Product Brief: Location Manager

Softphones are becoming ever-more prevalent in enterprises and SMBs alike. Organization of all types and sizes are deploying these devices across their organizations to allow their users greater flexibility to communicate and collaborate from virtually anywhere. With this flexibility, however, comes a challenge: if users can work from anywhere, how do you know where they are in an emergency? If someone dials 911 from their softphone, on- or off-site, does your organization have the necessary systems in place to know where they are located and get that call to the right Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)?

West's new Location Manager, deployed as a module of West's Emergency Routing Service, allows organizations to do precisely this: keep track of mobile softphone users, regardless of whether they are on- or off-site, and get the emergency calls to the right location for emergency assistance dispatching. Hosted in the cloud, Location Manager eliminates the need to purchase and deploy on-site equipment, allowing organizations to minimize the capital expenses associated with their voice networks.

West's Safety Services

- Compliant with all major IP-PBX platforms for seamless E911 integration and interoperability

- E911 connectivity to over 6,000 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) across North America

- Reliable support for complex environments such as multiple UC vendors deployed on-premises, hosted, or hybrid environments

1000 Trusted to safeguard over 1,000 organizations

36M Over 36M VoIP records under management

24/7/365 Call routing service delivered over a geo-redundant network with no single point of failure

911 Location is Essential

Many organizations are subject to state and local legislation and regulations that require them to deliver highly granular location information along with a 911 call. As well, the FCC is investigating 911 location rules that would apply specific location granularity standards to organizations across America. These rules were implemented, and are being considered nationwide, because providing first responders with detailed location information allows them to more quickly locate the caller, saving precious seconds and minutes in crisis situations.

The ability to provide detailed location information is distinct from the functionality provided by standard static E911 solutions, which may only provide a civic address for 911 location. These solutions may not meet the regulatory requirements imposed upon many organizations, and also don't accommodate softphone users who frequently move their devices from one location to another. Location Manager addresses both of these challenges – it allows for the location granularity required by legislation and regulations to be implemented by enterprises, and keeps the locations of mobile softphones up-to-date.

How it Works: On-Site Users

When users are on the enterprise network, they can move their softphone from location to location and remain connected to the voice network. To keep track of these on-site devices, Location Manager leverages the location of your fixed network elements: subnets, switches and ports, and wireless access point BSSIDs.

To implement softphone location tracking, Layer 2, Layer 3 and Wireless LAN network maps are provisioned in ERS. These network maps associate physical locations to subnets, switches and wireless access points. When a user dials 911 and is connected to any one of these network elements, Location Manager sends the call to ERS, along with the data points necessary to reference the caller's current location against the provisioned network maps. The determined location is then used to select the PSAP for call routing, and the call is delivered over the ERS network. The location of the network elements can be provisioned to any level of granularity, from the building level all the way down to specific workstations.

All this occurs completely behind the scenes – the caller is unaware that any of these data flows are happening. The caller simply experiences their call quickly connecting to the right PSAP, and the call taker confirming their current location.
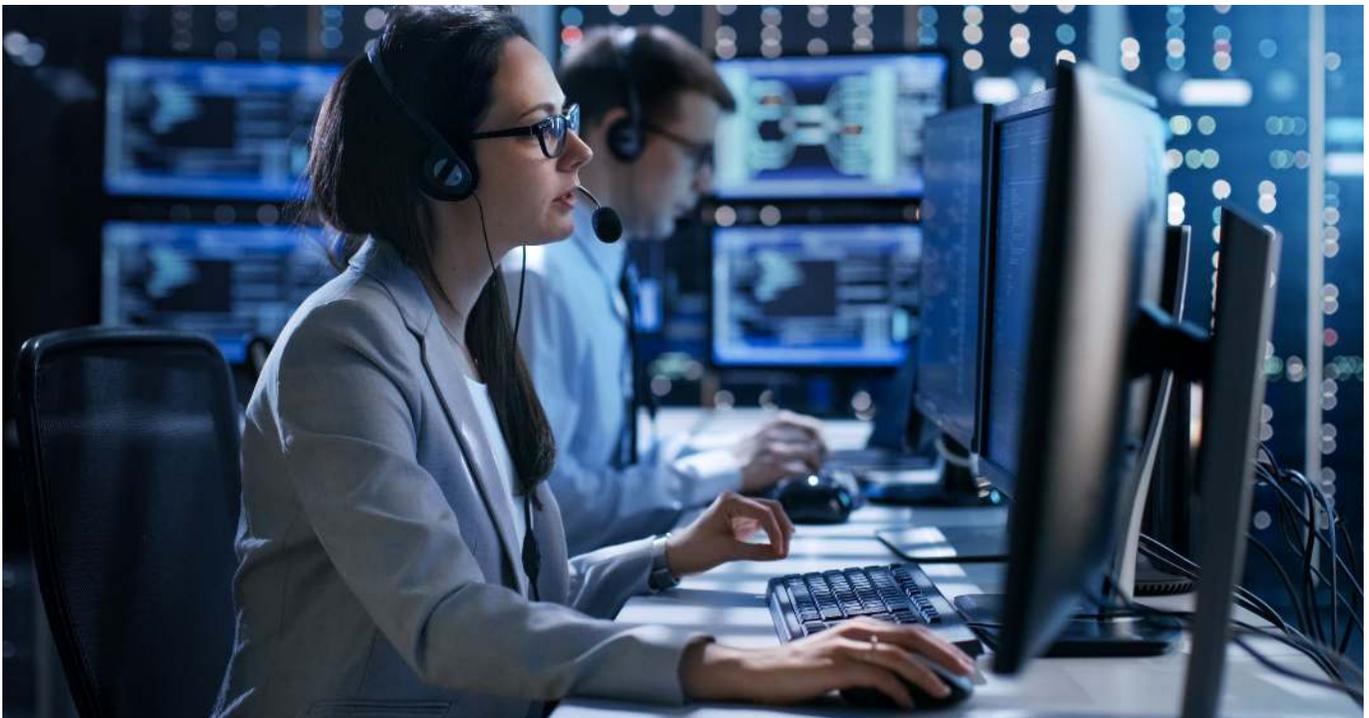
How it Works: Off-Site Users

Without the benefit of fixed network infrastructure, off-site users pose a different challenge altogether. The organization's phone system has no way of knowing where that caller is, as there are no subnets, switches or access points to reference. Location Manager solves for this challenge as well: it allows off-site users to self-provision their locations directly in ERS, so if they dial 911 when off-site, their call can be connected to the right PSAP with the right location being sent along with the call.

When a user moves off-premises and starts up their softphone, a customizable disclaimer appears and informs the user that they need to update their location. Once the user has entered their address in the Location Manager interface, if they need to place a 911 call, their self-provisioned location will be used to determine the appropriate PSAP for call routing and will be sent along with the call, via the ERS network, to the PSAP call taker.

Organizations can elect to make it mandatory for their off-site users to provision their locations in Location Manager before they can use their softphone.

Flexibility to Work with Existing Systems

Some organizations may have already implemented on-site location management solutions like Cisco Emergency Responder or PBX-enabled Emergency Location Identification Number (ELIN) mapping. In scenarios where organizations have already accounted for on-site location management, they may elect to deploy Location Manager exclusively for off-site location management. This is a simple configuration that enables organizations to leverage their existing infrastructure investments while simultaneously addressing any unmet needs.

High Availability

In instances where a caller's location is not available for any reason, West operates a US-based 24/7/365 Emergency Call Relay Center (ECRC) to receive calls and connect the caller with the correct PSAP. Staffed by highly experienced, APCO-trained professionals, this failover helps get 911 calls to the right place as quickly as possible even in the event that a caller's location is not automatically available.

Location Management Deployed in the Cloud

Location Manager is a hosted solution: there is no hardware to install on-site. This deployment methodology makes for an extremely cost-effective 911 location management solution, and delivers the added benefit of being compatible with softphones and voice systems from both leading and specialized vendors.

If you're currently struggling with manually managing softphone locations on your network, and if you're looking to comply with either existing or upcoming legal and regulatory requirements, contact a West Account Executive to discuss your requirements and learn more about how 911 can complement your architecture.

Ready to learn more? Connect with us:
west.com/safety-services, 877.862.2835 or WSSinfo@west.com.

WHY CHOOSE WEST

West's Safety Services is in the business of 911, but it's also personal. After all, we're all potential consumers of the most essential service anyone requires. We help carriers, alarm companies and organizations of all sizes connect millions of subscribers, employees, students and end users to the nearest emergency assistance, and we arm thousands of public safety agencies and first responders with critical data points to locate those individuals and coordinate the best response. As innovations emerge to make our lives more connected and convenient, we focus on the ones that make us all safer.

we connect. we deliver. **west**®