

# Making Public Safety Apps as Safe and Effective as Possible

Mark Reddish

Senior Counsel & Manager of Government Relations

APCO International

[www.appcomm.org](http://www.appcomm.org)

The screenshot shows the 'application community' website, which is described as 'the destination for public safety apps'. The site is brought to you by APCO International. The navigation menu includes Home, About, Browse, Submit App, News & Resources, Group Talk, and APCO International. There are links for Login and Register.

**Search**

Keyword Search:

Categories:

All Categories

Device:

All Devices

Pricing level:

All Pricing levels

SEARCH

**Top Tags**

Backend Integration | CAD | Calculators | Campus Safety | Checklist | CPR | Crime Tips | Disaster | Dispatch | Dosing | Earthquake | Educational Tools | Emergency Contacts | Evacuation | Fire | First Aid | Government Data | GPS | HazMat | Help Request | Hospital | Hurricane | Incident

As host of the single trusted site for public safety apps, APCO seeks to ensure that apps for public safety and emergency response are as safe and effective as possible. To learn more about the work APCO has been doing to improve apps, check out our [blog post about partnering with developers and industry experts to conduct an app testing pilot](#). We are continually looking for input and additional partners. Whether you're a developer, public safety professional, or industry expert – we want to hear from you! Please contact us at [AppComm@apointl.org](mailto:AppComm@apointl.org) to share your ideas and/or feedback with our staff.

**App Gallery (most recent first)**

- 1st Minute
- SceneDoc
- LiveSafe
- USPD Hub
- Lost Person Behavior
- AT&T Enhanced Push-to-Talk

**Have an idea for a great app? SUBMIT ideas here.**

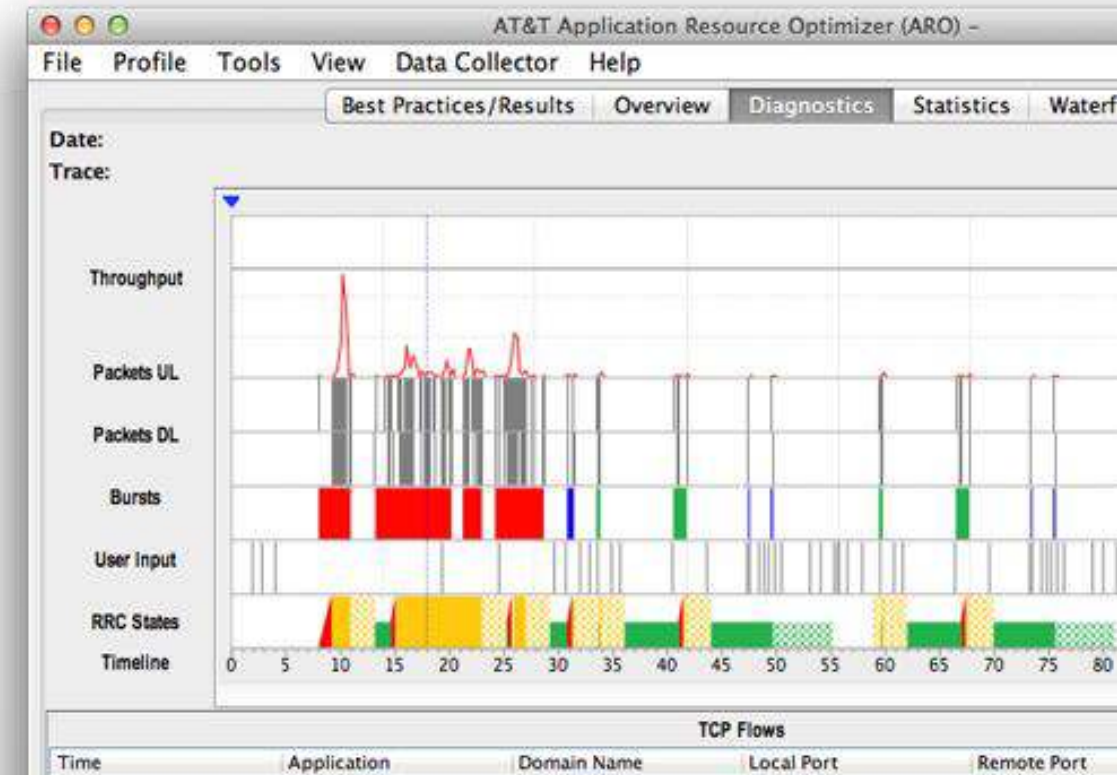
**Looking for App inspiration? FIND ideas here.**

APCO Gov't Relations @GRO\_APCO  
 :@APCOIntl seeking volunteers to serve on committees; deadline to apply is April 1st  
[magnetmail.net/actions/email...](http://magnetmail.net/actions/email...)  
 15:51, Tue  
 Reply Retweet Favourites

UrgentCommunications @UrgentComm  
 :@APCOIntl Executive Director Derek Poarch outlines how Project 43 can help PSAPs make NG911

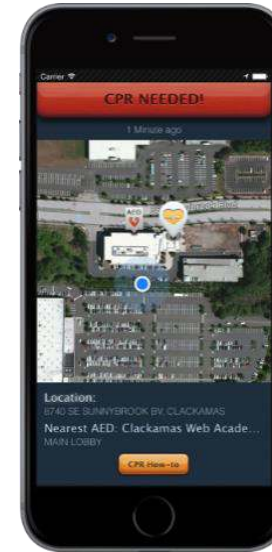
- Some apps are not safe or effective
  - Misleading claims such as “Better than 9-1-1.”
  - Interference with emergency operations
- APCO created a list of [Key Attributes of Effective Apps for Public Safety and Emergency Response](#) to guide the selection of apps on AppComm. Examples:
  - **Operability** (efficient use of data, minimal battery strain)
  - **Security**
  - **Communication with 9-1-1, sending data to PSAPs and Comm Centers, and interfacing with PSAPS**
- Sought input from orgs with technical expertise

- Collaboration with CTIA – the Wireless Association, AT&T, and developers through AppComm
- Testing with AT&T's Application Resource Optimizer (ARO) for file compression, unnecessary connections, duplicative files/downloads, etc.



## The Results:

- App 1 - meeting best practices; adopted for routine development
- App 2 - opportunity for file compression to speed data transfer and reduce battery/data use



- Partnering with orgs like FirstNet, NIST, and DHS,
- Gathering public safety professionals, app developers, and industry experts,
- To discuss app-related issues such as:
  - Security Requirements
  - Public Safety Data Classifications
  - Interoperability





# Refining an App Testing Platform

- Work underway through a partnership with DHS S&T
- Exploring how app testing platforms can detect security vulnerabilities such as:
  - Excessive Permissions
  - Sensitive Data Exposure
- Adapting a program used by federal agencies for public safety and investigating issues such as:
  - Data interoperability between agencies
  - Meeting security requirements
  - Compliance with federal, state, & local laws, regulations, & policies

- In 2015, 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
- Shared early lessons learned from app efficiency and security testing pilots



- Comply with industry standards
- Work anywhere in the country
- Be as reliable as the existing 9-1-1 system
- Preserve the familiar simplicity of 9-1-1
- Connect users to the appropriate PSAP
- Comply with FCC rules, state/local regs, and industry best practices

- Work without delay, regardless of device or app software updates
- Be free to the public and not impose unreasonable costs on PSAPs
- Be device and OS agnostic
- Meet public safety's cybersecurity needs
- Efficiently use/monitor device battery and throttle-down if necessary

# Hypothetical 1

9-1-1



"24/7" Monitoring Center

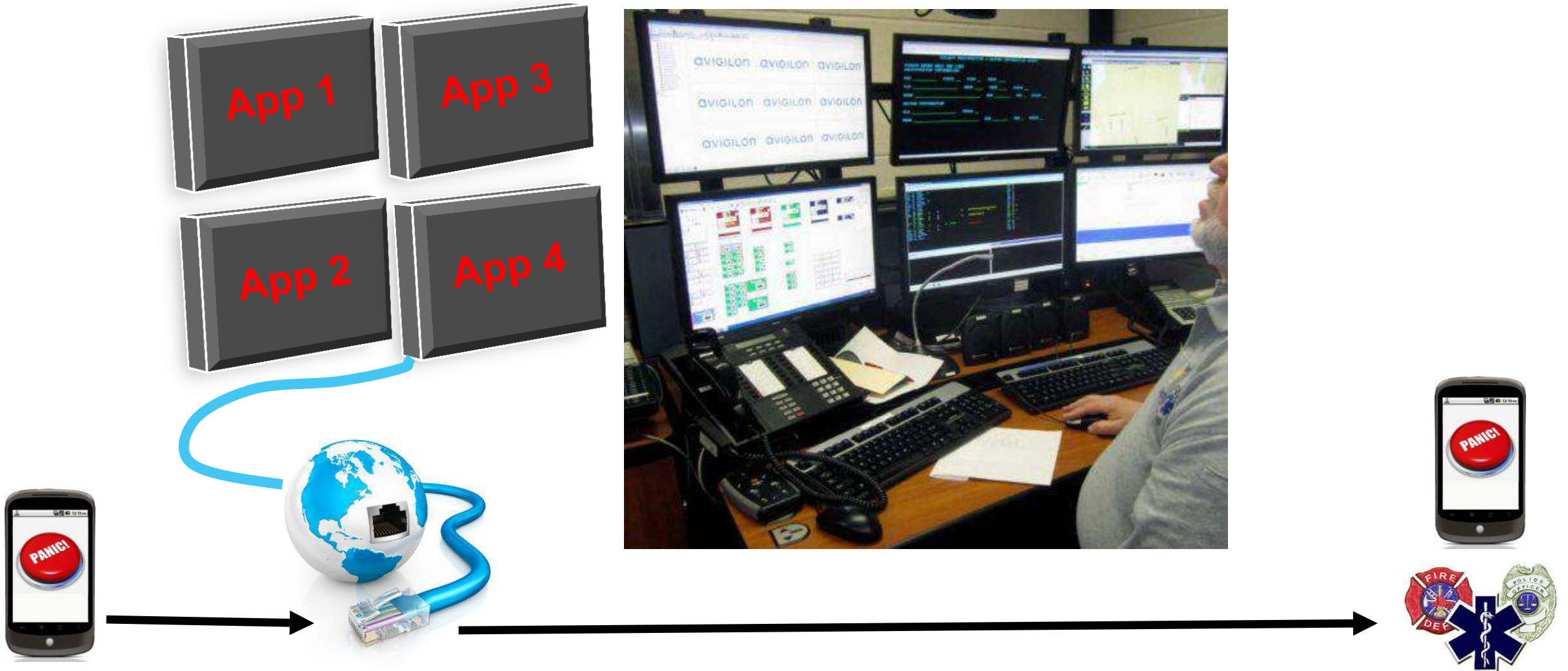


www.clipart.com : 1239039

PSAP

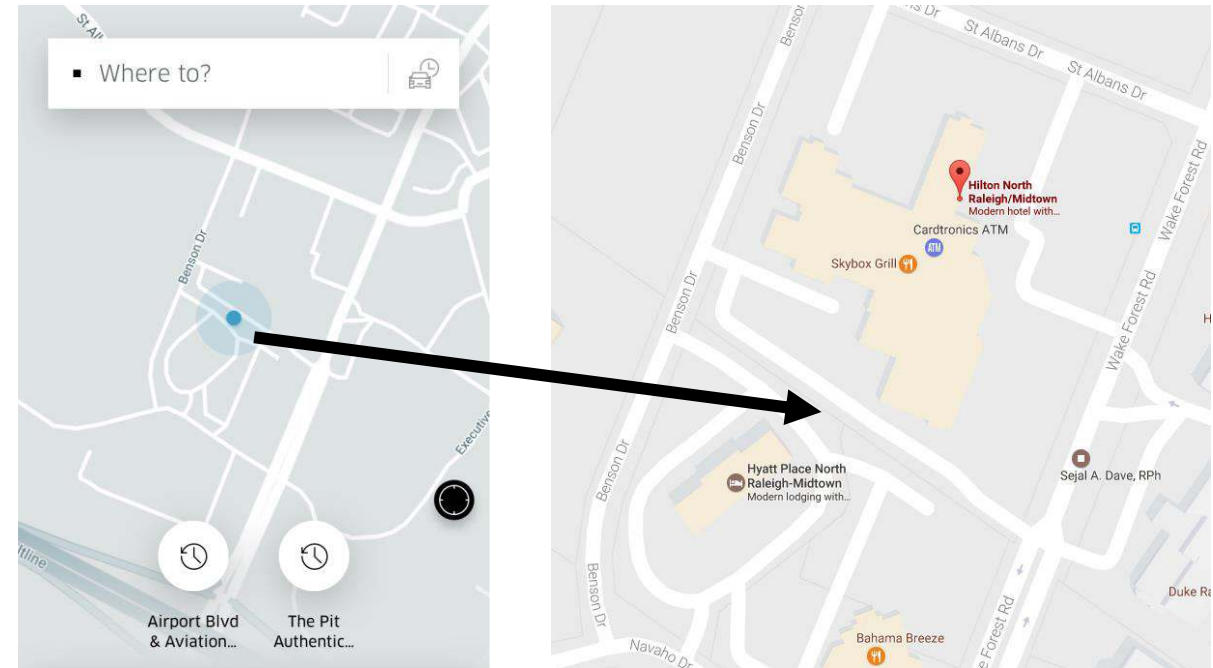


# Hypothetical 2



- Dec. 2016, PSHSB sought comment on a request to initiate a proceeding to address concerns related to 9-1-1 apps
- APCO reiterated points from its white paper:
  - Mobile apps are not ready to replace a 9-1-1 call.
  - Critical issues must be addressed, even before using apps to supplement a 9-1-1 call
    - *Ensuring reliability, universality, and security*
    - *Ensuring sustainability, continued functionality of apps*
    - *Ending misleading app descriptions that confuse the public and do a disservice to the efforts of committed public safety professionals*

- 9-1-1 can benefit from commercial location-based technologies, but there's no quick fix.
- Weigh the benefits against the potential risks.
- App-enabled location vs. Dispatchable Location



# Thank you!

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

APCO's 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/>

APCO's Recent Comments to the FCC on Apps for 9-1-1:

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10202534923248/APCO%20Comments%200-%20Smartphone%20apps%20for%20911%20-%20Feb2017.pdf>