

Cooper Notification

Top Technology Trends for Emergency Communications

Due to the threats college campuses face and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) emergency response and evacuation requirements, there has been a heightened demand for Emergency Communications Systems (ECS). When conducting an online search for Emergency Communications Systems, more than 50 million results are produced for this dynamic and growing market. Whether upgrading current systems or a first-time shopper for an ECS, there's a large amount of information for inundated campus law enforcement administrators and security professionals to review and decipher. From indoor voice evacuation systems and outdoor high-power speaker arrays to automated voice dialing systems and SMS/text messaging, ECS technology is spreading like wildfire.

Campus law enforcement administrators and security officials are challenged with finding the right mix of emergency

communications systems to protect their personnel and community, but also with keeping up with the latest trends and technology and understanding local and national codes and requirements from the HEOA to the new ECS chapter in the 2010 edition of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 72 *National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code*.

System-of-Systems

With a variety of different emergency communications solutions available, one of the latest trends that law enforcement professionals are recognizing is the need for a System-of-Systems approach to emergency communications. There is no single technology that fits every situation. The NFPA 72 code states that relying on just one technology to do the job in an emergency could result in a relatively large population not receiving the message. The overall solution is to utilize



multiple communication systems that combine to produce a reliable and robust design, ensuring that information will successfully reach the affected audience. A System-of-Systems approach to ECS can include broadcasting alerts over indoor or outdoor mass notification systems; sending text messages and emails; distributing automated voice calls; and utilizing display signs, desktop alerts, and social media.

Integrated Notification Systems

Law enforcement professionals know all too well that launching alerts from multiple communication systems can greatly increase the time it takes to send and receive messages, leading to slower response times from first responders trying to decipher the appropriate actions for the crisis. This challenge directs us to a further trend, integrated emergency communications systems.

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Corporate Snapshot

Cooper Notification

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Designed to protect, alert and inform, Cooper Notification provides critical emergency communications for college campuses with integrated mass notification solutions.

With limited staff and multiple communication systems to launch, college campuses need an integrated emergency notification system with a simplified, single interface to launch all of the different systems and applications: in other words, one button to push. It allows emergency response personnel to focus on the emergency at hand without being slowed down trying to activate multiple systems.

Interoperability. Knowledge is critical in efficiently responding to emergencies. The more knowledge one has about a situation, the better he or she can respond. In addition to integrating multiple communication systems, an interoperable emergency notification system can provide a secure real-time information sharing framework, allowing facilities to communicate to other campuses as well as to local fire, police, and health departments for a better understanding of the emergency, enabling administrators to make more informed decisions when time is of the essence.

Another trend in mass notification system (MNS) is collecting data from external data sources like the National Weather Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Federal Drug Administration and Consumer Products Safety Commission, and automating alerts, allowing campuses to get the essential information out quickly and then follow up with additional information as needed.

Future Interoperability. In the near future, campus officials will see flexible



MNS solutions that easily adapt to an organization's risk analysis and Emergency Response Plans (ERP) as well as a heightened convergence of the elements in the ERP — interoperable protection, sensor and alerting systems. By integrating these technologies, including fire protection, access control, accountability, video services, and MNS, a campus will greatly improve its situational awareness, system management, and emergency response time.

A future example of integrated life-safety systems could take place at a university laboratory, where an intrusion detection system is triggered in the perimeter, which then activates a camera to stream live video of the area and an emergency communications system to send an alert to the security guard, stating that there is an intruder in the restricted access area as well as broadcast a message to the detected area to deter the offender. By viewing the video, the guard confirms the threat and with a couple of clicks, he sends notification to security officers within the area to respond, alerts employees and students in the surrounding area, and locks all of the building doors with the access control system. Responding to this situation takes place within minutes, saving lives and reducing chaos.

IP Networked Systems. The ECS market is going through an IP network convergence evolution. Since emergencies don't always happen while you are sitting in the office, businesses need the ability to remotely activate any of their emergency notification systems, from an emergency text messaging system to an outdoor warning system. One of the main benefits of an IP-based mass notification is the ability to send and receive alerts anytime, anywhere across a range of networks and communication devices.

Mass Notification Codes. The latest fire codes apply to more than fire situations and now affect a range of departments, including law enforcement and emergency management. When the Department of Defense was developing requirements for MNS, they discovered that most fire alarm systems were unable to communicate with people in non-fire emergencies such as severe weather. They petitioned the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to develop MNS



requirements. As a result, the NFPA added Annex E Mass Notification Systems as recommended guidelines for MNS in the National Fire Alarm Code 2007 edition. In the 2010 NFPA 72 *National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code*, Annex E became Chapter 24 Emergency Communications Systems, the first mass notification code for the private sector.

To help security professionals meet the latest requirements, Cooper Notification designed the SAFEPATH MNS (SPMNS) to integrate with a facility's addressable fire alarm system for a complete in-building MNS solution that performs both fire alarm and emergency communications functions. Compliant with UL 2572 and NFPA 72 2010 codes, the SPMNS provides personnel and building occupants with intelligible live and pre-recorded voice messages that communicate what to do in response to an emergency.

The key is finding a solution provider that is providing these advanced technological solutions in the rapidly growing ECS/MNS market as well as one that has already decoded the latest codes to help put an effective emergency communications plan in place.

Cooper Notification: Delivering Critical Alerts When It Matters Most

With approximately 500 MNS installations around the globe, Cooper Notification provides integrated mass notification solutions for colleges nationwide. Cooper Notification is composed of the following MNS solutions:

- Award-winning Roam Secure Alert Network (RSAN) emergency text and voice alerting system for distributed recipient MNS
- WAVES High Power Speaker Arrays (HPSAs) for wide-area MNS
- SAFEPATH Mass Notification System for in-building MNS