

EAS Profile Comments

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VII.A – Info and area block restrictions. The restrictions are biasing the messages for the limitations of EAS too much. We have found there are numerous situations where these multiple blocks are necessary during Update messages in order to properly represent the state of the message chain.

For the info block restriction, I think there is a case to be made that 2 info blocks in a message could result in 2 separate messages and this could prove problematic for the EAS unit. However there are many cases during Updates where one block represents something new that should go out via EAS, and another represents something already in place which does not. Or something that has been in place for some time suddenly changes with an Update that necessitates re-activation of EAS. The info and area block restrictions in the Canadian CAP profile are being removed based on real-world experience dealing with these situations.

So I propose the following change to info block handling. If the message has only one info block then it will be processed normally. If the message has more than one info block, then the first info block that contains the parameter EAS-Activate/Yes, is the info block that is used. If there are multiple info blocks and they all contain the parameter EAS-Activate/No, then no blocks are used. Finally if there are multiple info blocks and none of them contain this parameter, then the first info block is used with an implementation note instructing originators that good CAP practice is to add new blocks to the front of the message with existing blocks following.

For the area block restriction, I can't see any case to be made for it, if there is I'd like to hear it, and it should be removed. The CAP spec states that the sum total of the area for the info block is to be all of the area blocks combined. So it is simply a matter of combining the areaDesc's together and grouping the geocodes. Relational area blocks make for better presentation and filtering. This is especially important when creating the areaDesc to use for the text-to-speech. If there are 15 geocodes/areas in the message and only 2 apply to the actual area served by the EAS unit, triggering its filtering, why would the remaining 13 be displayed? And if they were displayed for completeness, the 2 that do apply should receive priority, else they be cut-off by the areaDesc length limit.

VII.C.5 – Duration calculations. The calculations for the duration do not mention the CAP effective and onset elements. Either they are ignored, or their handling needs to be addressed.

VII.E - Recorded audio. This problem is addressed in my comments to the CAP TC regarding having a proper replacement for an info block in another medium such as audio, and/or the addition of a resourceType element.

VIII.K – Update/Cancel messages. This discussion and subsequent validation table entry for msgType Update/Cancel does not talk about proper use and formatting of the references element.

VIII.M-N - Constructing text-to-speech. These default values used to create the broadcast message will result in a lot of EAS bias in presentation. I would suggest that these rules be the 3rd preference with the resource element containing an audio file being the 1st preference, and a new parameter called EAS-Text that contains a prepared text version being the 2nd. In the case that an audio file is included, it will be used for audio broadcast and if the EAS-Text is available, it will be used for video broadcast. If no audio resource is available but the EAS-Text is there, it is used for both text-to-speech for broadcast and video broadcast. Finally if neither of the other options are present, then these formatting rules would be followed. The use of this parameter would allow all types of distributors to have better presentation.

VIII.M-N - Constructing text-to-speech. The event should come before the headline as event is typically short and the headline expands on what may be present in the event. The instruction should come before the description as it will contain actions to be taken and is more relevant. There is no mention of how a responseType element could influence any of this text construction. Finally if multiple area blocks are used and one block has a matching geocode and another does not, then only the matching areaDesc should be added to the text.