



EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND NEWS APP

Mobile warning app for the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK)

By connecting the warning app for smartphones to the federal government's Modular Warning System, citizens now receive warning messages about current hazardous situations directly on their smartphones. The app is called NINA (an acronym for "Notfall-Informations- und Nachrichten-App" – Emergency Information and News App) and is available to all citizens free of charge on iOS and Android operating systems. When developing the app, the BBK chose T-Systems as a reliable and innovative partner. T-Systems provides the highly available and extremely powerful infrastructure required for NINA, including push notifications capable of informing several million users simultaneously. The current version can notify the 3 million users currently registered within 30 seconds. An extension is possible at any time. 5 million users are expected to have signed up by 2020. The top priority is being given to data protection and security.

AT A GLANCE

- Provision and operation of highly available and extremely powerful infrastructure for the warning app
- Push notifications capable of informing millions of users simultaneously: notification of 3 million users currently within 30 seconds
- Plan to expand the solution to 5 million users by 2020
- Top priority for data protection and security
- Immediate and reliable delivery of warning messages about current hazardous situations to citizens
- Rapid provision of information on what to do in emergencies
- Failsafe due to redundant infrastructure
- Fast implementation and extension thanks to partnering

THE REFERENCE IN DETAIL

THE CUSTOMER. Civil protection is a key pillar in the overall concept of the Federal Republic of Germany's national security architecture and it is part of the state's duty to provide protection in terms of security. The Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK) was established in May 2004 as an important contribution by the federal government to the new strategy for protecting the German population. As the higher federal authority in the area of accountability of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), it performs tasks in civil protection and disaster relief. With the BBK, the Federal Republic of Germany has a central organizational unit for civil security that bundles all relevant tasks in one place and links them to an effective protection system for the population and their livelihoods.

THE TASK. More than 53 million people in Germany use a smartphone according to the findings of a recent Bitkom study. The smartphone has become a digital all-rounder in everyday life, replacing a variety of devices and information channels that were previously indispensable. It has never been easier to reach the vast majority of the population regardless of time and place. Against the background of digitalization, the BBK also took advantage of this trend. In view of the increasing number of extreme weather situations, it was an obvious move for the BBK to extend its existing warning systems (radio, television, sirens, etc.) in the so-called Modular Warning System (MoWaS) to include an application for mobile devices to be able to alert the population accurately, quickly, and effectively. For this task, the BBK looked for reliable partners with the appropriate know-how and expertise, who would be capable of designing the app, implementing the extension on several million smartphones, and meeting the high demands in terms of data protection and security.

THE SOLUTION. In the benchmark test, T-Systems was able to convince as a reliable and innovative partner and was entrusted with the provision and operation of the infrastructure for the NINA warning app. Only four months passed between initial discussions and the launch of the app. The highly available and extremely powerful infrastructure was built redundantly by T-Systems. The ITIL-compliant 24/7 operation, in accordance with individual SLAs, ensures maximum performance and reliability. Using push notifications, the BBK can inform several million users about current threats at the same time and send them warning messages. In the current version, 3 million users can be notified within 30 seconds. T-Systems can implement an extension within a very short time. User figures are increasing by about 3,000 users daily. 5 million citizens are expected to have signed up by 2020. The top priority is being given to data protection and security: at no time does data leave Germany and all processing takes place within the country.

The NINA warning app draws data mainly from MoWaS, which has already been in use by the Federal Government and all federal states since 2013 for warnings relating to civil protection and disaster control. The issuing of warnings is the central function of NINA. The app always displays all currently valid official warnings, which are sent by the federal and state governments – as well as by municipalities in some states such as North Rhine-Westphalia – via MoWaS. In addition, the app also contains up-to-date information, from the German Meteorological Service (DWD), for example, as well as current water levels from the states' flood warning centers. All warnings and information can be viewed in a map or list view. Warnings are – in contrast to information – notifications, which are sent by the official bodies responsible for civil protection and disaster control and which are always displayed. Information from the DWD and WSV (Federal Waterways and Shipping Administration) can be shown or hidden. As part of a cooperation, the plan is for the other two warning apps, BI-WAPP and KATWARN, to be connected.

CUSTOMER BENEFITS. In the digital age, the NINA warning app is making a significant contribution to fulfilling the BBK's task of protecting the population. NINA can be used free of charge by every citizen and thus complements all previously available warning systems. Thanks to T-Systems' highly available and failsafe infrastructure with its push notifications function, it is possible to deliver warning messages about current dangerous situations to citizens throughout Germany immediately, reliably and, if desired, also in a location-specific manner. In addition, event-related information on what to do and general emergency tips help the population to optimally prepare for possible dangers. Thanks to partnering, the app was implemented within a short time. Extensions can be realized just as quickly.

“Digitization opens up almost infinite technological possibilities. The NINA warning app is an example of how citizens' lives can be made not only easier, but also safer. Thanks to the powerful infrastructure provided by T-Systems, more than three million users can at present be notified of emergencies accurately, quickly, and effectively. Some two billion push notifications were sent in May 2018 alone.”

Jakob Rehbach (BBK)



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