

FEMA Comments on Multimedia Content in WEA Messages

Regarding the Matter of)	
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Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community-Initiated Alerting)	PS Docket No. 15-91
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Regarding the technical feasibility for requiring multimedia content in WEA messages:

It is technically feasible to require multimedia content in WEA messages. Today, many Alert Originators include links to images, audio files, and web content in their Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) messages. Often times these links are in the "resource block" of the CAP message, and do not appear in the WEA text. It would be a simple matter of updating the C-interface standards to allow the inclusion of these resources in the messages sent to the cell carriers for WEA distribution.

Regarding the current state of multimedia testing and standards development:

In an effort to make public alerts and warnings more accessible for people with disabilities and limited English proficiency the FEMA IPAWS Program enlisted the National Alliance for Public Safety GIS (NAPSG) to develop a set of simple symbols representing commonly used emergency message event codes. The NAPSG, with input from over 30, local, state, federal public safety stakeholders, including the DHS Geospatial Management Office and DHS S&T First Responders Group, published a set of symbols in 2017 ([https://napsg-web.s3.amazonaws.com/symbology/index.html#/subcat?Public Alert](https://napsg-web.s3.amazonaws.com/symbology/index.html#/subcat?Public+Alert)). The symbols are available as small picture files each representing a Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) event code intended to aid rapid recognition of an emergency message without the need for the viewer to be proficient in the English language.

Regarding the potential costs and benefits to public safety:

The costs to include multimedia content in WEA messages is minimal on the part of public safety. They would need to add a procedure to create or obtain the content if they don't already have one, but this is

not thought to incur much if any cost to public safety. There may be some modifications or updates required for alert origination software, but we have seen that some of the companies are receptive to customer feature requests. Additionally, FEMA has and will continue to support testing with alert origination software companies and provide feedback and recommendations for desired functions for improved alert and warning through IPAWS. The benefit to public safety would be immense. Multimedia alerting addresses a number of the challenges alert originators face today, such as:

1. Alerting people with access and functional needs
2. Alerting people with limited English proficiency
3. Relaying imagery or auditory information to reduce distractions while driving
4. Visually presenting evacuation routes, hazard areas, or storm tracks instead of describing via text

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the FEMA IPAWS Program Office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Lucero', with a stylized, flowing script.

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