

THE BEST WAYS TO SEND MASS TEXTS

THE CHALLENGE

Text messaging has become a staple of business communication. It's personable and people view texts far more than they read emails, especially marketing emails.

So mass texting makes sense for companies that conduct large-scale communications and deal with large volumes of phone numbers.

But mass texting requires a list of phone numbers. Before you mass blast a phone list, you must ensure that you know which phone numbers are landlines and which ones are cell phones.

Otherwise, you'll be wasting text messages on phone numbers that can't receive them.



THE SOLUTIONS

So, you'll need separate lists for landlines and cell phone numbers. Depending on your needs, you can keep or discard the landlines on your list.

You'll need two things to separate landlines and cell phones:

1. A batch phone validator.
2. A list cleaning and aggregating tool.

Once you've got your lists separated, you can send mass texts in one of two ways. The texting method you use depends on what information you know about the phone numbers on your list. We'll cover both methods later on.

First, here's how you get your phone lists in shape for mass texting.

BATCH PROCESSING

The most important part of this process is a batch phone validator. Without it, you'll lose more time validating numbers one by one than you gain by mass texting.

At the very least, your batch processing tool needs to deliver information about the line type. The line type is what you'll use to create separate lists of landlines and cell phone numbers.

You may want to use a batch processing service that also delivers the SMS email address for each phone number. However, you only need this if you want to send texts via email, which we'll talk about later on.

THE SOLUTIONS

SEARCHBUG BATCH SKIPTRACE TOOL

Some batch phone validators are lenient about certain aspects of your uploaded list. But, there are a couple things to check before you upload your list to ensure that you get the results you want.

First, your list of numbers needs to be in a *.txt*, *.csv*, or *Excel file*. The file can contain up to 20 columns in any order. And the columns can be separated by tab, comma, or pipe. A header row with column titles is fine, but not necessary. A good phone validator will accept numbers in any format.

For example, these should all be acceptable formats: 7604547301, 760-454-7301, (760) 454-7301, 17604547301, etc.

Additionally, make sure that your phone numbers have enough digits. This is the most common mistake that creates invalid phone numbers. Phone validators might be nonchalant when it comes to number formats. But there are two things you need to clean up before you upload your list:

1. Remove duplicate rows.
2. Remove invalid records.

Both of these can be done in Excel. You can remove duplicates by selecting all the rows in your list and using the remove duplicates data tool.

Just click "Data," select "Data Tools," then click "Remove Duplicates."

Use the data validation tool to remove invalid phone numbers. Excel data validation is also in the "Data Tools" menu. Click on "Data Validation" to bring up the data validation dialogue. Specify the minimum number of digits each entry should have. For phone numbers the minimum should be ten. And fifteen is a safe number for the maximum digits if your phone numbers have no standardized formatting.

The same process can be completed in Google Sheets. The interface just looks different.

Once your list is cleaned up and uploaded, you'll usually get your results back in a comma separated *.csv* file. You can open and manipulate this file in Excel or Google Sheets.

SPLITTING YOUR RESULTS

Creating separate lists for landlines and cell phones can't be done with Searchbug alone. However, the file that Searchbug delivers is very easy to manipulate in Excel. There are tools for Excel, such as Kutools², that make the process of splitting your list based on the content of a cell very easy. But, it can be done for free. It's just a little more complex.

First, open the *.csv* file from Searchbug in Excel. Then, navigate to the developer tab and click "Insert." Select "Module" from the insert menu. Paste this code into the module window:

```
Sub parse_data()  
Dim lr As Long  
Dim ws As Worksheet  
Dim vcol, i As Integer  
Dim icol As Long  
Dim myarr As Variant  
Dim title As String  
Dim titlerow As Integer  
vcol = 1  
Set ws = Sheets("Master sheet")  
lr = ws.Cells(ws.Rows.Count, vcol).End(xlUp).Row  
title = "A1:C1"  
titlerow = ws.Range(title).Cells(1).Row  
icol = ws.Columns.Count  
ws.Cells(1, icol) = "Unique"  
For i = 2 To lr  
On Error Resume Next  
If ws.Cells(i, vcol) <> "" And  
Application.WorksheetFunction.Match(ws.Cells(i, vcol),  
ws.Columns(icol), 0) = 0 Then  
ws.Cells(ws.Rows.Count, icol).End(xlUp).Offset(1) = ws.Cells(i,  
vcol)  
End If Next myarr =  
Application.WorksheetFunction.Transpose(ws.Columns(icol).Speci  
alCells(xlCellTypeCon  
stants)) ws.Columns(icol).Clear  
For i = 2 To UBound(myarr)  
ws.Range(title).AutoFilter field:=vcol, Criteria1:=myarr(i) & ""  
If Not Evaluate("=ISREF("" & myarr(i) & "!A1)") Then  
Sheets.Add(after:=Worksheets(Worksheets.Count)).Name =  
myarr(i) & ""  
Else Sheets(myarr(i) & "").Move  
after:=Worksheets(worksheets.count)  
End If ws.Range("A" & titlerow & ":A" & lr).EntireRow.Copy  
Sheets(myarr(i) & "").Range("A1")  
Sheets(myarr(i) & "").Columns.AutoFit  
Next ws.AutoFilterMode = False ws.Activate  
End Sub
```

Now, modify just a couple of variables to get it to work for your purposes. *vcol=1* is the column that you're splitting the data based on. You'll need to change "1" to correspond with the column that has the information about whether the number is a cell phone or landline.

For example, in the data below, the column that has the information we want is the “D” column.

Set ws = Sheets(“Master Sheet”) defines which sheet you’re splitting. So you’ll need to change this to match the name of the sheet where the Searchbug data is.

Title = A1:C1 defines the range of the title.

Set these variables how you need them.

Once that’s done. Press F5 to run the script and split your list into multiple sheets based on the content of the LineType field. This will create separate lists of landlines and cell phones.

If you want to split your lists without using any code, create two copies of your list. Then, open

CONCLUSION

SENDING MASS TEXTS

The hard work is done. Sending mass texts is just a matter of feeding your list of cell phone numbers into your mass texting software.

But mass texting can be a time consuming process if you use the wrong tools. The best way to save time and standardize the end-user experience in your mass texts is to create templates.

SMS marketing is similar to email marketing. You need to segment your list so that your SMS messages are relevant and timely. Otherwise you’ll get poor results from your mass texting efforts.

You can use your email client to create templates and segment your list if your batch service provider delivered the SMS email addresses associated with your phone numbers.

If you want to use this method, check out our blog on sending text messages via email.

Mass text messaging is one of the most reliable customer outreach tools, so long as you’re doing it the right way. Batch processing is a quick, easy way to filter your phone numbers so that you can safely send mass text messages without hitting landlines, and get the most return on your mass texting investment.

If you’d like to get started with mass texting, check out our batch phone validator to identify cell phones and landlines, see which numbers are on the DNC list, and get SMS emails.



ABOUT SEARCHBUG

Searchbug is a professional online service for finding people and collecting verified contact information that enables businesses to generate reliable contact lists for customer outreach and sales engagement.

