Texting Clients Using Twilio

Twilio, a robust messaging software that offers a powerful instant messaging solution for companies large and small, works seamlessly with the FileMaker Platform to manage an otherwise roundabout method of contacting field staff and key partners. Read on to understand Twilio's API and how Revolution11 integrates messaging features for our clients by utilizing a few simple PHP requests.

Understanding the Twilio API

Twilio is a cloud communications (IaaS) company that allows software developers to programmatically make and receive phone calls and send and receive text messages using its web service APIs. The services are accessed over HTTP and are billed based on usage. Twilio is a well-known player and has a large installed user base.

Twilio API and FileMaker

In the past year or so, there have been posts from FileMaker developers using the Twilio platform. Jeff England wrote a great post here: designingfilemaker.com/2014/04/09/send-sms-easily-from-filemaker-13

Colibri Solutions has a comprehensive post that goes over an integration strategy using SmartPill: colibrisolutions.com/2014/05/23/filemaker-is-the-messenger-insert-from-url-is-not-just-for-containers

Revolution11 recently developed a solution for a client that allowed them to send small audio/video and other files in addition to a text message via Twilio. Similar to the examples above we are using an HTTPS request and the Insert From URL script step in FileMaker.

How To Use Twilio

1. Use the attached sample file after signing up for a free Twilio account here: twilio.com

2. Enter the Account ID, Token and Twilio phone number from your Twilio account in the corresponding fields in the demo file.

3. Add the mobile number you would like to send the SMS to in the "to_phone_number" field.

4. You can send audio or video by entering the URL of the media file in the media file field. It needs to be an unprotected site, you can use a public Google site to try the demo file. Read about the limitations on media here: twilio.com/docs/api/rest/media

The script in the demo file constructs an HTTPS request and sends it to the Twilio server, which processes the request sending an SMS using your Twilio phone number.

To Summarize

Digging into APIs such as the offerings from Twilio is well worth the effort. One script step and a carefully crafted HTTPS request can accomplish quite a bit once you understand the API. Stay tuned for a follow-up post where we will examine the Twilio API a little deeper and share some of our success stories.

Have Questions?

Revolution11 provides a free initial consultation. Contact us to find out more about how SMS and Twilio can benefit your organization. We would be happy to discuss your situation and needs.

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