SMS 101 – Basics of SMS Technology

1. What is SMS?

SMS or Short Message Service is a text messaging component of most mobile device systems, the Internet, and telephones. SMS, today, is the most common means of communication. “Short” refers to the maximum size of the text messages that can be sent, i.e. you can send a message of up to 160 characters from one device to the other. Any message that is above 160 characters, will be split into multiple characters. SMS serves the purpose of sharing information from any location and at one’s convenience.

2. How does it work actually?

Your handset uses the Short Message Peer to Peer (SMPP) protocol to communicate with Telephone operators gateways. SMPP is used to send and receive messages from and to GSM, UMTS, iDEN, CDMA, and TDMA cell phones. This level-7 TCP/IP protocol allows fast delivery of SMS messages.

Once you type the SMS, it travels via radio waves to the control channel, which is the pathway that allows your cell phone to interact with your phone tower. This enables your cell phone to send and receive SMS messages.

3. What is MMS?

MMS or Multimedia Messaging Service is a way of sending messages that include multimedia content. Unlike SMS, MMS has the ability to send a wide variety of media such as a video of up to 40 seconds, an image, audio, or a slideshow of images. Most of the modern-day devices support MMS texting. MMS message can send rich media content to mobile devices and is

an effective and powerful tool for companies and business to show their loyalty towards their customers by keeping them informed about their products and services in a creative way.

4. How can SMS be sent from a PC or website?

SMS provider companies such as Screen-Magic directly buy SMSC connections from Telecom operators and submits messages to them. Telecom operators then sends the messages to end devices. Same works in the opposite way for Inbound numbers or VMN (Virtual Mobile Numbers)

5. What is TCPA/DND?

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) controls the outbound telemarketing calls to third-party generated leads. The TCPA prevents businesses from sending text messages, making telemarketing calls, and broadcasting pre-recorded messages without obtaining a prior express consent of the consumers.

SMS is a popular marketing channel, and anyone can send SMS to mobile numbers. Telecom regulatory authorities of most of the countries have brought in laws to control unsolicited messages. TCPA or DND are basic laws that prevent misuse of SMS for unsolicited usage. The National Do Not Call (DNC) or Do Not Disturb (DND) Registry is a specific provision of TCPA. It is created with an intension of restricting the businesses to send messages or make phone calls to consumers who have activated DND.