



U.S. ARMY'S FORT RILEY Network-Centric Emergency Mass Notification System for Army Installation



The Fort Riley deployment leverages additional AtHoc features such as tiered operator permissions, Active Directory integration and multi-tenancy in support major tenant units, including the 1st Infantry Division, Irwin Army hospital and the Fort Riley elementary schools.

Fort Riley, "Home of the Big Red One", needed an enterprise-class network-centric alerting solution that could quickly alert all personnel connected to the network and via SMS text messages through cell phones.

This case study illustrates how Fort Riley deployed AtHoc IWSAlerts enterprise edition to:

- Deliver a network alerting solution to complement the base's existing public address and telephony alerting systems
- Reliably meet a large installation's base-wide, inter-tenant and intra-tenant alerting needs
- Ensure anyone connected to the network would be alerted in minutes
- Notify non-networked personnel via email and SMS text messaging
- Include provisions for secure communication, authentication and encryption using DoD and industry-standard PKI-encryption technologies
- Ensure base personnel can self subscribe and add their personal contact information into the AtHoc system

Executive Summary

Fort Riley at a Glance

- 25,000 personnel
- Major tenants:
 - 1st infantry Division
 - Irwin Army Community Hospital
 - DoD Schools

Requirements

- Unified multi-channel alerting system to leverage the Fort's existing notification
- Ability to notify personnel via networked computers across untrusted domains/networks
- Ability to create and store numerous emergency scenarios
- Capability to reliably deliver alerts to individual tenant units; and for units to send alerts specific to their personnel
- Personnel recall
- Mass casualty communications and medical "code" alerts
- Security, user privacy and protection of personnel data
- Obtaining contact information for soldiers, civilian employees, and contractors out in the field
- Enterprise-wide, centralized management

Solution

- AtHoc IWSAlerts Enterprise Edition
- AtHoc provided a self-service/self-registration "kiosk" for obtaining soldiers, contractors and family members contact information
- Enterprise edition leveraged existing systems and made unit-specific alerting easier and more efficient
- Obtained cost savings by avoiding the deployment of additional separate systems for each tenant unit
- Centralized deployment that maintains sensitive personal data behind the firewall yet reaches beyond the Ft. Riley domain to other tenants networks
- Alert triggering from any network-connected PC from a Web browser console
- Reaches 25,000 individuals in minutes
- DoD Schools can receive alerts via desktop pop-up, email and text messaging
- Self-service/self-registration capability is powered by the Common Access Card (CAC) and allows recipients to enter various types of information including survey data

Results

- Unified alerting to computers, mobile devices, email
- Personal contact information kept secure and private
- Tenant units combined and integrated their individual requirements in order to deploy an enterprise system
- Substantial cost savings realized through integration and consolidation of separate systems

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Challenge

Like all Department of Defense installations, the U.S. Army's Fort Riley is required to maintain a constant level of preparedness to respond to any threat or emergency. The Fort is like a small city, housing a garrison, schools, a hospital and large tenant units such as the famed 1st Infantry Division. Each tenant presented a challenge with different, and in some case unique, mass alerting requirements. For example, the Irwin Army Hospital needed to incorporate medical "code" alerts in its mass alerting spectrum.

In 2005, the Fort Riley Operations Center (FROC) determined the fort needed a reliable and secure method for delivering emergency threat notifications to all its personnel in cases of emergency. These notifications range from force protection conditions and antiterrorism warnings, to natural disasters such as tornados. Some tenant units had various types of mass alerting systems in place.

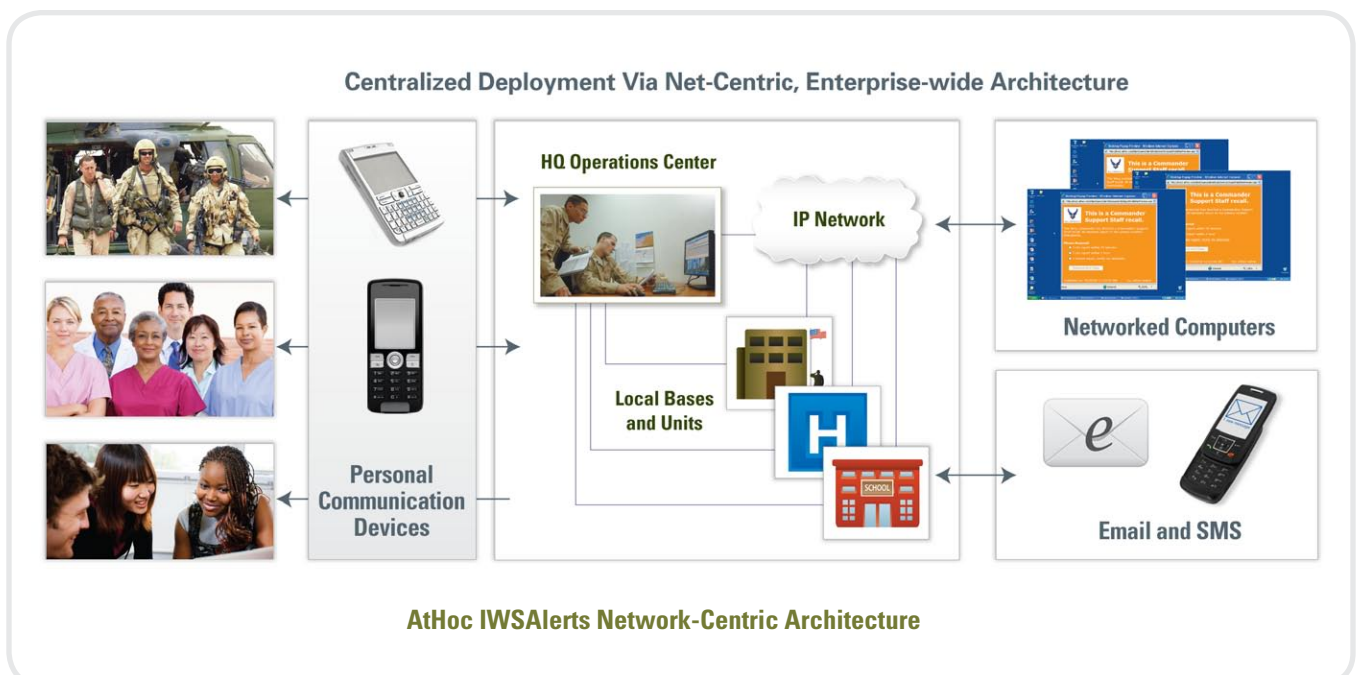
What was needed was a reliable, cross-domain solution that could handle a myriad of different users and provide effective rapid and secure mass notifications across the Fort.

Solution Delivered

AtHoc IWSAlerts™ is now implemented at the fort and enables alerts to be sent to all computers at Fort Riley in an average of one minute from the FROC's activating the alert.

The alerts, in the form of pop-up windows accompanied by an audio alarm, describe the threat, categorize the threat level and include instructions for taking appropriate action. When a user clicks on the pop-up window, the system's main server acknowledges and tracks the receipt. The system also delivers alerts as SMS text messages to cell phones, and can send emails to computers and mobile devices (including BlackBerry devices).

AtHoc-generated alerts comply with signals and messaging specifications appropriate to FPCONs, weather warnings, evacuation routes, directives and other federal, Department of Defense (DoD) and Army-specific emergency notifications. AtHoc IWSAlerts also includes a library of pre-programmed audio-visual signals to correspond to these scenarios.



In 2009, Fort Riley upgraded from AtHoc IWSAlerts Standard Edition to the Enterprise Edition. With this upgrade, Fort Riley will be able to take advantage of additional features including tiered operator permissions, Active Directory integration and multi-unit support. The new deployment includes two additional major units – the 1st Infantry Division and Irwin Army hospital – as well as the Fort Riley elementary schools which are located on the installation.

The expansion of Fort Riley’s net-centric mass notification system extends the reach of the system to its tenant units, enabling each tenant to reach its active duty and civilian workforce with an emergency message, activate recall and provide accountability information in times of emergency.

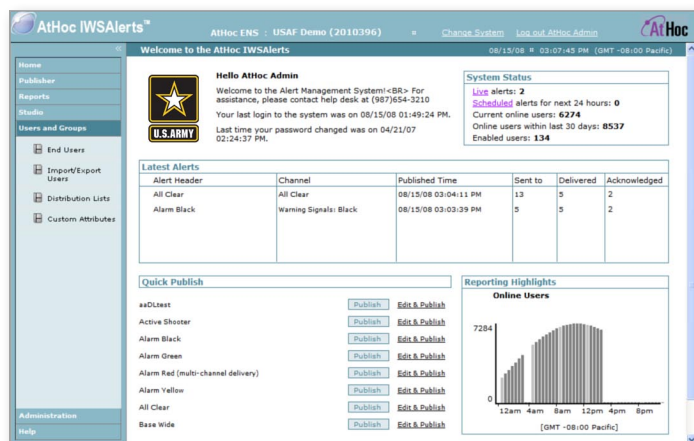
One of the new tenant organization to be integrated in this enterprise deployment will be the Irwin Army Community Hospital. IACH provides health and medical support to the Fort Riley population. The AtHoc system will provide IACH with the ability to rapidly alert its staff in the event of a man-made or natural emergency.

However, as a health care entity, IACH also has unique mass notification requirements that will be met by the AtHoc system. These include mass casualty incidents, medical “code” alerts; personnel recall and delayed openings. As part of the centralized setup IACH will receive cascading alerts from the FROC in the event of weather and other base-wide emergencies. This feature will also apply to DoD schools located on the installation.

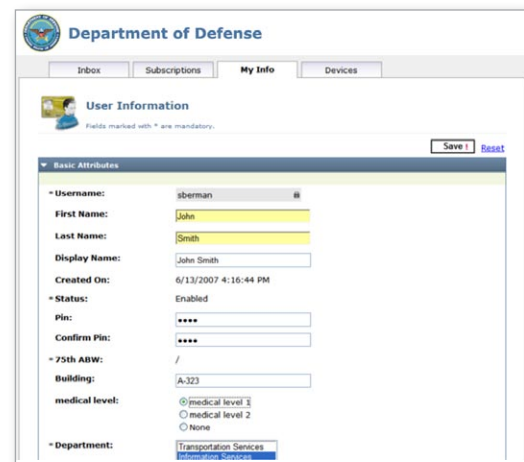
In addition, IACH needed a robust level of security for the sensitive personnel information it maintained for its staff and patients. AtHoc IWSAlerts can provide this level of information security and privacy.

AtHoc IWSAlerts™ Solution Benefits

- Distribute emergency alerts to thousands of network-connected devices in an average of one minute.
- Contact personnel inside buildings and sound proof bunkers by leveraging the network.
- Comply with federal and DoD emergency notification guidelines.
- Create pre-programmed alerts and target recipient lists for specific operational scenarios.
- Support multiple operators with permission-based web access.
- Install in hours and become fully operational within days.
- Highly-secure, enterprise-class software with open architecture.



Web-based console for managing the entire notification process



Self-service module allowing end users to update their own contact information and alerting preferences

Cost Savings

Fort Riley realized substantial cost savings by moving to an enterprise edition of AtHoc IWSAlerts. This consolidation removed redundant components within separate tenant units, unified management of mass alerts and saved budget on software licenses and maintenance costs.

Customer Profile

Fort Riley's mission includes training, readiness and deployment support for two brigade combat teams, one engineer group and other corps forces. The Fort provides planning, mobilization, validation and demobilization for active and reserve units and individuals.

In addition to being able to send alerts to the entire Fort Riley staff, the fort's operation center uses AtHoc IWSAlerts to send targeted messages to specific groups. Targeted alerts can be sent to military police, emergency management services, crisis management teams, fire services or other groups depending on the situation. The operations center can select from pre-programmed scenarios which they can tailor for each circumstance.

Emergency operators use AtHoc IWSAlerts' Web-based operator console to activate alerts from any computer connected to the base's network using the correct username and password — a crucial capability if the primary FROC gets disabled during an emergency. The system can also be configured so that each operator has different rights to activate specific types of alerts. For example, some operators may be limited to activating weather alerts while others can only launch IT alerts.

AtHoc IWSAlerts is an enterprise-class, commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) software running on a Microsoft platform. AtHoc IWSAlerts has received an Army Certificate of Networthiness and Department of Defense Information Assurance Certification and Accreditation Process (DIACAP) certification.

Conclusion

Fort Riley now uses AtHoc IWSAlerts daily to contact their staff about threats ranging from a tornado warning to an unauthorized person trying to get onto the Fort. The AtHoc product has also proven very valuable in informing Fort personnel about inclement weather conditions.

The deployment of AtHoc's IWSAlerts at Fort Riley further demonstrates the Department of Defense's adoption of third generation mass notification technology. Third generation systems leverage existing IP networks to (a) communicate rapidly to all connected devices; (b) integrate and unify disparate existing mass notification capabilities; (c) provide bi-directional communication allowing collection of feedback from all personnel; and (d) achieve enterprise-level scalability and processes.

The result is the most effective enterprise-wide mass notification capability with the best cost to benefit ratio.

Moving Forward

The current architecture of the AtHoc IWSAlerts system opens the door for additional integrations of tenant units, and other alerting capabilities such as giant voice, telephony, land mobile radio (LMR) and digital display boards.

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