



Survey Says! National EAS Test Accessibility Study

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Accessibility in Perspective

- American Red Cross responds to more than 70,000 disasters annually
- How can I get help in an emergency?
 - Will I be able to get the message
 - Will I know what to do or where to go
- Will it come in the mode of communications I use
 - Vision disability – voice over picture, weather radio
 - Hearing disability – captioning clear and readable
 - Cognitive & speech disabilities – AugCom devices

The Emergency Alert System

- **Federal Communications Commission**

Protect the public interest, ensure a fair market, encourage innovation while protecting the consumer.

- *Protect the Public Interest*

- Rules and regulations that aim to “Ensure Access by People with Disabilities to Emergency Alerts”



- **Emergency Broadcast System** 1950's-1994

- Technical and operational overhaul.



- **Emergency Alert System** 1994-present

- Flexible architecture for future expansion.

- **Next-generation EAS** rulemakings

- Proliferation of advanced technologies

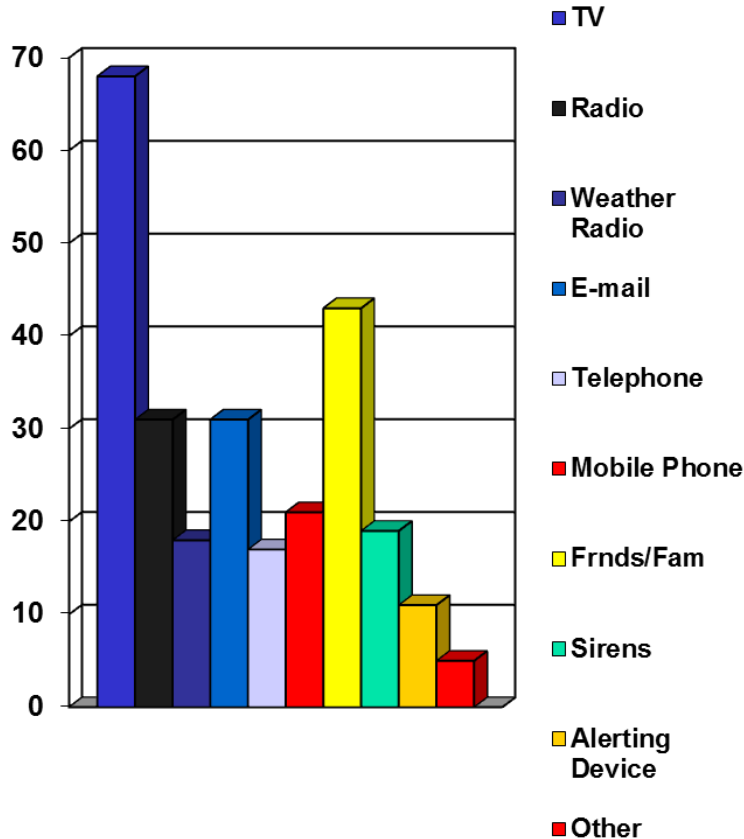


Alert and warning systems must provide equal access to emergency alerts

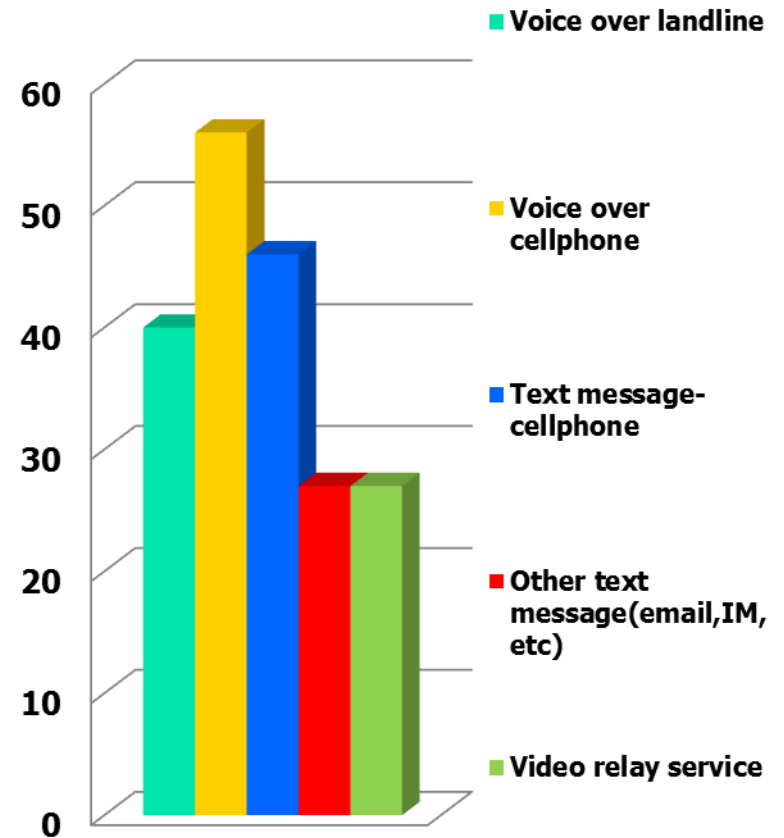


Emergency Access

How do you currently receive emergency alerts



How do you contact emergency services?



National EAS Test

- November 9, 2011 - First nationwide test of EAS
 - 30 second test message
 - Message was received by 88% of the EAS participants
 - Early report of problems (audio distortions, early termination of message, breaks in daisy chain)
- What was the public's experience?
 - Many received the message
 - Some got Lady GaGa instead
 - Others the Home Shopping Network

What about people with disabilities?

- Pre and Post-Test Surveys (on-line)
 - Conducted November 2, 2011 through November 18, 2011
 - Gauge awareness of EAS, in general; and the national test, specifically
 - Gauge accessibility of the system
 - 403 respondents with sensory disabilities
- 3 Focus Groups on National EAS Test
 - Deaf and hard of hearing (10) discussed the televised EAS message
 - Blind and low vision (6) discussed the televised EAS message
 - Blind and low vision (6) discussed EAS message via radio

Survey On-Line Results

- 81% had heard of EAS
- 82% were aware of the national EAS test
- 45.6% received the national EAS test message
 - 62.6% did not hear the alert attention signal
 - 70.3% did not hear the audio message
 - 53.8% did not receive the text crawl

EAS vs. Mobile Survey Responses

EAS (TV & Radio)

- Did not hear the radio attention tone:
 - 50% of low vision / 63% of hard of hearing
- Did not hear the television attention tone:
 - 47% of low vision / 27% of blind / 52% of hard of hearing

Mobile Alerts

- 33% of respondents had received mobile emergency alerts
 - 62% followed instructions given in the alert
 - 60% sought more information on TV

Focus Groups

90 minute discussion



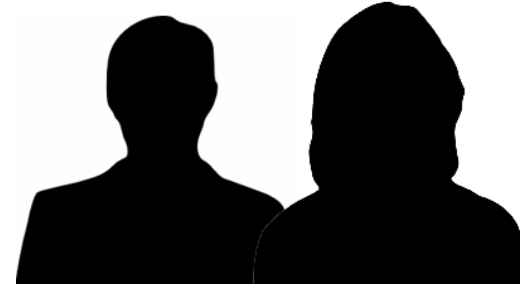
- The alert. The attention signal. The message.
- Alternative emergency alerting methods/technologies;
- Behavioral reactions to EAS messages (i.e. followed instructions, ignored, sought additional information, etc.);
- How EAS messages could be improved.



It needs a
spinning logo...

I hate the color,
how about Fuschia?

How could the EAS messages be improved? (regarding attention getting methods)



- I would prefer something flashing to let me know this is something different from regular TV or radio.
- People who are hard of hearing hear at different frequencies. If you're going to use something that's audio, use a wide range, low end and high end.
- Needs to be a message because we get these tones so often it is important to have some message explaining what is happening.

How could the EAS messages be improved?

(regarding including other technologies)

- Internet is here to stay...every effort should be made to have emergency alerts available over the internet, radio stations, all websites.
- I think it would be important to be able to get information on **cell phones**. We all carry them and use them.
- Some of us use **attention getting devices**, like strobes for when the phone rings. Is that practical?
- Have a prerecorded **ASL video** that would automatically come up just like captions or text. Important to have an interpreter on the screen signing the information for the deaf.



Access Barriers for Sensory Impaired

- TV broadcasts of alerts **inconsistent** in their use of audio
- Text crawl was **too small** and **too fast** to decipher
- Radio and TV broadcasts of alerts was **poor quality**
- Attention signal not in a **frequency** HoH can hear
- No visual **alert** mechanism
- Lack of awareness of **accessible options** (NOAA Radios, CMAS)

Recommendations

Survey Says...Receipt of alerts must be **timely, accurate, accessible and actionable** sources of emergency information.

- Conduct **extensive outreach** to people with disabilities regarding accessible options for emergency communications
- Provide **audio and visual formats of alert content** for all types of alerts
- **Standardize the appearance** of EAS messages and make mandatory compliance of the same
- **Reduce the speed** of the text crawl, **increase the size** of the text font and **improve audio** voice quality

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