Text Messaging – a technological first from a Prime Minister

Submitted by: Alison Hall PR

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It has recently been reported that Prime Minister Tony Blair is to connect with thousands of mobile-phone users, in a novel attempt to win over voters under 24 - the age group seen as the most committed texters.

However, this is not the first time that text messaging has been used in the political arena to communicate with potential voters. Earlier this summer, text messaging was chosen by Liberal Democrat London Mayoral candidate, Simon Hughes as the tool for his campaign 'Text Simon'. The party rolled out this 'new' political communication using Text Message Server (TMS). It was also reported that Labour controversially used text messages in the 2001 election - sending thousands of messages saying "If you don't give a XXXX for closing times, vote Labour."

Text Message Server, SMS software distributed by Avanquest UK (formerly known as Avanquest Kommunicate), brings this unique means of communication to the desktop via the LAN, without the need to deploy expensive communication hardware. Text Message Server runs as a set of services on a basic Windows NT/2000 server, with events logged in the NT/2000 event queue. Server specs are those for a standard NT/2000 OS install, clients must be Windows 9x/XP/NT/2000. Once TMS is installed, any organisation can communicate more efficiently with a mobile workforce.

The upsurge in SMS as a convenient and fast means of communication, coupled with low cost and accuracy, makes SMS a unique and confidential means of communication. Texting brings any campaign right up to date, enabling voters to text their questions and concerns.

Jeanette Fennell, TMS Product Manager at Avanquest UK, developers of TMS, comments "Engaging people into politics and voting is probably one of the hardest tests that politicians face in any election campaign. SMS is the favoured method of communication for the under 25s - the next generation of voters - so is an obvious choice."

Many varied organisations have taken advantage of the considerable benefits of PC-based text messaging, including ambulance, fire and other emergency services, insurance brokers, law firms, satellite telecommunications and rail transport companies.

Asked by the Capital FM DJ Margherita Taylor in November about his texting skills, Tony Blair confessed "My texting talents are poor, let's say they're underdeveloped," he added. "My children are texters. My daughter took me through it the other night. The predictive one I wasn't too bad on, but the other way - let's just say it would have taken me a very long time to send a very short message." However, almost 7,000 mobile phone users had "Texted the PM."

Further information about TMS, including user case studies, white papers and detailed product information can be found at: www.textmessageserver.com

About Avanquest:

Avanquest UK is part of the Avanquest global organisation. Formed in June 2003 by parent company BVRP Software Group, Avanquest is a network of companies offering a complete range of software publishing resources and a worldwide market to software developers from around the globe. Avanquest has a local presence on five continents and long-established relationships across all channels of distribution in markets covering nearly 90% of the world's total software sales. BVRP Software Group, a leading international software developer and publisher, was founded in Paris in 1984 and is listed on the Nouveau Marché of the Euronext stock exchange (ISIN FR0004026714). For additional information, please visit www.avanquest.co.uk.

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