

# **Multimedia Weather Briefing**

## **Product Description Document (PDD)**

### **National Weather Service, Southern Region**

#### **Part I – Mission Connection**

- 1) **Product Description** – The Multimedia Weather Briefing is an Internet-accessible multimedia file that provides information concerning hazardous weather events within the service area of a Southern Region office. The briefing provides a medium for supporting the planning activities of emergency response partners and customers by conveying (both aurally and visually, in non-technical terms) the forecaster's reasoning and confidence concerning upcoming hazardous weather events.

A forecaster, hydrologist or member of the management team performs the task of developing this briefing, and it is available on the Internet as frequently as staffing and need allows. During periods of fair weather, the multimedia briefing may be produced with low frequency, most likely less than once a day. Prior to and during impact events, the frequency of the briefings will increase as needed in order to adequately address the risks posed to users.

- 2) **Purpose** - The purpose of the Multimedia Weather Briefing is to serve as a briefing tool that can be used by emergency managers, responders and decision-makers; media; local and state officials; law enforcement; school superintendents; spotters; and the general public. The briefing provides general information concerning the location, timing, and expected magnitude of impacts which may affect these entities.

The briefings also serve as a means of conveying forecaster or hydrologist reasoning or uncertainty, which can impact the preparations made by our partners and customers. Preparedness information can also be communicated through the briefings, depending on the type of hazardous weather.

- 3) **Audience** – The target audience encompasses all partners and customers of Southern Region offices with Internet access and multimedia playback capability. The product is available to anyone who has an Internet connection (dial-up or high speed).
- 4) **Presentation Format** – The user accesses the Multimedia Weather Briefing by selecting the appropriate link on the office's web site. The office should make every reasonable effort to provide files that satisfy the most popular media formats (see Part II).
- 5) **Feedback Method** – We always are looking for feedback regarding the quality and utility of NWS products. Southern Region offices that prepare and post multimedia weather briefings will provide a link to a formal customer survey as a means of soliciting feedback on this product. The survey can be accessed through the following URL:

## Part II – Technical Description

- 1) **Format & Science Basis** – There are a wide variety of file formats for recording and storing the Multimedia Weather Briefing, including (but not limited to) Windows Media Video (\*.wmv), Real Media (\*.ram), QuickTime (\*.mov), MPEG (Moving Picture Expert Group, \*.mpg, \*.mpeg) and Macromedia Flash (\*.swf) compression standards. The format must be able to handle both audio and video. The files are stored on a regional web server that distributes files to users via Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP). Users can access the videos via hyperlinks on the main office's web page served via the Internet. The file format must also be such that users can access the Multimedia Weather Briefing through any web browser (Internet Explorer, Fire Fox, etc.) on any operating system (Windows XP, Linux, Unix, Mac, etc.)

The files can be produced using a variety of multimedia recording and editing software sources. The video programs used should be robust enough to create video files at many different levels of compression and file formats.

One of the main goals in creating this type of multimedia content is to preserve bandwidth as much as possible, in keeping with regional and national IT objectives. As such, videos produced by the office will remain at a file size of 3 MB or less. These files sizes can usually accommodate videos ranging in length from 3 to 6 minutes with 3 to 5 slides in the presentation.

The videos are completed as needed and uploaded to the Southern Region web server via File Transfer Protocol (FTP). After upload, the file is then available for download by customers and partners.

- 2) **Availability** – The product is available for download via hyperlink on the office's main website located on Southern Region web servers. A new webpage will load with the briefing embedded in it for viewing and download. The format of the Multimedia Weather Briefing should also be accessible, independent of the web browser or operating system used by the intended audience. The briefings are produced whenever forecasters believe some potential exists for hazardous or high-impact weather within the forecast area. A forecaster, hydrologist or a member of the management team performs the task of developing this briefing, and it is available on the Internet as frequently as staffing and need allows.

A text summary and audio clip of the Multimedia Weather Briefing will be available on the same web page as an alternate to the briefing. The text summary will describe the content in each slide, and highlight the main ideas given in the briefing. An audio file (\*.mp3) will also be available which is a copy of the audio from the briefing. The alternate text summary and audio file are available in the event that the movie file

does not load properly in the web browser. The text summary and audio file are also designed to fulfill 508 compliancy requirements for users with disabilities.

3) **Additional Information** – None.