



# TV, Radio, Mobile Alerting for Weather Emergencies – And the Winner is...

## Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference

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# Statistics in Perspective

- American Red Cross responds to more than 70,000 annually
- **54** million people have some type of disability
- By 2030 it will equal **20%** of the population

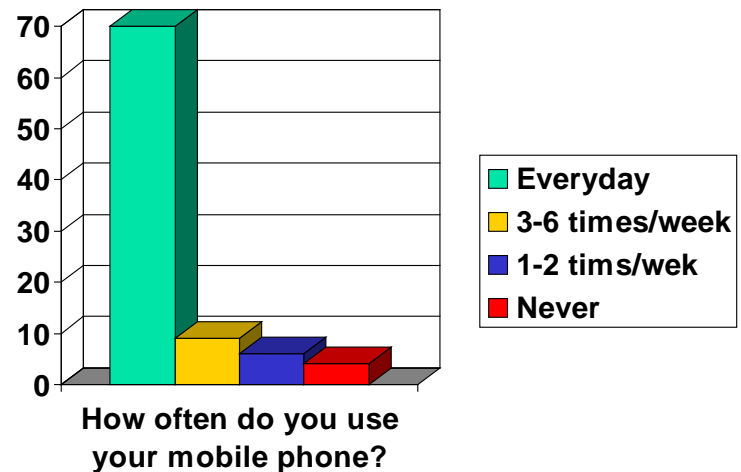
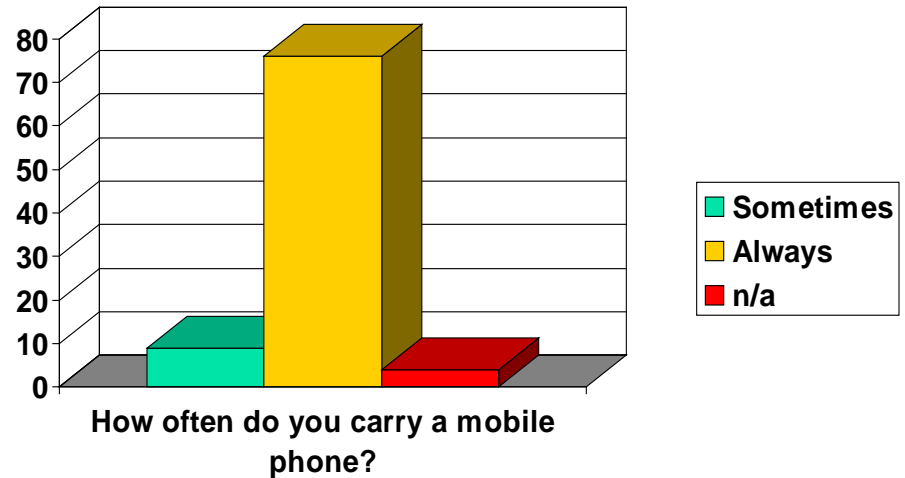
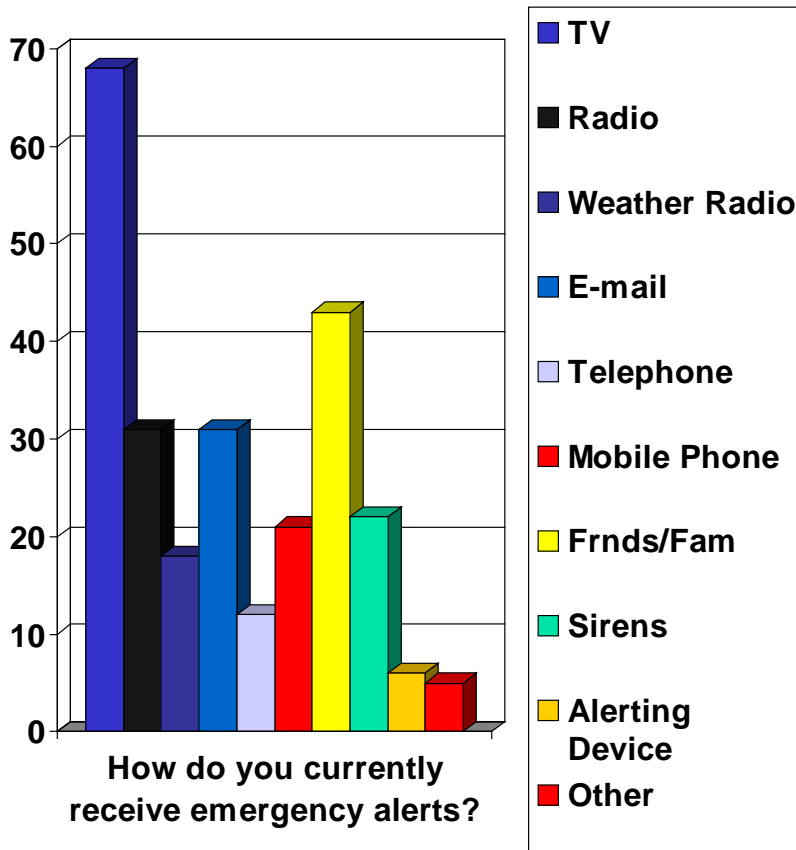


# Challenges for People with Disabilities

- Disabilities are diverse
  - abilities, situation, aging into disabilities
  - Not all disabilities are obvious
- Access to emergency alerts
  - Receiving the message
  - Ability to take action



# Access to Emergency Alerts



# National EAS Test

- 11.9.11 - First-ever 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

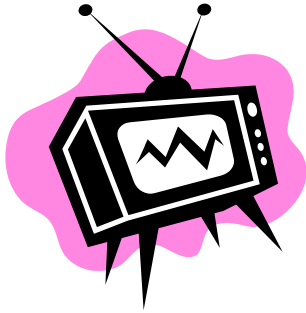
# What about people with disabilities?

- 3 Focus Groups on Accessibility of 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
- 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

# Survey 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 test crawl



# EAS vs. Mobile



## EAS (TV & Radio)

- Did not hear the attention tone:
  - 50% of low vision / 63% of hard of hearing
- Did not hear the 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





## 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



And the winner is...Receipt of alerts in the most user friendly, applicable and commonly used modality of the individual.

- 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 include a **visual alert mechanism** such as a screen flash
- Reduce the **speed** of the text crawl, **increase the size** of the text font and **improve audio** voice quality

# In the meantime...

- 63% of people with disabilities use social media
  - 22% have received public alerts via SM
  - 16% have verified public alerts via SM
- Facebook & Twitter Popular
  - Facebook: 11.6% receive alerts / 8.6% verify
  - Twitter: 4.6% receive alerts / 2.5% verify



The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white, lowercase, sans-serif font on a dark blue rectangular background.



*"Rather than trying to convince the public to adjust to the way we at FEMA communicate, we must adapt to the way the public communicates ... We must use social media tools to more fully engage the public as a critical partner in our efforts." ~ Craig Fugate, FEMA*

Contact Us: [www.wirelessrerc.org](http://www.wirelessrerc.org)

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