Executive Summary for the
2014 ARES FLdigi Project Initiative

The purpose of the FLdigi Project is to provide each ARES Emergency Coordinator with a laptop computer equipped to send and receive radio traffic using the Narrow Band Emergency Messaging System. NBEMS is becoming the preferred method of providing situation reports to the National Weather Service, Hospital Association of Hawaii, and Civil Defense Agency.

In the summer of 2014, several Dell Inspiron laptop computers were donated to the Kohala Hamakua Radio Club. The hard disk drives were removed and destroyed for security reasons.

Each laptop computer requires the following accessories: a DC power adapter so the laptop computer can be powered from an external 12 volt source; a USB thumb drive for local data storage; and, a sound card radio interface with a miniDIN 6-pin male plug wired according to the convention used by all modern radios for the accessory port. For radios that use a different connector for the accessory port, an adapter cable will be needed. This radio specific interface cable will have a miniDIN 6-pin socket on one end and the appropriate connector on the other.

Since these laptop computers do not contain a hard disk drive and the BIOS does not support booting from a USB device, they must be booted with a version of the Linux operating system via the internal optical drive. Several identical boot CDs must be created. One will remain in the drive of each laptop.

The USB thumb drives for all laptops will contain the complete FLdigi software suite, message forms, and several sample messages suitable for SKYWARN, Healthcare of Hawaii, and Civil Defense exercise purposes. Each thumb drive will need to be preconfigured, i.e., customized to contain a unique call sign and location specific to each unit. The call sign may be the call sign assigned to a station at a specific location like North Hawaii Community Hospital, the call sign of the Emergency Coordinator who is the custodian of the unit, or the Kohala Hamakua Radio Club call sign.

One person shall be in charge of insuring that the files on the boot disk and the files on the USB thumb drive contain all of the appropriate data and are kept up to date. This is necessary to insure consistency so that the behavior of all units is virtually identical.

Each ARES Emergency Coordinator or designee shall be the custodian of one of these FLdigi project units. Each custodian is responsible for upkeep and deployment during planned exercises and real-world call outs.

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