

Getting america really ready

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Today the Federation of American Scientists launched ReallyReady.org, a comprehensive emergency preparedness website developed in nine weeks by FAS intern Emily Hesaltine. Modeled after the Department of Homeland Security's Ready.gov, ReallyReady.org addresses the inaccuracies and incomplete information on the DHS site.

ReallyReady.org launches just after recent updates to Ready.gov that changed the site's look and feel, but did little to improve the information contained within. The Department of Homeland Security took more than five months and millions of dollars to create a website that was redeveloped in nine weeks by a 20 year-old college sophomore for the price of a domain name.

ReallyReady.org includes clear and accurate information to help individuals, families, businesses, and individuals with disabilities prepare for and respond to a variety of threats. A thorough analysis of Ready.gov is also available on the site.

"I know it isn't good to laugh about such a serious topic, but when I saw the graphic on Ready.gov suggesting that when a nuclear bomb goes off a hundred feet away you might want to protect yourself by walking around the corner, I just couldn't help myself," said Ivan Oelrich, Vice President of Strategic Security at FAS. "After three years and millions of dollars, taxpayers should expect a better website from the Department of Homeland Security."

The appropriate reaction to a nuclear attack is to hide from the light and

heat of the blast, then walk perpendicular to the wind away from the dust cloud. Accurate information like this, not available on Ready.gov, can be found on ReallyReady.org. Modifications were also made to repetitive, lengthy, and generic Ready.gov material to make it easier to use and remember.

A section was added to help Americans with disabilities prepare for and respond to emergencies. The section, developed in collaboration with the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative, is titled "ReallyReady Disabilities" and answers questions like how to create a support network to help you in an emergency and how to develop an evacuation plan.

"The Department of Homeland Security has declared September National Preparedness Month. It would be shameful if they could not get Ready.gov into shape before then," said Michael Stebbins, Director of Biology Policy at FAS. "It took an intern two months to make ReallyReady.org, DHS should be able to make a useful site in less than a month."

Source: Federation of American Scientists

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