

# Ideas & workflow for using GroundSource texting tool



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GroundSource is a texting service that offers a way to reach people who do not normally listen to public radio, thereby diversifying the voices and perspectives we feature.

## Basics

GroundSource is a texting tool. People interested in participating can “opt in” to the conversation by using a short code word.

GroundSource allows us to craft survey-like questions and send it out to the subscribers. The responses can help reporters gather more information and data on a given topic and connect them with potential sources for stories.



## 3 ways to use GroundSource

### Survey

Gather people’s thoughts on a topic.  
Ask yes or no questions or open-ended questions.

#### Benefits:

- It can supplement traditional reporting efforts for stories.
- It can help inform a talk show conversation (WILL, for instance, [uses GroundSource to gather potential listener questions/testimonies](#) for their talk show, The 21st).

### Breaking news alerts

Send push alerts and story links regarding breaking news events. These messages can be sent without any questions and are a way to keep your broader, non-listening audience informed.

#### Benefits:

- It shows your newsroom is on top of the breaking news .
- It’s easy to do.
- It broadens the audience for your story, especially for those not watching the news during the day.

### Gathering interest

Send out links to special projects, enterprise stories, investigations, or a story of high community interest.

#### Benefits:

- It’s a way to experiment with the rollout, beyond publishing a post and broadcasting. For example, you can break down the story by scheduling the sharing of different parts.
- It can start a relationship between the subscribers and the reporters working on the story.
- It’s a chance to ask for questions to continue the reporting.

## Make GroundSource grouping work for you

The keyword function allows you to establish a the word people will use to enter into the texting conversation.

You can have different conversations running at the same time and group sources together based on what they’re interested in.

The best way to keep your sources organized is to use the “tags” feature. Conversations related to coronavirus coverage can be tagged “COVID,” which will create a group of “COVID” sources.

# Working GroundSource into your editorial process

1

**Identify how you want to use GroundSource** (i.e. for a talk show, one topic, one reporter) Involve the GroundSource manager from the beginning of the story process.

2

## Create a rollout timeline.

For GroundSource to yield successful and useful results, it's important to establish a timeline that includes the following:

- **Marketing plan: Get the word out as much as possible**
  - Write a [digital story explaining how GroundSource works](#), why the station is using it, and how joining the texting exchange could benefit people. Make it clear this tool/process would allow people to contribute more meaningfully to our coverage, and it's an opportunity for them to receive coverage from the station.
  - Social media posts, airing promos on your station, placing ads in local newspapers, reaching out to local organizations, etc.
  - Promote on talk shows. The show host can promote the texting campaign by telling listeners the number and codeword to text.
  - Use GroundSource website embed that allows people to sign up by entering their phone number
- **Drafting messages/questions with Celisa or your GroundSource manager**
  - Think about the topic you want to focus on — voting, coronavirus, etc. — and what kind of information you're hoping to get from respondents. For instance, do you want to know how they're being impacted by a certain policy?
  - For survey-style conversations, it's important to include a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions. Start with simple, close-ended questions and then following up with open-ended questions.
  - Keep the questions simple; don't bog them down with unnecessary wordiness.
  - Sign up and test it yourself.
- **Publishing text exchange on GroundSource and start marketing rollout.**
  - Here's one example: For [KCUR's our first GroundSource texting exchange](#), we asked questions about their voting behavior prior to the Missouri primary on March 10:
    - "What qualities do you look for in a presidential candidate?"; "Do you plan on voting during the presidential primary"

3

## Close the loop and keep it going

- **Monitoring GroundSource**
  - Responses will be entered into a spreadsheet.
  - Decide how to get the responses to the right reporters and editors
  - Are there follow up questions to ask of the subscribers, or stories that you've published you can share?
  - Decide what's next.
- **Share with the subscribers**
  - Did you publish a story or include some of the responses on air? Share that with the subscribers.
  - Do you have more coverage plans? Share that
  - Maybe have the reporter and/or editor schedule a Q&A session with the subscribers
  - Ask what other topics you can focus on to get ideas on other threads.