



**Title:** Travel Advisory mobile app

**Category:** Information Communications Technology

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**Project Dates:** November 12, 2014 – December 16, 2014

**Executive Summary:** The Indiana Travel Advisory app is meant to help users stay aware of changing travel conditions.

Features include:

- Ability for users to set alerts for any county or counties they choose, up to every county in the state. When the travel status in a selected county is changed, the user will receive an alert notification.
- Weather conditions for each county. Tapping on a county on a state map on the smartphone's screen will display the temperature and an icon with the current conditions.
- Contact information for county Emergency Management Administrators, who are responsible for the status updates.

The State reports data provided by county Emergency Management Administrators (EMAs). Some counties only update data when there has been a change in status and do not reaffirm that everything is 'Normal.'

For example, County X may not have had any travel emergencies since June and has remained in the "normal" category the entire time since that last event. Since the status has not changed, there has been nothing to update – but the advisory will continue to reflect the June event unless the local administrator resets it to "normal." The next time there is a county-level emergency impacting travel, however, the status is changed by the county EMA and is reflected in the app.

The data lag makes some people not use the site because they think it is out-of-date. That app, with the alert notifications, makes it so the user can passively wait for the notifications to come to them instead of checking the website.

**Business Problem and Solution Description:**

The Travel Advisory app was designed with one overriding purpose – to keep motorists safe in their travels by informing them of travel conditions throughout Indiana and enabling them quick access to local authorities should they need to contact them. The mobile app allows citizens to be sent proactive notifications, which are helpful because they do not need to go to the website to constantly check the county status.

The Travel Advisory web app is among the top three most-visited pages during the winter months -- and sometimes the most visited page overall, depending on the severity of the winter. The mobile app provides the ability for alert notifications to be sent directly to users, saving them time from having to go online.

Aside from “normal,” there are three possible statuses: warning, watch and advisory.

- “Warning” constitutes the highest level of local travel advisory, meaning that travel may be restricted to emergency management workers only. During a “warning” local travel advisory, individuals are directed to refrain from all travel; comply with necessary emergency measures; cooperate with public officials and disaster services forces in executing emergency operations plans; and obey and comply with the lawful directions of properly identified officers.
- “Watch” means that conditions are threatening to the safety of the public. During a “watch” local travel advisory, citizens are advised only to engage in essential travel, such as to and from work or in emergency situations. In addition, emergency action plans should be implemented by businesses, schools, government agencies and other organizations.
- “Advisory” is the lowest level of local travel advisory, meaning that routine travel or activities may be restricted in areas because of a hazardous situation, and individuals should use caution or avoid those areas.

**Significance:** This new mobile app means that citizens with smartphones have quick and easy access to important travel-safety information in the palms of their hands. Via this mobile app, citizens are sent only the travel status changes in which they have interest. There is no need to check the website anymore.

And by clicking on a county, motorists get instant access to phone numbers and emails at which they may reach local emergency management officials.

**Benefit of the Project:**

Putting this information into a quickly-accessible smartphone app – for both Apple and Android users – has definitely improved the services provided via the state’s Travel Advisory map.

The Apple version of the app has been installed 28,364 times as of May 27, 2015, and launched 245,712 times. In addition, 65,895 push notifications have been sent since February.

The Android version has been installed 25,257 times and launched 400,705 times – again, as of May 27, 2015.

This was developed internally by the Indiana Office of Technology mobile development team, saving the state money from hiring outside resources.