CAP IPAWS Profile Comments

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Some of the comments that I am submitting were previously submitted to the EAS-CAP Industry Working group. I have developed some examples and other materials in support of these comments that can be made available if further clarification is necessary.

1. Use < > when referring to CAP elements throughout the document to be consistent with the CAP specification.

2. There are multiple <parameter>s defined for different purposes yet they are sharing the same table cell. It would be clearer if each distinct <parameter> was in its own individual cell.

3. A note should be added about potential <valueName> collisions between those of this profile and what other system developers may choose to use.

4. Are multiple <eventCode>s with a <valueName> of SAME allowed in an <info> block?

5. In order to support a number of different exchange partners using the same message, a <parameter> should be added to allow an alert issuer to indicate that a particular partner should ignore a message that would normally be acted upon. For example, a police agency is issuing an Amber Alert. The local media has already begun covering the story in some detail and so a broadcast EAS activation is not desirable, while activation of other exchange partners such as HazCollect and CMAS is desired. The issuer therefore adds the <parameter> EAS-Activate/No to the message to indicate this.

6. When alert information is delivered to the public through two simultaneous methods using one medium, the message should be synchronized. This not only ensures there is no message disconnect but allows for more accessible alerts. For instance, when an audio message is played on a television screen with the accompanying text scrolling by, the content of the two should be the same. For EAS broadcast content (sound/video) included in a message as a <resource> there is no accompanying text content element. Using an existing CAP element to include this customized text could result in a message that does not make sense to other exchange partners. An optional <parameter> such as "EAS-Text" should be created to hold this message text that is specific to the EAS broadcast content. In the case that audio/video content is included in the message, EAS-

Text will be used for a television screen scroll and/or closed captioning. If no audio/video resource is available but the EAS-Text is there, it can be used to create the text-to-speech audio for all mediums in addition to the television screen scroll and/or closed captioning.

7. Is the <resourceDesc> value case sensitive?

8. Is there a size limit to files referenced via the <uri> or <derefUri> elements in a <resource> block?

9. The current requirement to include at least one <geocode> with a SAME value should be changed to optional. The mandatory use of geocodes should only be used to support legacy EAS equipment and should not apply to more capable next-generation systems.

    1. The IPAWS and CAP documents state:

        1. "Flexible geographic targeting using latitude/longitude shapes and other geospatial representations in three dimensions."

        2. "Textual and coded descriptions (such as postal codes) are supported, but the preferred representations use geospatial shapes (polygons and circles)..."

        3. The <geocode> element is "...primarily for compatibility with other systems. Use of this element presumes knowledge of the coding system on the part of recipients; therefore, for interoperability, it SHOULD be used in concert with an equivalent description in the more universally understood <polygon> and <circle> forms whenever possible."

    2. Over-alerting will continue to be a problem while imprecise methods of representing the event area such as geocodes are used. When faced with these limitations, alert issuers must make difficult choices about how to notify the public. The manual origination scenario in the CAP specification is a good example.

    3. Next-generation systems should not be required to perpetuate this legacy support. For example, in the CMAS documentation it speaks about using geospatial values to better target the message by cell tower. There is no technological reason that new model EAS devices cannot support geospatial values.

4. Representing event areas outside the US for which there are no SAME values is a limitation. Exchanging messages between national governments (tsunami, earthquake, terrorism) and IPAWS profile supporting equipment being used in other countries (embassies, military bases) will all require the more universal geospatial values.

5. The IPAWS profile text should be changed to something like this: "For compatibility with legacy EAS, at least one instance of a <geocode> with a <valueName> of "SAME" and <value> of a SAME 6-digit location code (extended FIPS) MAY be used. The more accurate geospatial representations of the area, <polygon> and <circle>, SHOULD be used whenever possible."