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Analysis of Current Text-to-911 Systems Usage in the Northern Virginia Area

A review of the literature reveals that while misuse of the voice 911 system is well-documented and addressed, patterns of misuse within newer 911 systems are being neglected. This study examines the public's use of the text-to-911 (T911) systems in Arlington County and Fairfax County, Virginia through quantitative research that evaluates data from T911 transcripts. The study questions whether the system is being appropriately used by the public and, if not, how the public is misusing the system. Data acquired from T911 transcripts showed that 3.51% of text contacts in Arlington and 8.05% of contacts in Fairfax met criteria for valid use of the T911 system. The majority of misuse stemmed from accidental misuse, rather than malicious abuse or pranks. The ensuing data analysis confirms that T911 likely suffers from the same type of misuse that voice 911 systems encounter and supports potential policies to mitigate further misuse.

Presentation Theme: Public Safety Communications Technology. The presentation covers text-to-911's history, benefits, flaws, its usage in the northern Virginia area, and patterns of misuse.

Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research:

The presentation is the result of my master's thesis in Emergency Services Administration at California State University, Long Beach. The thesis committee was comprised of: Shirley Feldmann-Jensen, D.P.P.D., M.P.H. (Chair); Steve Jensen,

D.P.P.D.; and Peter Kreysa, Ph.D. The College Designee for the Department of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Emergency Management was Brenda Vogel, Ph.D.