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E-Connect Emergency Notification System
Anderson University Case Study, Anderson, IN

Amatra's E-Connect - A web based Emergency Notification System that allows the transmission of large number of messages to target audience using multiple communication methods.

Executive Summary:

Customer:

*Anderson University
1100 East Fifth Street
Anderson, IN 46012*

The Need:

Anderson University needed an integrated system to inform students, faculty, staff and emergency first responders of any emergency situations by instantly transmitting and tracking a large number of messages via multiple communication channels.

The Solution:

Amatra's E-Connect Emergency Notification System is a web based solution that allows the transmission of large number of

messages to target audience using multiple communication methods.

Key Features:

*Support for multiple communication methods including Email, Voice, SMS and Social Media.
Send Pre Defined messages to Pre Defined target audiences
Role based security
Tracking capability to allow analysis of notifications.
Completely web based.*





The Challenge.

PROVIDE the campus community with an advanced message broadcast and alert notification system built on a reliable, scalable and secure platform for rapid multimodal emergency communications.

Built with IBM technology, the E-Connect solution from Amatra Technologies provides rapid, reliable mass communications in emergency situations. The E-Connect System supports transmitting hundreds or thousands of messages in a consistent manner via e-mail, SMS and voice notification with text-to-voice translation for any phone number in the world.

Seamless integration with the existing student and staff database minimizes implementation time and reduces maintenance costs over time.

Role-based security helps ensure university administrators have around-the-clock access to contacts and communication. Optimized data performance helps ensure the system can send thousands of messages in a very short period of time.

In recent years, tragic events have made campus safety an ever-increasing priority for schools, colleges and universities across the country. Many educational institutes,

"A key facet of risk and emergency management on school campuses is communication..."



“This multi-faceted notification system serves our campus well, delivering emergency and critical information to faculty, staff and students with flexibility, reliability and speed.”

- Sena Landey,
Vice President for Finance and Treasurer, Anderson University

“Of all the systems we evaluated, Amatra stood out as the most capable...”

including Anderson University in Anderson, Indiana, are turning to information technology for powerful and effective emergency management systems to help reduce risk and to help effectively respond to an act of violence or to natural disasters, such as flood or fire.

“A key facet of risk and emergency management on school campuses is communication,” says Chris Williams, director of university communications at Anderson. “The tragic event at Virginia Tech prompted our emergency management committee to evaluate emergency message broadcast systems that allow school administrators to quickly contact

students, faculty and staff in the event of an emergency.”

Initially, Anderson contracted with a private company that offered a free, SMS-based messaging service. However, the system required students and staff to sign up for service and ultimately became obsolete. Anderson University needed a fully integrated, scalable system that could instantly transmit a large number of messages via various communication channels to first responders and everyone in the school’s database, and also provide a tracking mechanism.



The Solution.

“ONCE we had the interim solution in place, we began looking for a more sophisticated, scalable, prepackaged and easy-to-customize emergency communication system,” Williams explains. “Of all the systems we evaluated, Amatra stood out as the most capable, and as a member of the emergency management committee, the fact that IBM was the backbone of the solution was very important to us. Having a stable environment for the long haul is critical.”

Anderson University worked with Amatra to implement the E-Connect solution, an innovative state-of-the-

art message broadcast and notification system.

Based on a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) that enables the re-use of Web services, E-Connect offers Anderson University an easy-to-customize channel for reliable and consistent mass communication in both emergency and non-emergency situations. Vital information is communicated reliably and in real time, and university administrators have around-the-clock, user-friendly, Web-based, consolidated access to contacts and communication. The role-based security model helps to ensure that only authorized users can access and administer the

“I signed up and gave the system my cell phone, my e-mail and my home phone. Messages will go to those three places for me.”



“The emergency broadcast system not only has to be reliable, but it also has to be very low maintenance,”

system, and safeguards against spam notifications.

“Secure and tight integration with our database and its broad distribution of messaging was vital for an efficient response to emergency situations,” Williams says. “Plus, the flexibility of the E-Connect system was appealing because when we’re ready to take the service in other directions, we know those options are available and the system is scalable.”

Since the university’s mascot is a raven, the E-Connect system is known on campus as the Raven Alert System.

Other key features include message management, which allows the university to create, send and track messages; profile management, for managing user profiles and updating personal information; and group management, which allows the university to create, update and delete custom groups for message management.

“The emergency broadcast system not only has to be reliable, but it also has to be very low maintenance,” Williams adds. “As students register and new employees come online, they indicate that they want to receive these messages and their contact information is automatically

“We used the Raven Alert System (E-Connect) to communicate the power outage, redirect classes and communicate cancelled or delayed classes.”

- Chris Williams,
Director of University Communications, Anderson University

The Results.

reflected in the Raven Alert System. This capability has saved us endless man-hours in resources that we would otherwise spend constantly uploading and purging a list of individuals who have signed up for the service.”

Since the Raven Alert System is not limited to text or SMS messaging, members in the campus community can receive messages in several ways to ensure receipt. “I signed up and gave the system my cell phone, my e-mail and my home phone,” Williams says. “Messages will go to those three places for me. This flexibility is valuable because we can’t guarantee that everybody can

receive text messaging on their phone at all times.”

The system has already proved to be effective during a recent power outage and a few snow days. “We used the Raven Alert System to communicate the power outage, redirect classes and communicate cancelled or delayed classes,” Williams says. “We have a range of prepackaged messages sitting in our portal, and a few groups created. In the event of an inclement weather occurrence, we already have a message created so all I have to do is select that message and the group I want to send it to. That saves valuable time, because when you’re

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Learn more.

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dealing with an emergency situation there's potential for errors if creating a message in the heat of the moment. All I have to do is check two boxes and send the message. It relieves a lot of stress and pressure."

The Amatra E-Connect system also includes analytical capabilities so that Anderson staff can verify that messages are transmitted successfully. Williams adds: "After the event, we can evaluate the type of message we constructed, if it went out in a timely manner and how widely it was distributed. We can also see which calls didn't get through so we can flag a user and

let them know their contact information didn't work."

"A highly effective emergency management system is very important. It's important for us as an institution, it's important for families and it's important for students. Amatra and IBM have put the tools in place to help us communicate quickly with our campus and community, and to minimize as much as possible the impact of potentially disastrous events."

