

REPORT OF THE COMMON ALERTING PROTOCOL (CAP) IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOP NEGOMBO, SRI LANKA, 17-18 JUNE 2014



INTRODUCTION, SPONSORS AND HOST OF THE WORKSHOP

The Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) Implementation Workshop was held in Negombo, Sri Lanka, from 17 to 18 June 2014. The Workshop was co-sponsored by the International Tele-communication Union (ITU), OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The WMO role was led by the Public Weather Services (PWS) Programme, which is responsible for developing service delivery capacities and capabilities of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) of WMO Members. The focus of PWS includes how official alerting authorities disseminate alerts and warnings to the public, to media, and to disaster management and civil protection authorities.

The host of the Workshop was Learning Initiatives on Reforms for Network Economies Asia (LIRNEasia). Based in Sri Lanka, LIRNEasia is a non-profit company seeking to identify the institutional constraints on effective use of Information and Communications Technologies to improve the lives of people in the Asia-Pacific region. The Workshop was part of the IOTX Convention hosted by LIRNEasia, where IOTX stands for the 10th anniversary of the tragic Indian Ocean Tsunami. The General Chair of IOTX was Mr Nuwan Waidyanatha, of LIRNEasia and Sahana Software Foundation. Mr Waidyanatha was also on the Program Committee of the CAP Implementation Workshop.

SCOPE, OFFICIAL RECORD AND LINKS TO MATERIALS OF THE WORKSHOP

The Workshop was a technical meeting among experts, chaired by Mr Eliot Christian, Adviser to WMO on CAP. The Workshop addressed various aspects of CAP including: experience gained in implementing CAP by various countries; the tools for dissemination by major aggregators of alerts and warnings, as well as their needs for improved application of CAP; the efforts that CAP sponsoring organizations are taking to advance the CAP standard and its uptake as a standard for communicating all alerts through all media.

- The official records of the Workshop, including the invitation letters and the nomination form is located at the following link: http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/amp/pwsp/CAP_WKshop_2014_en.htm .

FINAL REPORT

- Presentations delivered at the Workshop, and links to the records of six (6) prior CAP Workshops sponsored by ITU, OASIS, and WMO are contained in the Workshop Documentation Plan, available at the following: <http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/amp/pwsp/CAPWorkshopDocs2014.html> .
- Brief biographies of the presenters at the Workshop are at: http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/amp/pwsp/CAP_Workshop_Presentations_2014_en.html .
- The Workshop was attended by 72 participants from 22 countries, and they are listed at: http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/amp/pwsp/documents/CAPWKSHP-2014-INF-2-PLOP_en.doc .

MAJOR OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

1. Workshop participants noted the need for clarification on use of the WMO branch of the Object Identifier (OID) tree assigned for alerting (<http://www.oid-info.com/get/2.49.0>). Specifically, clarification is sought on use of alerting OIDs by organizations that cannot issue public warnings, yet perform private or restricted alerting to those governmental authorities who issue public warnings. Examples of such organizations include motorway control centres, airports, power plants, chemical plants, and ambulance services. Their private alerts typically inform alerts issued publicly by alerting authorities such as fire-fighters, police, civil protection agencies, environmental authorities, etc. For this reason, it would be very useful if all alerting organizations (governmental as well as others) were to use officially registered alerting OIDs. Subsequent to the Workshop, WMO clarified that it does not place any policy constraints on which alerting authorities are designated by national WMO Members, nor any constraints as to whether such authorities issue alerts publicly or privately. Therefore, assignment of OIDs nationally for use with private or restricted alerts from any recognized authority is entirely within the purview of each Permanent Representative with WMO.
2. Workshop participants noted interest in a number of important issues associated with emergency telecommunications, although not specific to the CAP standard itself. One suggestion is to have a convenient source of common message templates for emergency messages according to various common emergencies.
3. Participants also briefly discussed aspects of cell broadcast, noting that effective implementation of cell broadcast for alerting depends on a range of factors, including: capabilities of end-user devices in actual use; willingness and capability of cellular service providers to use cell broadcast technology; and perhaps national policy that regulates telecommunications services.
4. A Workshop participant noted some matters that could be taken up in an ITU context. One suggestion is to require that CAP alerting support be provided in all cell phones worldwide. Another suggestion is to establish a standard worldwide emergency radio frequency. It was also suggested that there be established a dedicated satellite channel for emergency messaging.
5. Workshop participants were invited to request to be a reviewer of the draft "Public Warning Design Guidelines for FIA Messaging" being developed by the Federation for Internet Alerts (see document PWS-CAP-2014/Doc. 3.11, located at the following link: <http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/amp/pwsp/documents/CAPWKSHP-2014-d03-11-VDG-ONLINE-WARNINGS.ppt>). However, the draft is under a controlled review process because the draft document has not been released publicly. Workshop participants who wish to review the draft or suggest expert reviewers should contact Eliot Christian by e-mail to echristian@usgs.gov.

FINAL REPORT

6. Workshop participants noted that the Google Public Alerts design for presentation of CAP alerts is gaining broad exposure. There is therefore a strong interest among CAP implementors to have a deep understanding of how Google processes CAP messages for display, to include rules used for truncation or summarization of CAP free text values when length is an issue.

7. Workshop participants noted that the OASIS Emergency Management Technical Committee (OASIS EM-TC) has ongoing discussions on various topics that could be of interest to CAP implementors, including some that have been raised at this and prior CAP Workshops.

7.1. One such topic concerns the complications associated with CAP messages that have multiple "info blocks".

7.2. Another topic concerns best practices on use of an "All Clear" CAP alert message (this is distinct from a "cancel" CAP message).

7.3. Workshop participants noted that it would be useful to have a controlled list of parameter names that are in use with the "name-value" construct of the CAP parameter element. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center mentioned that they would like to receive seismic data along with their alerts received from other regional monitoring stations governed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO/IOC). Also, the 2009 CAP Workshop was the first instance when Siegfried Fechner of Deutscher Wetterdienst (DWD) tabled the need for harmonizing the event data when shared through CAP. Workshop participants commented that further consensus-building is needed to develop consistent practice on how to best use CAP for communicating auxiliary information that does not fit neatly in the CAP parameter element, as well as how to indicate units for the value sub-element.

7.4. Workshop Participants again raised the issue of a registry of CAP profiles that could be discoverable.

7.5. The OASIS EM-TC chair noted that Workshop participants and other CAP implementors are welcome to comment on and participate in reviews of EM-TC works, including the discussion and resolution of comments associated with the next version of CAP (see https://www.oasis-open.org/committees/membership.php?wg_abbrev=emergency for details).

8. Participants in the CAP Workshop recognized the uptake of CAP by developing countries and the need for more assistance such as capacity building programs. The specific presentations from Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania were inspiring, and participants from Mali and Comoros took particular note of these African examples.

9. The Workshop participants briefly discussed the timing and venue for the next CAP Implementation Workshop. The participants were in agreement with the suggestion that the next CAP Implementation Workshop could be in 2015. Rome was among the potential venues mentioned and subsequent to the Workshop a hosting offer was confirmed. This offer is to host the next CAP Implementation Workshop in September 2015 at the [Istituto Superiore Antincendi](#) (ISA - Fire Corps Academy), at [Via del Commercio, 13, Rome](#), Italy. CAP implementors and others with comments on this matter may contact Eliot Christian by e-mail at: echristian@usgs.gov.