Communications Expectations from ARES/RACES Teams

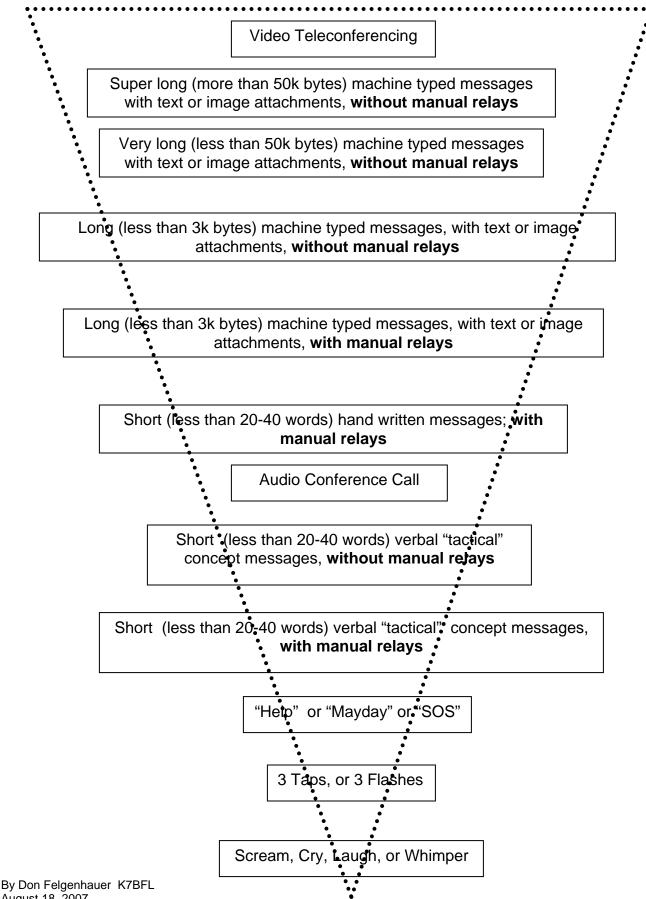by Don Felgenhauer   K7BFL

August 18, 2007

Before an ARES/RACES team provides communications services for a client, a definition of expected performance levels from the ARES needs to be defined and agreed upon with the client.

These expectations should to be described and defined in a manner which the client will understand that it can "expect" and what it "cannot expect".   Performance measurements could include:

1. Could there be any degradation in the accuracy of the information during the transfer?

2. Will the information be conceptual in nature; or specific letters, numbers, and words?

3. Will a ham radio operator be "relaying" the information, or will two or more of the client's personnel be able to use the equipment directly.

4. Will the information be transferred via voice, hand-written notes, machine typed, video, etc.?

5. What will be the expected time delay to transfer from the client's Sender to the client's Receiver?

6. How secure and confidential is the information during the transfer?

7. How far (distance) from the base of operations can information be transferred?

8. What is the largest message that can reasonably be transferred?

9. Can pictures, images, and video be transferred?

10. What is the expected maximum "throughput" that can be expected from the ARES? This can be described in terms such as "messages per hour" of ___ size.

11. Can information be transferred both Out from the Client and In to the Client?

12. How quickly can the ARES begin providing communications, after Callout?

13. Will the client expect documentation (What, Who, When, Where) of all or part of the information transferred? Will the ARES be able to provide the needed documentation?

Information Transfer Levels - between Third Parties

Video Teleconferencing

Super long (more than 50k bytes) machine typed messages
with text or image attachments, **without manual relays**

Very long (less than 50k bytes) machine typed messages
with text or image attachments, **without manual relays**

Long (less than 3k bytes) machine typed messages, with text or image
attachments, **without manual relays**

Long (less than 3k bytes) machine typed messages, with text or image
attachments, **with manual relays**

Short (less than 20-40 words) hand written messages; **with
manual relays**

Audio Conference Call

Short (less than 20-40 words) verbal "tactical"
concept messages, **without manual relays**

Short (less than 20-40 words) verbal "tactical" concept messages,
with manual relays

"Help" or "Mayday" or "SOS"

3 Taps, or 3 Flashes

Scream, Cry, Laugh, or Whimper

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