

Connecting FrontlineSMS v2.2+ to Ushahidi

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Approximate time required to install, configure, and test: 15 - 25 minutes

Introduction

[FrontlineSMS](#) and [Ushahidi](#) are free and open source software tools, widely used by social change projects the world over. [FrontlineSMS](#) is used to enable users to send, receive and manage large numbers of incoming and outgoing SMS. [Ushahidi](#) is a platform for information collection, curation, and geospatial visualization. Used together, these tools can produce powerful results, with [FrontlineSMS](#) managing incoming mobile data and [Ushahidi](#) handling the visual representation.

Technical requirements

- [FrontlineSMS](#) software (free to download)
- A USB modem or phone and cable [compatible with FrontlineSMS](#) for receiving SMS
- The [Ushahidi](#) platform: Either the self-hosted [Ushahidi Platform](#) or an account and active deployment with the our cloud-hosted [Crowdmap](#) service
- A mobile phone for sending SMS to test
- An Internet connection

Step 1: Setting up

If you don't yet have an instance of [Ushahidi](#) or a [Crowdmap](#) online, [download the Ushahidi platform](#) or [launch a new Crowdmap](#). If you need help, please refer to the [Ushahidi Administration guide](#) in this wiki.

Download and install v2.2+ of [FrontlineSMS](#). Their walkthrough installer is like installing most any other software on your computer and should be fairly straightforward.

Step 2: Configuring the FrontlineSMS Ushahidi Add on

Log into your [Ushahidi](#) instance. In the "Addons" tab of your instance, you'll find the complete list of addons that extend [Ushahidi](#)'s core functionality. Find the 'FrontlineSMS' addon. We'll need to enable this for the two platforms for communicate, so click on 'Activate' on the right. Confirm that you wish to activate this plugin in the dialog box that appears by clicking 'OK'.

Dashboard Reports Messages Stats **Addons** Settings Manage Users

Addons [Plugins](#) [Themes](#)

Show all Inactive Active

ACTIVATE DEACTIVATE

<input type="checkbox"/> Plugins	Version	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/> CKEditor Adds CKEditor to message fields within Ushahidi <small>Author: Rob Baker Plugin Website: http://www.rrbaker.com/projects/ckeditor</small>	0.1	Activate
<input type="checkbox"/> Clickatell Send and Receive Text Messages Using Clickatell <small>Author: David Kobia Plugin Website: http://www.ushahidi.com</small>	0.5	Activate
<input type="checkbox"/> Contacts Manage contacts and contact groups within the Ushahidi administration <small>Author: Rob Baker Plugin Website: http://www.rrbaker.com/projects/contacts</small>	0.3	Activate
<input type="checkbox"/> FrontlineSMS Receive Messages from a FrontlineSMS Installations <small>Author: David Kobia Plugin Website: http://www.frontlinesms.com</small>	0.5	Activate

Now the FrontlineSMS plugin is active and we can almost connect the two platforms. Our final step is retrieving a key piece of information we'll need to plug into FrontlineSMS: the "Sync Key." You can find this by clicking the 'Settings' link next to the "FrontlineSMS" title of the addon. This will open the FrontlineSMS addon settings where you will find the Sync Key. Copy this key; we'll cover where to plug it in in the next step. (Note: You may ignore the "FrontlineSMS HTTP Post Link" URL as that pertains to the 1.X versions of FLSMS.)

Dashboard Reports Messages Stats **Addons** Settings Manage Users

Addons [Plugins](#) [Themes](#)

FrontlineSMS Settings SAVE SETTINGS

Step 1: Download Frontline SMS and install it on your computer ?

FrontlineSMS is free open source software that turns a laptop and a mobile phone into a central communications hub. Once installed, the program enables users to send and receive text messages with large groups of people through mobile phones. Click on the grey box to request a download from FrontlineSMS.com.

[DOWNLOAD FRONTLINE SMS](#)

Step 2: Sync with Ushahidi ?

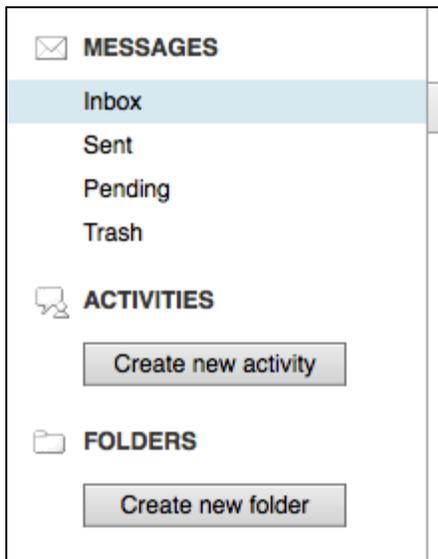
Messages received into a FrontlineSMS hub can be synched with Ushahidi. Detailed instructions on how to sync can be found [here](#). You will require the key and link below to set up the sync with FrontlineSMS.

Your Ushahidi Sync Key: **3VQDJAXB**

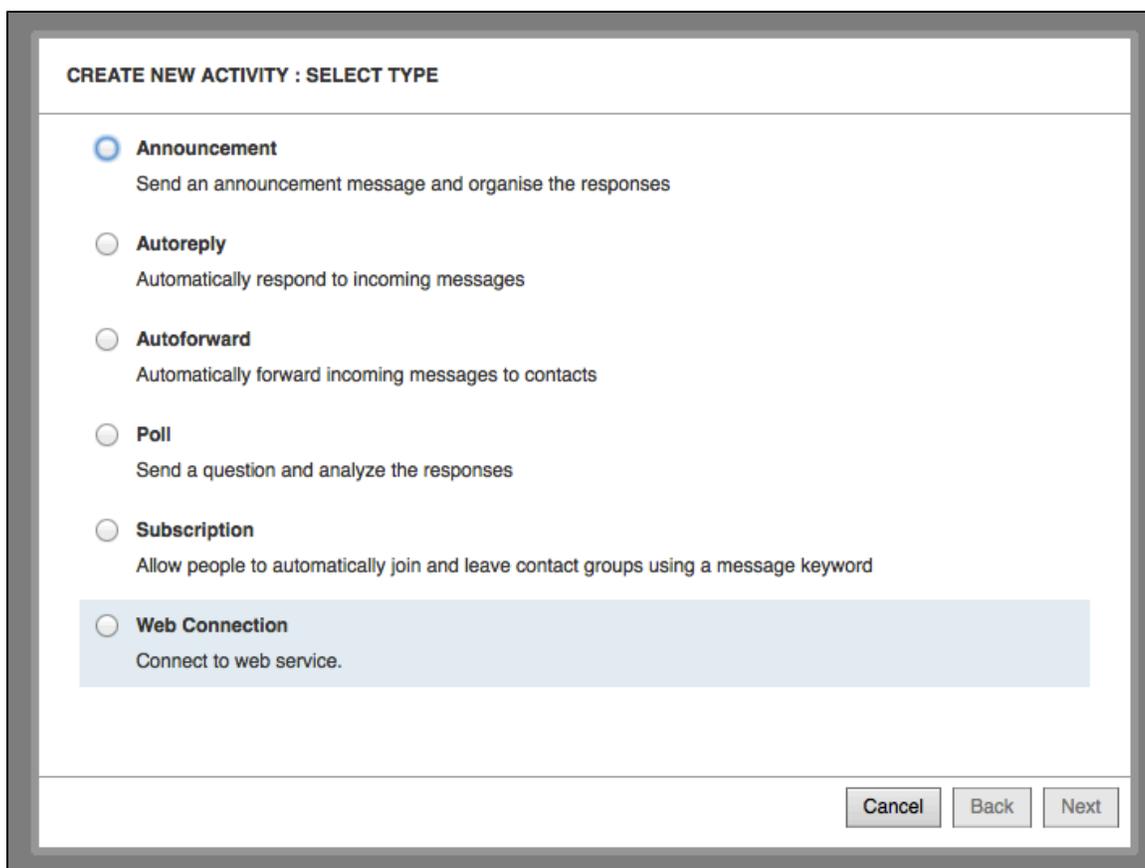
FrontlineSMS HTTP Post LINK:
[http://u26.dev/frontlinesms/?key=3VQDJAXB&s=\\${sender_number}&m=\\${message_content}](http://u26.dev/frontlinesms/?key=3VQDJAXB&s=${sender_number}&m=${message_content})

Step 3: Setup a new activity in FrontlineSMS

On the left sidebar, click on the "Create new activity" under the "Activities" section.



A new window will appear and you will be presented with a number of options. Choose "Web Connection" at the bottom of the list.



Selecting Web Connection will present a new set of options. Select "Crowdmap / Ushahidi" and click "Next" at the bottom right.

NEW WEB CONNECTION

Select Type	Select Web Service or application to connect to:
Configure service	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Crowdmap / Ushahidi Send messages to CrowdMap or to an Ushahidi server.
Expose API	<input type="radio"/> Other web service Send messages to other web service
Automatic processing	
Confirm	

Cancel Back Next

For Crowdmap:

Click the Crowdmap button and add the following settings: Complete your Crowdmap deployment URL and API key (the "Sync Key" from your deployment).

For Ushahidi:

Click the Ushahidi button and add the following settings: Add your custom URL and API key (the "Sync Key" from your deployment).

Once you've entered this, click the "Next" button at the bottom right and you'll come to some final configuration options.

NEW WEB CONNECTION

Select Type	Process messages automatically using a keyword (optional)
Configure service	<input type="checkbox"/> If people send in messages beginning with a particular keyword, FrontlineSMS can automatically process the messages on your system.
Expose API	
Automatic processing	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Process responses containing a keyword automatically
Confirm	<input type="radio"/> Do not use a keyword All incoming messages that do not match any other keywords will trigger this activity
	<input type="radio"/> Do not automatically sort messages Messages will not be automatically processed by this activity
	Enter keywords for the activity
	<input type="checkbox"/> You can enter multiple keywords separated by commas: <input type="text"/>

Cancel Back Next

On this screen, you have the option to configure FrontlineSMS to automatically move messages into your Web Connection and pass SMS reports up to Crowdmap. To automatically process SMS in this way select, "Process responses containing a keyword automatically."

Alternatively, you can select the "Do not use a keyword" option, which will result in all incoming messages triggering the Web Connection provided they do not match any other activities' keywords. Only one activity at a time can have this setting.

The third option, "Do not automatically sort messages," you can also disable automatic sorting altogether. With this setting you can still use your Web Connection's functionality by manually moving messages into your new activity from the inbox or any other activity or folder. This allows you to manually choose which incoming SMS get passed up to Crowdmap. When you have finished setting up your automatic sorting options, you can set your keywords. You can enter any number of keywords separated by commas. With this setting, any incoming message that starts with one of those keywords will trigger the Web Connection.

Once you've decided how to deal with incoming messages, click "Next" again at the bottom right.

NEW WEB CONNECTION

<p>Select Type</p> <p>Configure service</p> <p>Expose API</p> <p>Automatic processing</p> <p style="background-color: #e0e0e0;">Confirm</p>	<p>Name this web connection</p> <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> <p>Confirm details</p> <p>Service: Crowdmap</p> <p>Address: https://whatever.crowdmap.com/frontlinesms/</p> <p>Crowdmap/Ushahidi API Key: fidsiyfsdffb</p> <p>FrontlineSMS API Secret: (API Disabled)</p> <p>Keyword: None</p>
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On the final screen you will find a summary of all your selected options to confirm the correct settings before creating the activity. You will also be prompted to give a name to your Web Connection to make it easily recognizable from the list of activities on the messages tab.

When you've finished, click "Next." The dialog box confirms that the Web Connection has been created and you can click "OK" to close the window. This new Web Connection will appear in the left sidebar under "Activities." Clicking on the name here in the future will show the settings and any messages matching those filter settings (if any).

Step 4: Testing

Now that the platforms are connected, it's time to do an end-to-end test to ensure that messages received in FrontlineSMS will appear within your Ushahidi or Crowdmap deployment.

Begin by connecting FrontlineSMS to a [compatible device](#). Test that FrontlineSMS is receiving messages from your mobile phone or modem by sending a couple of SMS, being sure to include a keyword if you specified that. You should see the message come into FrontlineSMS in the "Messages" section, or listed within your activity. A report should then appear in your Ushahidi or Crowdmap installation as well.

If it is not working, read through the [user resources](#) section of the FrontlineSMS website and check the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Examples of FrontlineSMS and Ushahidi being used together

FrontlineSMS and Ushahidi have been used together in many powerful and inspiring ways including [to monitor elections in Nigeria](#); [to map harassment on the streets of Egypt](#); [to track incidences of violence against children in Benin](#) and [to demonstrate and challenge incidences of human rights abuse in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#). We hear from new users regularly who are keen to use the software together, and this resource is intended to make that process as easy as possible.

More Help

We hope that this was useful for you. If you have run through these steps and need further assistance or if you would like to add best practice tips to our guide and help other users with this process please visit

- [Ushahidi forums and community](#)
- [\[FrontlineSMS community forum\]](http://frontlinesms.ning.com/forum)