Here’s what I’ve learned so far.

SMS and texting are pretty much the same thing. There are probably some technical differences, but for all practical purposes SMS just seems to be a more technical word for texting.

Texting is done by young people. The latest Nielsen numbers that I saw showed:

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| --- | --- |
| Age | Text messages per month |
| 13-17 | 3,417 |
| 18-24 | 1,914 |
| 25-34 | 928 |
| 35-44 | 709 |
| 45-54 | 434 |
| 55-64 | 167 |
| 65+ | 64 |

I doubt if these numbers will ever change very much. However, I do think there is a lot of difference between reading and sending a text. A lot of older people will probably enjoy a quick text message from their grandchildren, but they are much less likely to take the time to send a text message to anyone.

Cell Phones are used by all age groups. Older people have had no problems in using cell phones. They are quick and convenient. They offer tremendous safety. I know if I go out walking or driving around, I always want to take my cell phone with me, just in case of any sort of medical emergency or in case of any problems with my car. But if I have problems I’m going to call for help, I’m not going to text for help.

Twitter and Text Messaging are not the same thing, but they are pretty similar. If an older person won’t text, they probably won’t twitter. Older people are much more likely to use either email or Facebook. They will probably prefer to receive most of their Tweets on either email or facebook rather than on their cell phones.

Who is our audience? Young people or old people?

That’s a really big question. Our biggest audiences are always tour groups from local schools. They seem to range from grades 1 through 12, but those in grades 1 through 9 are most common.

Do we want to reach this age group? We definitely want them to visit the museum. We’d also like to get some of them to volunteer their time and energy to help the museum. Will Twitter help this? Maybe. I’m having a hard time thinking of a Tweet that would suddenly attract a group of young people to the museum. I suppose if there was some sort of special exhibit it might work, but most of our advertising for special exhibits is done through the newspapers. If we put out the word about a special exhibit on Twitter or Facebook, we just don’t currently have the readership to make it work.

I’m not giving up on Twitter at all. I’m going to keep working with it and try to figure out how it could help the museum. My first impression is that that I think its relative importance in the social media scheme is probably pretty low for museums.

Please feel free to share your ideas by posting a reply. Just posting a reply will get you one step further along in using social media.