1. Overview – It is possible for MSI to implement a service to send texts to smart phones on an as-needed basis. These texts could contain small bits of information informing the user of actions they need to take and are unaware of.
2. Business Case – On some business lines it is necessary to get approval for actions outside the normal business rules one example of which is a repair that will cost the client extra money they have not previously authorized MSI to commit on their behalf. The approval process sometimes takes longer than necessary simply because the approver is not in the office. If we can shorten this approval lag time we can complete the work in less time and receive payment for the work in quicker. An application to notify the approver is simple and easy to implement. This application could be expanded to include our clients and could even be something we sell to them for a small fee.
3. Functional Design – Using one of the commercially available services such as twilio a windows service would be written to send these messages. This service could handle any text message MSI wished to send to someone. Another windows service would need to be written to monitor the conditions that trigger an approval needed condition. This second service would call the first and have it send the text message on its behalf. Other applications or services could be developed to call the texting service as part of their requirements.
4. Hardware – This solution has not special hardware requirements. One of our productions servers would work as long as it has access to the internet.
5. Cost – I looked at twilio <http://www.twilio.com/> and it seems that the cost is 1 cent for each sent message. If we charged $5.00 per month for this service that would cover 500 messages sent to that client. This seems like a good investment after the initial development cost.