

# APCO's Next Steps for Improving Public Safety Apps

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# Overview

- Brief background of APCO's role with apps
- App security workshop
- Fact Sheet and White Paper on Mobile Apps and 9-1-1

# The Importance of Mobile Apps

- ❖ Mobile apps are already being used for public safety and emergency response
- ❖ Drivers:
  - ❖ Increasing use of smartphones, generally
  - ❖ FirstNet creating a public safety broadband network
  - ❖ Transition to advanced platforms such as NG9-1-1 will enable advanced public safety communications

# The Importance of Public Safety Experts to Driving Innovation

- ❖ Apps are better when public safety experts guide the app developers
- ❖ Apps introduce new opportunities and vulnerabilities for public safety communications
- ❖ Recognizing this, APCO created a website devoted to public safety apps - AppComm
- ❖ With AppComm, APCO can serve as a resource, both for app users and developers

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### What makes an effective public safety app?

APCO's recently-released "Key Attributes of Effective Apps for Public Safety and Emergency Response" provides a list of important characteristics for the apps that appear on this site. [Read it here.](#)

### App Gallery (most recent first)



Suspicious Activity Reporting



Fire Safety Web App



Lancaster County Emergency Radio



VSee



Hollr

Have an idea for a great app? [Submit it here.](#)

**Tweets**

APCO Gov't Relations @GRO\_APCO 8 Nov  
Earlier @FCC agenda had order re reliability & resiliency of #911 networks; removed to enable more time for new Chairman and Comm'r review

ABC7News @ABC7News 7 Nov  
Arlington's construction boom could be putting emergency radio communications in danger. [wj.la/1bfgtv4](#)  
Retweeted by APCO Gov't Relations

# APCO's Key Attributes (KA)

- Some apps are not safe or effective
  - Misleading claims such as “Use this app instead of calling 9-1-1.”
- APCO created a list of [Key Attributes of Effective Apps for Public Safety and Emergency Response](#) to guide the selection of apps on AppComm. Examples:
  - **Operability** (efficient use of data, minimal battery strain)
  - **Security**
  - **Communication with 9-1-1, sending data to PSAPs and Comm Centers, and interfacing with PSAPS** (NOTE: APCO has filed a PIN with ANSI to develop a standard for apps that interface with communications centers and public safety responders)
- This led to discussions with partners – such as NIST – who have expertise in issues such as app security

# Workshop on App Security Requirements



- ❖ Co-located with APCO's Emerging Technology Forum in Orlando
- ❖ Input from public safety practitioners, app developers, and industry experts
- ❖ Summarized in NIST IR 8018
- ❖ Explored 6 subject areas

# Ex - Data Protection

- *KA: Sensitive information is stored and transmitted using encryption*
- What data needs protecting, and how do we protect it?
- Next step ex: Develop a data dictionary for public safety data and their protection requirements
  - This topic will be explored further in a 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop with NIST



# Data Protection Use Case Example

- *During a medical emergency response, a paramedic uses a mobile application to collect a patient's information (name, age, gender, age, etc.) as well as to monitor the patient's vital signs (heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, etc.). In addition, the mobile application forwards the patient information to the hospital the patient will be taken to.*
  - *How much of this is “sensitive” information?*
  - *Do legal/regulatory requirements cover it?*
  - *How is sensitive data identified and labeled?*

# The Next App Security Workshop

- San Diego, June 2
- Will focus on data protection recommendations from NIST IR 8018
  - Identify public safety data types
  - Determine the impact of security breach for each data type
  - Discuss appropriate security methods for each level of sensitivity

# Mobile Apps & 9-1-1

- April 27, APCO published a Fact Sheet and White Paper on Mobile Apps and 9-1-1
- Intended to educate the public and stakeholders in the app development community on the state of the 9-1-1 system and the role that mobile apps can play currently and in the future

# Primary Issues

- The 9-1-1 network is secure, reliable, and trusted. Apps must be as well.
- “9-1-1” apps run over the Internet, require heightened developer support, and sometimes make misleading claims.
- Today, there is no standard to ensure safety, nationwide use, competition, interoperability, etc.

# Upcoming FCC Workshop

- May 8 at the FCC
- Workshop on the use of smartphone apps in the provision of 9-1-1 service
- Includes app developers and representatives of the 9-1-1 community, including APCO's Jeff Cohen

# Thank you!

- AppComm: [www.appcomm.org](http://www.appcomm.org)
- APCO website: [www.apcointl.org](http://www.apcointl.org)
- Twitter: @GRO\_APCO

Fact Sheet and White Paper on Mobile Apps and 9-1-1:

<http://psc.apcointl.org/2015/04/27/apco-releases-fact-sheet-and-white-paper-on-mobile-apps-and-9-1-1/>

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