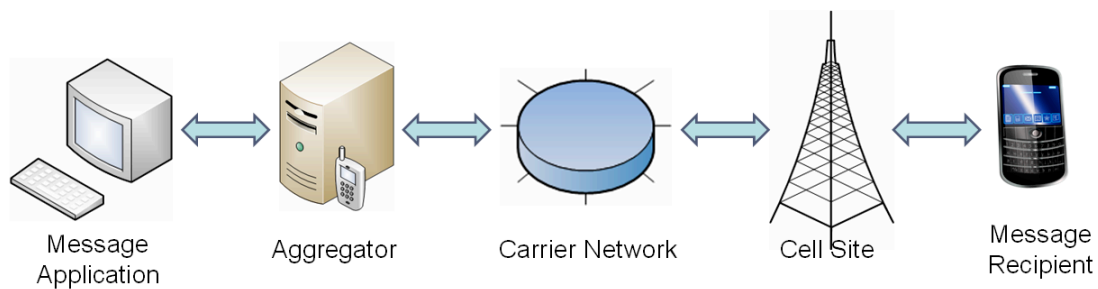

Life of a Text Message



Conceptually, sending SMS messages on a large scale has four steps. First, the user crafts a message to deliver to a recipient's, or multiple recipients' mobile device. There are several ways that messages are sent in this first step. Messages can be sent through mobile devices or web portals managed by service providers. In the second step, the message is submitted to the aggregator's SMS gateway. The aggregator is an SMS service provider that acts as an intermediary between users, recipients and the mobile carriers. The aggregator locates the recipient's carrier and transmits the message to the carrier's Short Message Service Center (SMSC). The SMSC is the infrastructure responsible for sending and receiving SMS messages in a wireless carrier's network. The SMSC delivers the message to the recipient.

If the target recipient is not available, the carrier's SMSC stores the message until a later time for subsequent retransmission. Thus, SMS operates as a store-and-forward service unlike a voice call. Each carrier has different policies about how long they will hold a message, but after that period of time expires, the message is deleted. Occasionally an SMS text message delivery is delayed, or not delivered at all, particularly if an end user's phone is turned off for an extended period of time. Some other causes are: network congestion, the destination handset is beyond the coverage area, the destination handset memory is full, or there are outages in the service provider or network infrastructure.