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**INDUSTRY RALLIES TO ESTABLISH INTEROPERABILITY STANDARDS TO
BETTER PREPARE FOR AND RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES**

*The EM-XML Consortium Releases Technical Specification For
The Exchange Of Alerts And Public Warnings*

LOS ANGELES, CA – August 12, 2003 – The Emergency Management (EM) XML Consortium announced today the completion of the first draft technical specification, the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), for emergency and incident management interoperability. CAP provides a XML representation for simultaneously exchanging all-hazard emergency alerts or public warnings across multiple emergency information systems.

The EM-XML Consortium was founded in October 2002 to address the critically important issue of interoperability between computer systems and other devices used by government agencies and the private sector in organizing the preparation and response to threats to homeland security, natural disasters, incidents, and emergencies. The current emergency management infrastructure, which is comprised of disparate and proprietary systems, severely hinders our nation's ability to respond to a major emergency. The EM-XML Consortium, which is now comprised of over 60 private, public and non-profit organizations, is researching, designing, developing, deploying, and promoting emergency and incident management standards that will ultimately facilitate interoperability, often through Web Services, and reduce human and financial losses.

The CAP format is the first initiative of the EM-XML Consortium. The standard enables users to input a message once to activate all types of alert and public warning systems during an emergency or incident. This reduces the workload and cost associated with using multiple systems, enhances technical reliability, and increases the consistency of the message and the ability to get that message to the right audience at the right time.

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The CAP format will go through final review and committee approval before being released to the public for review as a Committee Specification this fall. Once complete, the standard will be submitted to the OASIS membership for voting on full ratification as an OASIS Standard.

“Our efforts have already made a tremendous impact in defining the future of incident and emergency management standards,” said Matt Walton, Chairman of the EM-XML Executive Committee and Vice Chairman and Founder of E Team. “These technical achievements, which have been made in just a few short months, are outstanding. This work will ensure that first responders, emergency and event managers, public health agency officials and executive management in both the public and private sectors will be able to immediately share critical information during an emergency or major event.”

“EM-XML is critical to the success of the Disaster Management e-Gov Initiative,” said Mark G. Zimmerman, member of the EM-XML Executive Committee and Program Manager, Disaster Management eGov Initiative managed by the Department of Homeland Security. “Helping all responders share information regardless of state boundary, FEMA region, or type of incident command system used will help ensure relevant and timely responses.”

To accommodate the rapid growth of the EM-XML Consortium and to further focus the work being done, an Executive Committee (EC) and a Technical Committee (TC) have been formed. The EM-XML EC is focused on educational outreach to the public and Federal communities on incident and emergency management issues. The EC also provides guidance and direction to the TC for the development of interoperability standards. R. Allen Wyke, CTO of Blue292, Inc., chairs the TC, which is housed under OASIS, a not-for-profit, global standards organization. The TC is focused on the rapid design and development of standardized, XML-based protocols supporting incident and emergency management interoperability.

“Our existing emergency information systems are a patchwork quilt of technologies and procedures,” said Art Botterell, who represents the non-profit Partnership for Public Warning and is Chair of the Notification and Messaging Subcommittee responsible for the CAP specification effort within the TC. “We need to make all these systems work together. Interoperability standards like CAP are a vital first step in that direction.”

In addition to CAP, the EM TC is performing research and work in the areas of GIS (Geospatial Information Systems) and ICS (Incident Command System), as well as the overall infrastructure for emergency and incident management.

For more information about the EM-XML Consortium and the EC, please contact Matt Walton at mwalton@eteam.com. For more information about the EM TC, please contact Allen Wyke at emtc@nc.rr.com.

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