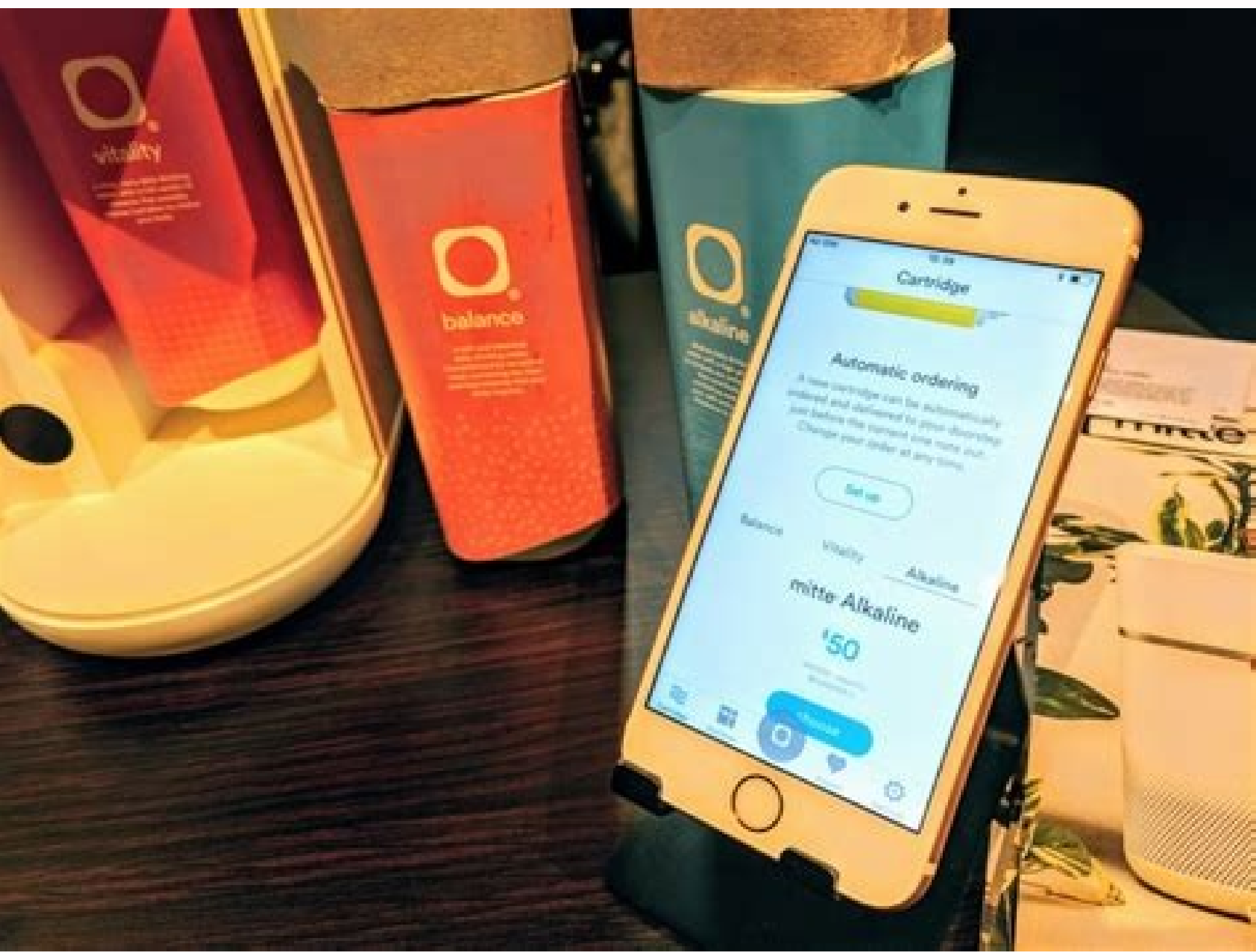
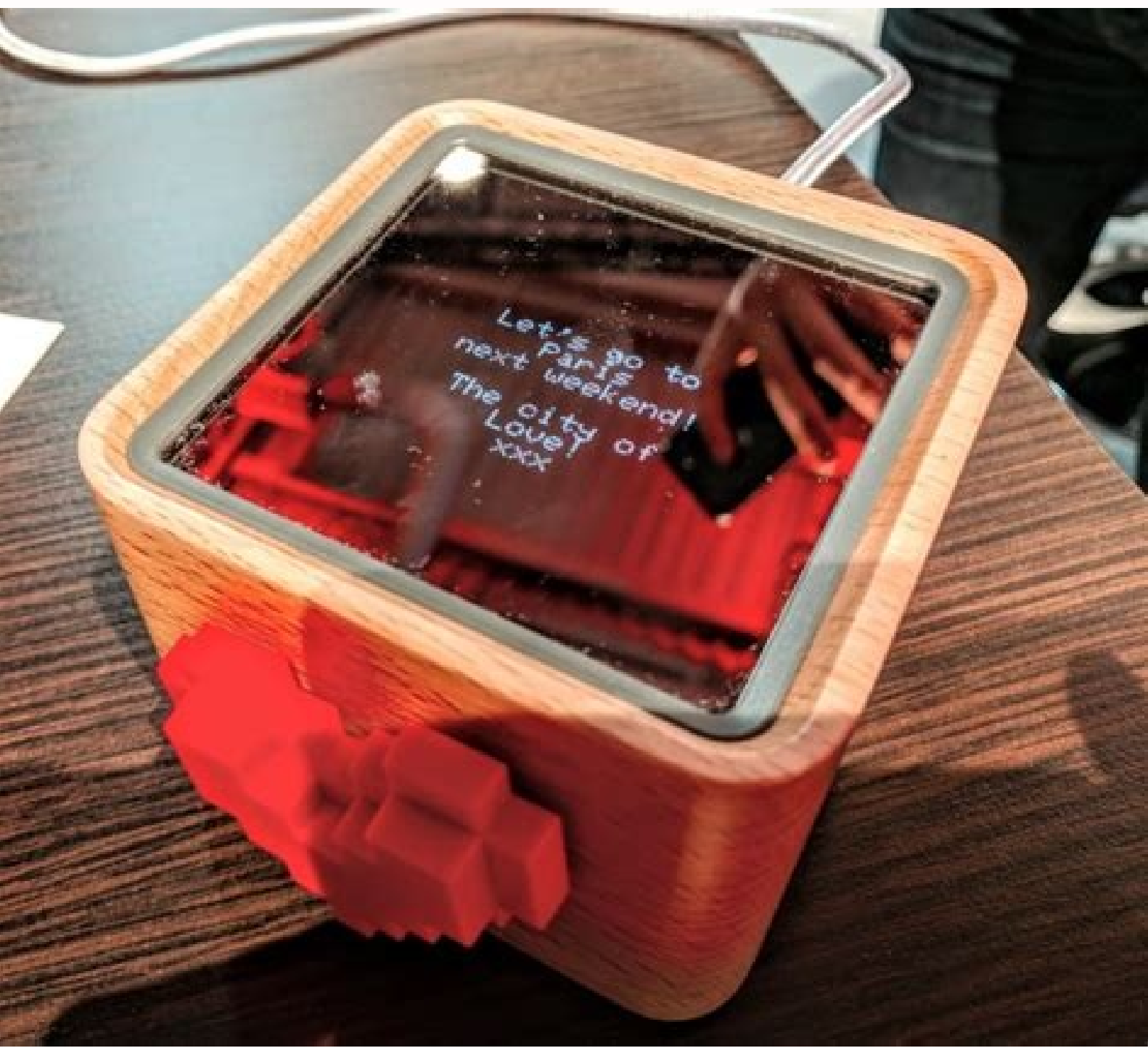


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Getting sms from unknown number. Send free sms unknown number.

Stay on top of the latest tech news with our free IT News Digest newsletter, delivered each weekday. Automatically sign up today! By Ben Charny Staff Writer, CNET News.com At least five countries have begun developing an alert system using cell phone text messages, a response to the catastrophic Asian tsunami that exposed flaws in present-day early warning schemes. Discussions among officials in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand, which were hard hit by the killer tsunami, along with France, have begun in just the last few days, according to a source familiar with the plans. The goal is to supplement older systems that proved little help for nations in the path of the immense waves in late December that have so far killed more than 140,000 people in 11 countries. Already emerging from the wreckage are tales of emergency workers and stricken residents using SMS (short message service) to aid in rescue efforts or keep in touch with loved ones. Sri Lankan officials have already used text messages to distribute information on how to get aid. More tsunami coverageTechnology's critical role in the aftermath "We hope to have something tangible in place by mid-April," said Greg Wilfahrt, executive vice president and co-founder of SMS.AC, a wireless e-mail provider that has relationships with carriers in 170 nations. The company has offered its infrastructure and carrier connections to become the basis of the SMS warning system. SMS.AC is also coordinating the talks between the various nations. Using SMS as an early warning system makes sense in theory, though it would be immensely difficult to carry out, according to analysts. Because cell phone owners typically carry their handsets with them, cell phones could be a much more suitable means of relaying information instantly to those in harm's way. Existing warning systems funnel warnings through various intermediaries and rely on televisions or radios. Yankee Group analyst John Jackson said the effort could have an enormous upside, given that most phones now are capable of sending and receiving text messages. However, coordination could be a big headache. "It could mitigate the capital expense of setting up sirens and other bits of early warning systems," he said. "But one of the major problems could be who's going to assure that message actually gets through?" There is precedent for such a system. Both Hong Kong and the Netherlands already incorporate SMS into their own emergency systems. To pull it off on a worldwide scale, all that's really needed is a database of telephone numbers to send messages to. But such efforts are gigantic and could take months to implement just on a regional scale. Many nations were caught unprepared for the tsunami, especially those that had not signed onto the existing tsunami early warning system. Also, a report published by the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Science, Technology and Innovation last week questioned whether tsunami early warning systems are being given enough attention. But the SMS effort raises some questions. As most wireless dialers are well-aware, cell phone coverage is spotty at best, and only gets worse when infrastructure is damaged. Roaming agreements, however, may help improve the system's range. Also, while nearly a third of the planet owns a cell phone, there are still billions of people who do not, which would leave them out of the loop with this system. By Joanna Davidson iBananaStock/BananaStock/Getty Images Unknown numbers make us curious. Who was it? Was the call important? Researching the source of the phone number can offer information about the nature of the call. The Internet offers free and fee-based search options to locate the phone number's owner and other related information. Even cell phone providers offer new ways to track unknown callers and glean information about them. Type the full number, including spaces, into a search engine such as Google, Yahoo or MSN. Often this will lead you to the website or advertisement of the phone number owner, especially if it's a business number. Visit the website White Pages and enter the number into the "reverse phone lookup" field. This will tell you if it's a cell phone or land line, where the service may be located, and sometimes will reveal the owner of the phone number. On that page, PeopleSmart also offers an option to look up the owner's name and address for a fee. On the Yellow Pages home page, click on the "by phone number" link at the top of the page. Enter the area code and phone number in the search field. Use free services such as 800notes to see if other people have received a call from the same number. Type the number into the search field and the site will bring up all other posts referring to that number, including any call information and what users

have discovered about the number. Search for number search services in a search engine. Services like US Search offer a profile and detailed information, such as the name, income and address of the number owner, for a fee. Search the number by texting it from your cell phone to 566587 (for a charge of \$1.99, or \$2.99 per month for unlimited searches, as of 2010). Perform a background check using the phone number as a starting point. Websites like Intelius offer these background searches with a reverse phone number look-up option. Reports include information on the phone number owner, phone carrier and carrier location. Ever since it went public, Twitter has been plagued by concerns about its slowing user growth. Facing mounting pressure from investors, who sent Twitter shares tumbling when its disappointing earnings were accidentally released before markets closed, the company today said it will change the way it calculates its monthly active users (MAUs).The change, of course, will mean that Twitter will suddenly have 6.4 million additional users.Twitter now has 302 million MAUs, up 18% from the first quarter last year. But the figure would be 6.4 million higher if the company counted what it calls "SMS Fast Followers," or people who sign up and access Twitter entirely using text messages. It wasn't immediately clear what these users would need to do to be considered active over time.In the coming quarters, Twitter said it will include these people among its MAUs. Looking at the last five quarters, the inclusion of SMS Fast Followers would have increased Twitter's monthly active user count by 1% to 2% each quarter.The change to how it calculates this metric could set up Twitter for disappointment. Based on the demographics of these users—largely people who live in developing countries and own feature phones—Twitter will have a hard time making money from them. Furthermore, many of Twitter's ad products, such as cards and app install ads, don't translate to text messages.And Twitter has been trying to convince investors to focus on other metrics, like how many see tweets regardless of whether they are logged in, so this move could serve to undercut that argument.But the company believes that building a relationship with these folks now will ultimately benefit its bottom line. Chief financial officer Anthony Noto said SMS Fast Followers are "relatively sophisticated," because they interact with a more technical interface compared with Twitter on smartphones and desktops. And though their revenue potential is low now, Twitter's betting on their upward mobility."In terms of the long term, we would hope these SMS Fast Followers will graduate to smartphone and desktop usage," said Noto. "As they do that, the magnitude of their usage will increase and our ability to monetize them, that will increase. But today, the monetization rate of SMS Fast Followers is going to be meaningfully lower than the monetization rate of [our current] users." Handcent SMS, an enhanced SMS and MMS application, lets you spruce up the look and feel of your phone's messaging function, and attach and send media files within IMs. The app gives you a lot of customization options. It puts text message conversations in a bubble design that some users will find easier to follow-and more pleasing to look at--than the default messaging system in Android. When you open Handcent on your phone, you see a list of your contacts, which Handcent has borrowed from Android's contact manager. You can choose an existing contact or hit a button at the top of the screen to start a messaging session with a new contact. After choosing a contact to message with, you see a screen containing the message stream from your most recent previous messaging session with that contact. You simply begin messaging and continue the stream. The interface includes a phone button at the top of each messaging screen, in case you decide to bail out of the messaging session and call the person. Handcent lets you change the background color of conversations, choose from several types of message presentations, and import new font packages to fancy up the lettering. A Handcent widget for your phone's opening screen tells you if you have new messages-and how many there are. You can customize alerts in various ways that will enable you to identify the source of a message at once based on an LED light, a vibrate mode, or a ringtone you specify for a particular contact. Handcent also simplifies the task of sending multimedia files through your messaging system. The app integrates with your phone's camera and image-view system to attach a photo (just-taken or in memory) to a message. Once you've attached it, the image shows up as a thumbnail in a new bubble in your conversation stream. I also found that adding videos and music to the conversation was a breeze, but the size limit on the multimedia files you can send is so strict that when I tried to send some relatively small MP3 files to a friend, I encountered a size-limit error message each time. Overall I found Handcent easy to use, and I'd recommend it for any heavy messenger who feels inhibited by Android's baked-in messaging system. The app is free and available from the Android App Market. It's ad-supported, but the only ads you'll ever see are at the bottom of the Settings page-so you can use the app on a daily basis and rarely be distracted by an ad. Nice.

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