



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

BruinAlert Network-Centric Emergency Notification System

UCLA Earns CESA Award



The California Emergency Services Association awards UCLA with its Gold Award in recognition of the BruinAlert campus emergency alerting system.

Real Life Use

- BruinAlert rapidly alerted and provided follow-up information to the UCLA population during the 5.8 magnitude earthquake that occurred near Los Angeles in July 2008.
- BruinAlert effectively alerted the UCLA population about a wildfire near campus in October 2008.
- BruinAlert successfully notified the campus community of a suspicious package found in parking structure adjacent to a medical office in March 2009.

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UCLA Protects Students and Staff with AtHoc's Network-Centric Emergency Alerting

UCLA successfully created a campus-wide emergency mass notification system, known as "BruinAlert," based on AtHoc IWSAlerts™ software. By using AtHoc IWSAlerts, UCLA became one of the first major American universities to deploy an effective mass notification system that fully unifies all campus communications resources.

A single AtHoc IWSAlerts Web-based application unifies and manages alerts to campus AM radio, cable TV, outdoor sirens, cell phones, landline phones, SMS text messages, emails, RSS feeds and digital display boards. The variety and reach of the devices supported by the AtHoc system creates a pervasive alerting capability.

BruinAlert has been used in real-life situations and has helped the university quickly alert staff and students about emergencies and provide them with information to help ensure a safe outcome. These situations demonstrate the effectiveness of UCLA's unified, campus-wide emergency mass notification system based on the AtHoc IWSAlerts software.

Because of the university's innovative approach to emergency alerting, UCLA was recognized by the California Emergency Services Association with its Gold Award in recognition of the BruinAlert campus emergency alerting system.

Executive Summary

UCLA at a Glance

- 38,000 Students
- 4,000 Faculty
- 29,000 Staff
- 174 Buildings across 419 acres

Requirements

- Unified multi-channel alerting system to leverage UCLA's communications assets
- Ability to create and store numerous emergency scenarios
- Redundant system that supports hot failover system offsite
- Security and user privacy
- Integration with internal contact directory so that people can be reached even without cell phone subscription
- Use of Common Alert Protocol (CAP) to ensure interoperability
- Enterprise-wide, centralized management

Solution

AtHoc IWSAlerts Enterprise Edition:

- Integration with the existing siren system, university radio and cable TV stations
- Centralized deployment behind the firewall
- Alert triggering from any network-connected PC from a Web browser console
- Reaches 60,000 individuals in minutes
- Integration with multiple user repositories
- Automatic hot failover capability to an offsite location

Results

- Unified alerting to computers, telephones, mobile devices, email, sirens, campus cable TV, campus radio and the Emergency Digital Information System
- System achieves 97% reach to students according to a UCLA report to FEMA's Disaster Resistant Universities (DRU)
- Reduced the time required to reach all students and staff to under five minutes
- UCLA received the California Emergency Services Association (CESA) Gold Award in recognition of the BruinAlert campus emergency alerting system!

The Challenge and the Opportunity Facing UCLA

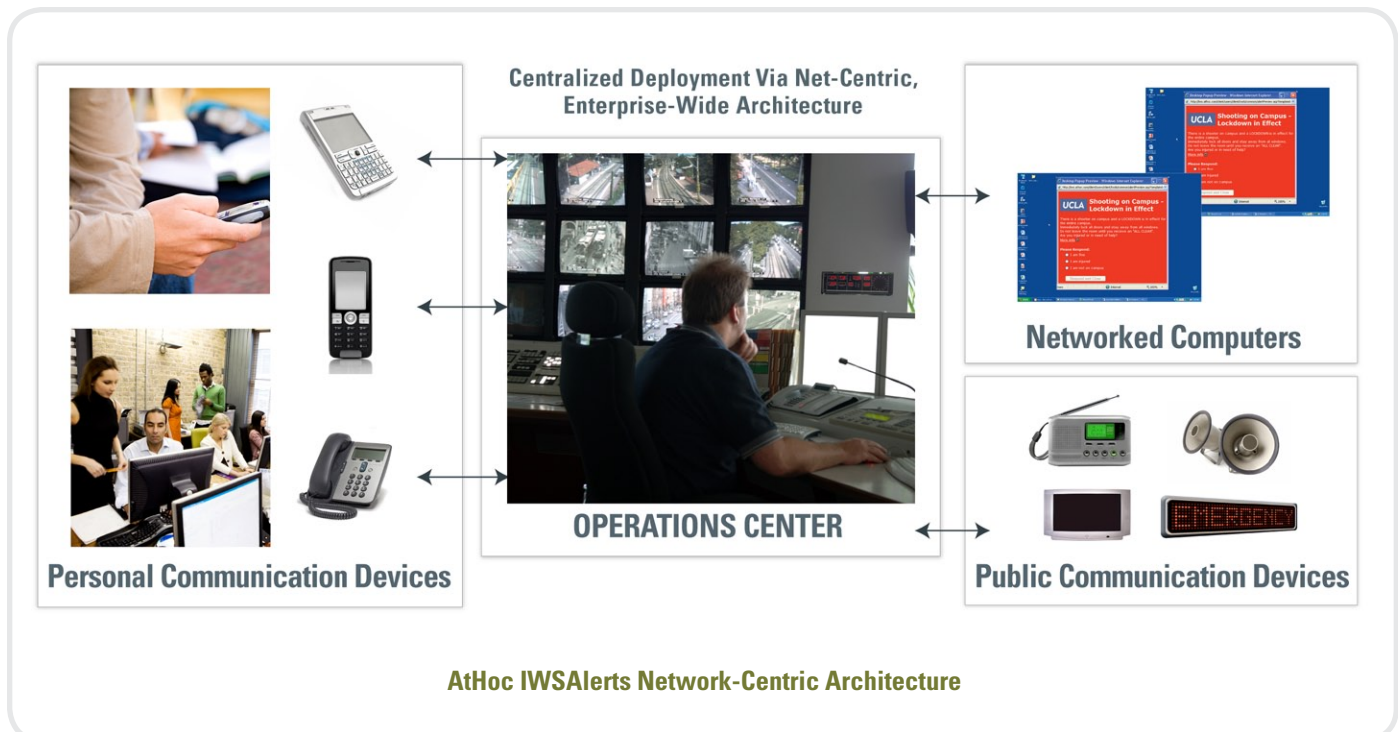
Every day, more than 60,000 students and staff engage in a variety of activities on the UCLA campus.

Over the years, UCLA's emergency notification capabilities had evolved to incorporate new technologies. As a result, the university had a number of separate alerting systems, including bulk email, a toll-free number, AM radio, a cable television station and a Web site. No single method of emergency notification could guarantee contact with everyone during an emergency. For example, many universities rely solely on text alerting for mass notification which limits the ability to reach the entire population during an emergency. In 2007, UCLA began researching and evaluating network-centric emergency alerting technologies as a complement to its existing systems.

Before beginning its research, UCLA administrators identified and developed a list of requirements they felt were essential to a university mass notification system. These included:

- **Unified and multi-channel alerting** – alerts need to be sent through multiple redundant channels, including radio, cable TV, sirens, cell phones, SMS text messages, emails, RSS feeds and desktop computers
- **Rapid alert dissemination across entire campus** – in the event of an emergency, alerts need to be delivered as quickly as possible to everyone on campus within minutes
- **Scalability to over 60,000 people** – with a large and growing population, any notification system needs to reliably support tens of thousand of users
- **Not dependent on self subscription** – people need to be alerted regardless of whether or not they subscribe to alerts
- **Redundant system** – to remain operational in the case of a data center failure, redundancy must be built into the system
- **Security** – access rights and authorization need to be robust to prevent compromising of the system and alert abuse
- **Integration with internal directories** – it was critical that personal contact information be up to date and accurate. Therefore the notification system had to integrate with existing contact repositories
- **Enterprise-wide centralized management** – reliable control and management of all components using a Web-based interface was key to the system

Network-centric emergency alerting addressed UCLA's requirements. It turns all network-connected devices, such as computer desktops and mobile devices, into alarms. It also serves as a unified platform for managing and triggering traditional alerting channels such as sirens, radios and public address systems.



The 2008 Earthquake

On July 29, 2008, a 5.8 magnitude earthquake struck the greater Los Angeles area. Emergency managers at UCLA successfully used AtHoc IWSAAlerts to notify the campus population.

Within minutes of the earthquake, the first alerts were sent out as emails and SMS/text messages. Students were informed that an earthquake had taken place and were warned about aftershocks. They were also directed to tune into the campus radio station for additional instructions.

This alert was the first actual emergency use of the AtHoc system since it was deployed by UCLA in November of 2007.

Triggering an alert is simple. “We just add the location of the emergency, fill in the blanks, target the recipient groups and send out the alert,” said David Burns, emergency manager for UCLA.

By combining mass broadcast notification with personalized alerting, the university can achieve an exceptionally high rate of student and staff notification.

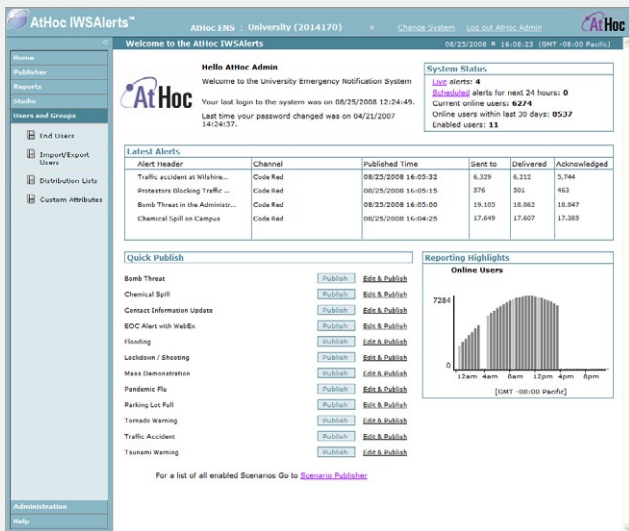
Once AtHoc IWSAAlerts was deployed, UCLA began a campaign to promote awareness of and participation in the alert system. For the initial launch, the General Services Emergency Management office sent over 47,000 messages, including SMS/text messages, emails and desktop notifications to students, faculty and staff.

Results and Benefits

Today, UCLA’s BruinAlert is used to protect more than 60,000 people across campus.

Unified alerting can now be triggered to computers, telephones, mobile devices, email, sirens, campus cable TV, campus radio and the Emergency Digital Information System, reducing the time required to reach all students and staff.

The UCLA Bruin Alert System consistently reaches more than 99% of subscribers.



Web-based console for managing the entire notification process



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