

# NSPACE

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## XSOEVL. SPLAT. IIIWRIII?

I made these up, but I figure this is potential text-messaging lingo that Americans could use. Text messaging now has the potential to catch on in this country among mobile phone users since the six largest American wireless carriers have connected their networks.

America is expected to follow the rest of the world in this trend. But, I don't think it will happen because the Pepsi generation just doesn't want to type on their mobile phones, perhaps because their sausage-like fingers are incompatible with tiny phone keypads.

Nevertheless, while America lives its Big Mac-and-fries lifestyle, the rest of the planet is rushing around creating a whole new text messaging language. According to the Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association, one billion text messages are now sent around the world daily.

The technology, called SMS or Short Messaging Service, is like Internet chat, but for cellular phones. You use your phone to type in messages no longer than 150 characters. When you press the send button, the recipient is alerted

with the message almost immediately.

Since the keypad on a phone is difficult to use and you can only send about 150 characters, a short-form language of acronyms has evolved.

Here's a guide to the impromptu SMS terms I made up above. NSPACE = NSync's Lance Bass blasts off. XSOEVL = Axis of Evil. SPLAT = The Taliban. And the other pressing issue gripping the nation: IIIWRIII? = Should Winona Ryder go to jail?

However, there are thousands more and they are not just unique to the English language. Each country has developed its own SMS-speak. For example, Israelis greet each other with SHLM, short for "shalom." There are even terms used only among friends or a particular group who know the acronym's meaning. On-line dictionaries and books have sprouted up to explain commonly used SMS lingo. Some terms—like "thx" for "thanks" or "LOL" for "laugh out loud," are also used by email writers, Internet chatters and SMS users interchangeably. Rebecca Grinter, a research scientist at Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), found SMS usage among teenagers in the UK so fascinating that she co-authored a study called "y do tngrs luv 2 txt msg?" (Why do teenagers love to text message?) with fellow researcher Margery Eldridge.

If all this stresses you out. Don't worry, you're not going to have to rush out and memorize a million terms. Even heavy users of SMS don't know them all.

"The teens we studied sometimes do receive some messages that they do not understand from their friends," said Grinter. "We saw three instances of a text message being sent back to the originator asking them to explain something in the previous message."

Luckily, all you have to do is fire off a one-character message: Simply type "?"

Here are some more SMS terms, as listed by SMSglossary.com. (Andy Walker owns SMSglossary.com)

**4yeo** - For your eyes only

**A3** - Anytime, Anywhere, Anyplace

**BRBGP** - Be right back gotta pee

**CYR OFIS** - Call your office

**JstCIIMe** - Just call me

**LtsGt2gthr** - Let's get together

**MSULkeCrZ** - Miss you like crazy!

**PRW** - Parents are watching

**QT** - Cutie

**RINGL8** - Running late

**SWG** - Scientific wild guess

**WTMPI** - Way too much personal information

**X!** - Typical woman

**Y!** - Typical man

**UR TH WKEST LNK**

**GDBY** - You are the weakest link, goodbye