

In an increasingly interconnected world, neither the public nor the private sector can claim sole stewardship for a stable critical infrastructure. These interconnections create a complicated web of priorities and responsibilities. This is particularly the case for the telecommunications infrastructure that, while wholly privately owned, is regulated by government. New interdependencies require new kinds of coordination of efforts in a variety of areas, in particular in the coordination of response to events which threaten the stability of the critical infrastructure. Many federal advisory boards have cited the need for both stronger national and regional preparedness, while also noting a broad recommendation such as this must be tailored to meet the needs of specific regions. Recent events such as the World Trade Center attacks and Hurricane Katrina have generated new discussions among stakeholders about the coordination necessary to ensure response capability. As a result, a number of initiatives at the federal level have focused on increasing coordination capability across sectors in terms of response to national incidents. Successes in these efforts at the national level together with encouragement from the federal advisory boards have raised questions among states and localities as well as providers about the creation of sub-national regional approaches to telecommunications incidents as a complement to existing state and local level incident response capabilities.

In 2006 the New York State Department of Public Service, (DPS) as a key actor in the national and regional telecommunications community, began to engage in discussions with other key actors in the region about launching an exploration of regional coordination of telecommunications incident response. Encouraged by interest from stakeholders, DPS partnered with the Center for Technology in Government (CTG) to organize a preliminary discussion about this idea among members of the telecommunications community. CTG brought together representatives of telecommunications and financial providers, state emergency management agencies, federal communications agencies, state regulatory authorities, state departments of homeland security, and representatives from state cybersecurity on March 28, 2007 for a one-day workshop to focused on this idea.

The stakeholders engaged in discussions about the potential value of regional coordination through the use of CTG's Public Value Framework, exploring how such coordination might deliver value to various stakeholder groups. A key aspect of this discussion was concern about unnecessary duplication of effort and that regional coordination should not duplicate response capabilities in either the public or private sectors. Participants at the workshop agreed that regional incident response requires leveraging currently held resources in innovative and potentially more efficient ways, as well as the establishment of new business processes, communication flows, and a system of governance that satisfies the needs of all stakeholders. In addition, trust, collaboration, and timely cross-boundary information sharing all play a pivotal role in this new model. A key finding from the workshop is that, regardless of future investments in regional coordination, the gap in current knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of individual organizations in sub-national incidents and the understanding of who has what information at any point in time that could be brought to bear on incident response need to be clarified.

This report summarizes the workshop discussions and includes a set of recommendations from the participants for next steps in exploring regional response coordination. The report outlines how the value of coordination was assessed by workshop participants and presents their prioritization of perceived benefits of and challenges to regional coordination. Suggestions for how this report might be used to assist in moving the discussion forward within and across each of the various sectors are also provided.

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