

The first commercial text message was sent over the Vodafone GSM network in the United Kingdom on 3 December 1992, from Neil Papworth of Sema Group (using a personal computer) to Richard Jarvis of Vodafone (using an Orbital 901 handset). The text of the message was "Merry Christmas".¹

Originally intended for use by mobile phone operators and technicians, the SMS (Short Message Service) was launched commercially in 1995. It was soon adopted by young users as a cheap alternative to voice calls.

'Texting' has since become a way of life for millions of people. Over 57 billion messages were sent in the UK in 2007.

¹ Source: Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org>)

5000 texts were sent every second in the UK in December, 2007.

290m texts were sent on New Year's Eve.

570% The increase in total text messages sent in the UK between 1999 and 2007.

95% of 16-24 year-olds use text messaging regularly, each sending an average of 100 texts per month.

2.3 trillion texts are expected to be sent worldwide in 2008.

Source: Mobile Data Association (<http://www.txt.it>)

Joy of Txt began as a collection of personal text messages in 2002.

In 2006 these were published in a book and on joyoftxt.com.

The web site has since been expanded to include over 200 text messages from people all over the world.

This is the first-known exhibition of text messages and text message culture.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this exhibition.

The exhibition was greatly inspired by the work of Amsterdam graphic design unit Experimental Jetset. View their amazing work at <http://www.experimentaljetset.com>

Finally, thank you to my family, friends, and everyone who sent me a text while I was overseas.

Anthony Calvert
February 2008

Joy of Txt

<http://joyoftxt.com>
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Saturday 16 February, 2008
2pm-5.30pm

An exhibition of mobile phone text messages
Joy of Txt

Joy of Txt

An exhibition of mobile phone text messages

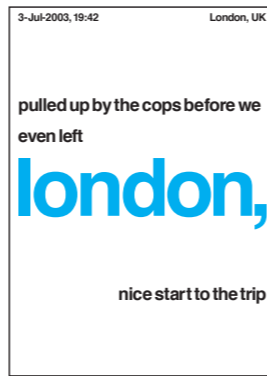
Saturday 16 February 2008, 2pm-5.30pm
Old Ginninderra Schoolhouse
Ginninderra Village,
Nicholls ACT



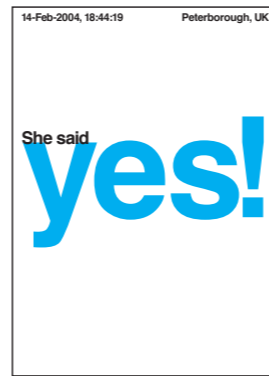
1 18-Jan-2003, 16:01
Canberra, AUS
This message was sent during the Canberra bush fires. Many houses in south Canberra had already been lost, and homes in northern Canberra (including my parent's house) were under threat.



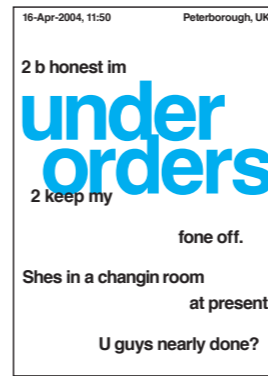
2 11-Jun-2003, 14:03
Aberdeen, UK
When travelling overseas the small luxuries in life are important. A comfortable bed, a hot shower, and watching Australian rugby in a Scottish pub with your father.



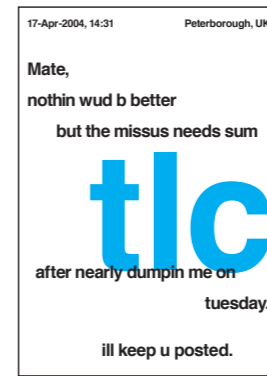
3 3-Jul-2003, 19:42
London, UK
A message from a friend as he left London. It was the first day of their three-month trip around Europe.



4 14-Feb-2004, 18:44
Peterborough, UK
This simple message was from a work colleague. Sent on Valentine's Day, he didn't need to say anything else.



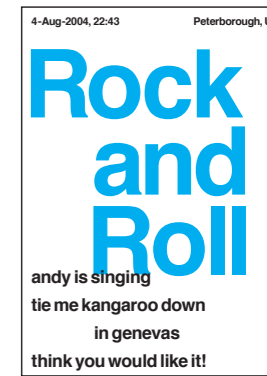
5 16-Apr-2004, 11:50
Peterborough, UK
A friend sent this stealth text message while shopping with his girlfriend.



6 17-Apr-2004, 14:31
Peterborough, UK
A message from the same friend when asked if he would like to go out for a few drinks over the weekend.



7 22-Jun-2004, 22:33
Wales, UK
This message was sent by a work colleague several weeks after he had moved back to his hometown in Wales.



8 4-Aug-2004, 22:36
Peterborough, UK
A late night message from a friend attending an open mic night. 'Rock and Roll Andy' was a local musician who regularly performed at the Geneva Bar in Peterborough.



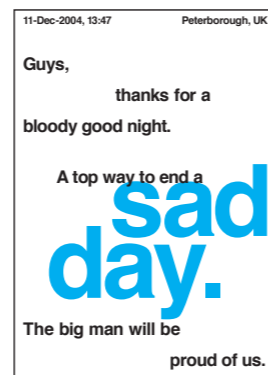
9, 10 20-Sep-2004, 10:14, 10:15,
Munich, DEU
Text directions to a friend's apartment. He must have been in a hurry, hence the miss-spellings and the message that followed one minute later...



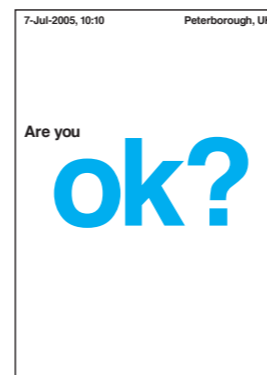
11 6-Oct-2004, 13:01
London, UK
A message from a good friend the morning after the night before.



12 29-Nov-2004, 10:29
Peterborough, UK
A close friend of mine was killed in a motorcycle accident in 2004. This message was from a mutual friend who heard about the accident on the radio.



13 11-Dec-2004, 13:47
Peterborough, UK
This message was sent after we had attended the funeral.



14 7-Jul-2005, 10:10
Peterborough, UK
On the morning of July 7, 2005 thousands of commuters were evacuated from train stations across London. Initial reports said that a power surge had caused two trains to collide. This theory was soon dismissed when images of a double-decker bus with its roof blown off appeared on television and the internet.



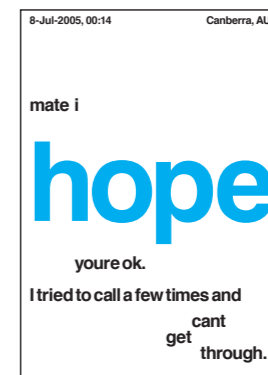
15 7-Jul-2005, 11:52
Peterborough, UK
As reports of a terrorist attack in London were confirmed, the mobile phone networks collapsed as millions of people tried to contact family and friends.



16 7-Jul-2005, 13:08
Stamford, UK
Throughout the day, Londoners were told not to leave their offices. We kept up to date with what was happening through the internet and television.



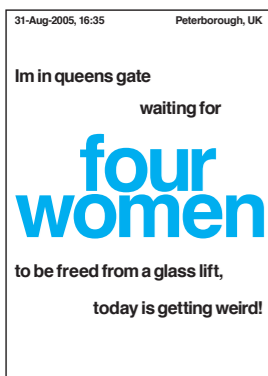
17 7-Jul-2005, 22:49
Canberra, AUS
Coverage of the bombings was broadcast live around the world. In some circumstances people in Australia knew more about what was happening in London than the people living there.



18 8-Jul-2005, 00:14
Canberra, AUS
As the mobile phone networks got back to normal, messages from Australia began to filter through...



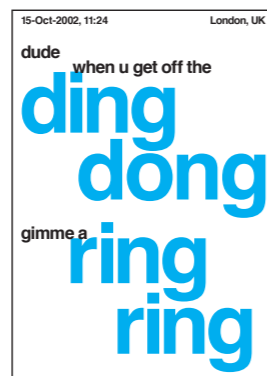
19 18-Aug-2005, 08:17
Peterborough, UK
A text message almost as bright as the sun that was shining outside.



20 31-Aug-2005, 16:35
Peterborough, UK
This message was sent from Queensgate shopping mall in Peterborough.



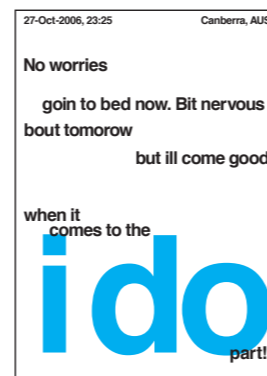
21 6-Oct-2005, 19:03
London, UK
Just another Thursday night in London...



22 15-Oct-2005, 11:24
London, UK
A poetic way of saying 'call me back'.



23 5-Aug-2006, 19:18
Queenstown, NZ
One of several entertaining texts sent by a friend as he was travelling around New Zealand.



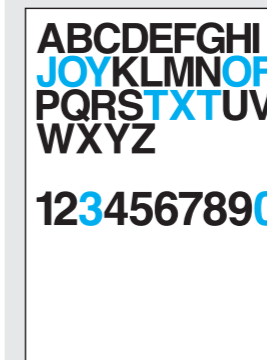
24 27-Oct-2006, 19:18
Canberra, AUS
This reassuring message was sent by a friend on the eve of his wedding.



25 25-Nov-2006, 04:02
Canberra, AUS
An intriguing message from a friend during a late night out in Civic.



26 3-Dec-2007, 01:25
Canberra, AUS
After spending five and a half years in the UK, this message was a welcome reminder of friends, family and home.



The themes of these posters (Reading, Writing, Arithmetic) are a graphic response to the location of this exhibition (a former schoolhouse).

Reading

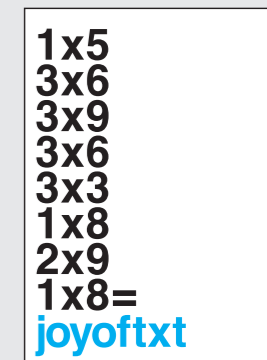
This poster was used as the invitation for the exhibition. It highlights the dual themes of the day (the Joy of Txt and a 30th birthday party).



Writing

On May 24, 1844 Samuel F.B. Morse sent the message 'What has God wrought' (Numbers 23:23, Old Testament) via telegraph. It was one of the first Morse code messages and a precursor to modern day text messaging.

This poster offers a slight twist on the original text... (Designed by Chris Doyle)



Arithmetic

There are many rhythms that go unnoticed during the course of everyday life. The beating of your heart; the sound of footsteps on the street and the tapping of keys on a phone as someone sends a text message.

This set of numbers is the sequence of keys to spell joyoftxt.