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# Florida Trend

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## Final Frontier

Growth is coming to Florida's heartland.  
Who gets to say where it goes and how? pg. 48



## Sending a Message

**Text messaging is moving** beyond the 16-to-24 age demographic as companies and organizations find ways to use this quick tool to communicate, advertise and even stay in touch during emergencies. In its first quarter 2006 report, Verizon Wireless noted that 49% of all its customers use text messaging. They made 9.6 billion text messages, more than double the 3.6 billion during first quarter 2005. A 2005 study by Seattle-based M:Metrics, a consumer research firm for the mobile communications industry, found that 14% of wireless subscribers over age 65 use text messaging.

Text messaging is expanding as a communication tool in a number of applications:

**Text message advertisements.** When the NBA's Orlando Magic used text messaging to collect trivia answers, team officials were hoping to bolster

season ticket sales by targeting a text message coupon to fans. Because a text message ad can be intrusive — and can cost a dime to the consumer — it's tricky to do right. Laura Betterly, president and CEO of In Touch Media Group in Clearwater, says that in general, "It's annoying" but works when it is attached to something of value, maybe a free ring tone. She adds that it is best on an opt-in basis to a limited group.

**Text to pay.** In April, PayPal launched PayPal Mobile, a system that lets people in the U.S. and Canada who have PayPal accounts send money by phone. Other text-to-pay companies such as Text-PayMe, MobileLime and PayWi also are cropping up. Here's how it works: A friend settling a restaurant bill with another friend, for example, could text pay his share of the bill to his friend's PayPal account. PayPal's system is PIN-protected.

### TECH SPOTLIGHT

#### Pangolin

[pangolinsms.com](http://pangolinsms.com)

**WHAT IT IS:** A 20-year-old Orlando maker of laser display software. In 2003, it branched out into software that processes text messages and then displays them using video or lasers.



**HOW IT WORKS:** In a nightclub, the crowd can flirt, chat, request songs or vote in contests by sending text messages, which are flashed on a screen for all to see. The system can monitor the messages for unacceptable language either automatically or manually. It captures the wireless numbers of the message senders, usually on an opt-in (permission given) basis and can target the crowd with future text message ads or coupons.

**TARGET MARKET:** The company is targeting nightclubs and bars, trade shows, concerts, sporting events and churches.

**DEVELOPMENT TEAM:** Led by William Benner, president and chief technology officer, Pangolin has 13 software designers around the world.

**SALES:** Pangolin's annual sales are about \$1.2 million, says Benner, with about 10% coming from the text messaging applications. The basic software system sells for \$995; a high-volume application system with special features is \$2,395.

**THAT NAME:** A pangolin is a long-tailed, sticky-tongued tropical mammal found in Asia. It is similar to an anteater. Benner says he was looking for a unique name. 