to SMS gateways or will participating organizations need to negotiate with telecoms in their regions to setup that infrastructure?**
   We recognize that this can be a burdensome process for many organizations, large or small. TextIt allows an organization to use a single Android phone as an SMS 'relayer' for their messages. For example a clinic would put a local SIM card in an Android phone, load the TextIt Android application and connect it to their TextIt account online. From then on they can send and receive messages through the web interface. In some countries (Kenya for one) we also facilitate users connecting a short code they have acquired, since in some cases this is the only way to have reverse billed (free for users to send to) phone numbers.

7. **How much does your service cost?**

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| **Gold** | $249/month | 15,000 messages | 5 logins | Email and skype support |
| **Silver** | $99/month | 5,000 messages | 1 login | Email support |
| **Bronze** | $39/month | 2,000 messages | 1 login | Email support |
| **Free** | $0/month | 100 messages | 1 login | Limited support |

8. **What are the technology requirements for using the platform? Do you need any specific hardware?**
   Administrators will need a modern browser and internet connection to configure their TextIt application on the website. They will also need to acquire an Android phone and SIM card to connect to their account. End users interacting with TextIt can use any phone that can send and receive SMS messages.

9. **Do you have any case studies you could share on how the platform can be used in the real world?**
   TextIt is still quite new so we are still gathering these, though it was inspired by custom software projects we built which showed efficacy. For example we built a pre-natal reminder system which was part of an RCT trial which showed improvements.

**Contact:** Website: http://textit.in/ Email: info@textit.in