

## Frequently Asked Questions Alertus Desktop Notification Project

### **What is Alertus Desktop?**

The Alertus Desktop notification option is the latest addition to the University of Iowa's [emergency notification system](#). When the university issues an emergency alert (Hawk Alert), all computer workstations and laptops running the Alertus system will display a full-screen pop-up alert providing messaging about the emergency on campus and what actions to take. The pop-up alert option is being added in addition to the notifications those on campus already receive on personal mobile devices, and are not meant to replace them.

### **Why is the University of Iowa adding Alertus Desktop as a Hawk Alert notification option?**

The university is committed to notifying faculty, staff, and students of emergency events that are currently occurring on, or imminently threatening the UI campus.

This service will help maximize the safety and protection of our campus community to ensure a wider dissemination for the UI Hawk Alert system by providing an additional layer of coverage in areas of campus where cell signal is degraded and in situations where faculty, staff, and students may not have immediate access to their cell phones. This service will also improve the accessibility of emergency communications for campus.

### **Is Alertus Desktop mandatory for everyone on campus?**

Alertus desktop will be installed on university supported computers located in classrooms, and lecture halls over winter break. Impacted spaces include:

- Classroom/Lecture Halls: <https://classrooms.uiowa.edu/>

Faculty, staff, and students will have the option to download the desktop notification client on their computers beginning in January 2020. Individuals will also have the option to install it on their personal devices if they choose to. If desired by a college/unit, Alertus will be available in the standard, "Software Center" for optional install.

### **How does Alertus Desktop work?**

If you opt-in to download the desktop notification client and are connected to the UI wired or wireless network, or are using a centrally supported computer with the client, the service will issue a "pop-up" Hawk Alert message on your computer.

To close the message and return to your desktop, you simply click the green "acknowledge" button. Unacknowledged alerts expire after a set timeframe, and will no longer be visible to the user once they expire or have been canceled.

### **Why should I opt-in to install Alertus Desktop?**

We are implementing this emergency notification service in an effort to maximize the safety and protection of our campus community. Downloading the desktop notification client will ensure a wider dissemination for the UI Hawk Alert system and provide an additional layer of coverage in areas of campus where cell signal is degraded.

### **Tell me more about the emergency messaging desktop client.**

Alertus is a vendor of alerting technology and systems. While they offer many options, the UI has procured their emergency messaging desktop feature (<http://www.alertus.com/desktop/>). This feature allows a UI Department of Public safety administrator to launch an alert which will cause any computer with the service to be overridden with a screen “pop-up” message. The message can be tailored to the situation and the recipient is forced to hit an “acknowledge” button in order to close the window.

Alertus can be integrated into our current dashboard provided by RAVE allowing the continuation of using just one system to launch alerts via multiple channels. Alertus requires a client to be downloaded and installed on each computer to establish a connection to the Alertus server and be able to receive alerts.

The software has been evaluated by the Information Security and Policy Office and is currently in the planning stages for deployment. The deployment will be a combination of automated distribution, and voluntary installation.

### **Where do I get the software and instructions for installation?**

This [Information Technology Services page](#) contains instructions for how to install the software on Mac and Windows. Log-in with your HawkID is required for download.

### **Do I have to be an administrator on my work station to install the client?**

University of Iowa owned and centrally managed computers will not require administrator privileges to install. If desired by a college/unit, Alertus will be available in the standard, “Software Center” for optional install.

Personally owned computers or computers not centrally managed will require administrator privileges to install.

### **Where do I go if I need assistance regarding installation, use, and troubleshooting of the desktop notification client?**

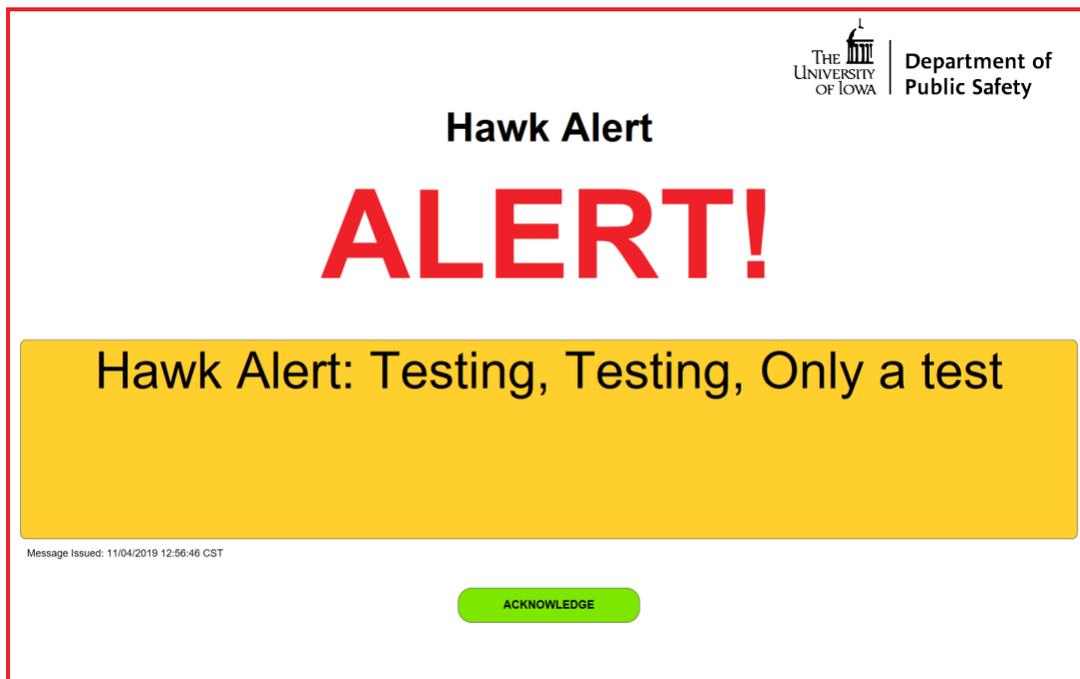
Contact the [ITS Help Desk](#) (319-384-4357), or [its-helpdesk@uiowa.edu](mailto:its-helpdesk@uiowa.edu) and they will assist you.

### **What sort of messages will come in the form of a “pop-up”?**

Only situations that rise to the level of a Hawk Alert will use the pop-up method of communication to those who install the desktop client. For more information on Hawk Alert, see: <https://police.uiowa.edu/emergency-preparedness/hawk-alert>

### What will the pop-up look like?

The Alertus Desktop pop-up will always include the date, and time of the alert, the University of Iowa logo, and specify it is a UI Hawk Alert. See image below as an example.



### Will I get the “pop-up” on my computer if I am off campus, and not on the UI’s wired or wireless internet network?

No. Hawk Alert “pop-up” messages will only deliver to a computer while it is connected to the UI wired or wireless network. Alertus messages will not display if you are connected using the VPN.

### Does the client track or monitor computer usage?

No. The client’s only function is to listen to its server for an alert and then process that alert into a “pop-up” message.

### Who is the manager of this service?

The emergency messaging desktop client, a part of the UI Hawk Alert service, will be managed collaboratively by the UI Department of Public Safety (UI DPS) and UI Information Technology Services (ITS).

**What if I don't want to install the emergency messaging desktop client on my machine for fear of it impacting software performance?**

If it is deemed the emergency desktop client could negatively impact special software or computing functions, installation is not required. Keep in mind installation beyond information technology centers, computer labs, classrooms, and lecture halls is voluntary at this time.

**What should an instructor do if a Hawk Alert comes up on the screen during class?**

When the computer user receives an actual emergency alert (Hawk Alert) on the Alertus Notification, the user should follow the action steps that are provided in the message related to the emergency. These could include "seek shelter," "evacuate," "avoid the area," etc.

To close the message and return to your desktop, you simply click the green "acknowledge" button.

**Who do I contact if I have questions about Alertus?**

- [ITS Help Desk](mailto:its-helpdesk@uiowa.edu), 319-384-HELP (4357), [its-helpdesk@uiowa.edu](mailto:its-helpdesk@uiowa.edu)
- [Classroom Technology Hotline](mailto:classroom-technology@uiowa.edu), 319-335-1976, [classroom-technology@uiowa.edu](mailto:classroom-technology@uiowa.edu)