



## FRONTLINESMS

**Area of Focus:** Various SMS group-messaging applications

**How it works:** FrontlineSMS is free and open source software that can be used to send and receive SMS, in addition to other analytics and contact management features. The latest version (2.0) released in June 2012 is browser-based. Since it is open source and customizable, the program has been used to power several sector specific products, such as FrontlineSMS: Radio, which is tailored to the needs of community radio stations and FrontlineSMS:Credit, which is an interface for tracking mobile money payments.

Specific to agriculture, FrontlineSMS is being used in a number of different ways. In Cambodia, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture is using FrontlineSMS to compile weekly reports on animal deaths from village animal health workers by SMS. While in Tanzania, TechnoServe has used FrontlineForms—a mobile data collection app—to conduct post-training evaluations with small-scale coffee farmers. In Côte d'Ivoire, a local nonprofit organization called RONGEAD is using FrontlineSMS to share market information with cashew producers. And in Kenya, Radio Nam Lolwe is using it to conduct polls and engage with listeners during an agricultural show.

**Technology used:** Mobile phone, GSM modem, computer

**Implementer/Funder:** FrontlineSMS was first developed by Ken Banks of kiwanja.net. It has received financial support from the Omidyar Network, the Knight Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, Vodafone Americas Foundation and others.

**Fees:** The software is free to download and use for non-profit activities. Users pay for standard SMS rates.

**Primary Markets:** FrontlineSMS is currently in use in over 80 countries.

**Users:** FrontlineSMS has been downloaded over 27,000 times. A survey of 130 users in 2011 found that 18% of them were working in agriculture.

**Business Model:** Besides grant funding, FrontlineSMS generates revenue from consulting services for users who require additional design customization, training, or technical assistance. Improvements to the application and maintenance of its free community support forum are carried out by its staff and dedicated users.

**Impact:** Impact varies by project and usage. In East Africa, for example, a Catholic Relief Service project using FrontlineSMS found that farmers increased yield, increased their income and improved their livelihood.<sup>1</sup>

**For more information visit:** <http://www.frontlinesms.com>

**Sources:** Amy O'Donnell, Radio Project Manager, FrontlineSMS, August 13, 2012.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.frontlinesms.com/2012/07/31/catholic-relief-services-uses-frontlinesms-to-save-cassava-farming-in-eastern-africa/>

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