# Utah nixes cellphone alert five days after system began

Five days after announcing its debut, Utah has discontinued the use of text alerts targeted at travelers along the state line after the technology proved to have too many bugs.
The text messages were meant to be sent to travelers entering the state on I-15, I-70 at the Colorado border, I-80 at the Nevada and Wyoming borders, I-84 at the Idaho border, Highway 491 near Monticello and Highway 89 near Kanab, according to the Utah Department of Transportation. However, in addition to targeting drivers, residents as far as 80 miles from the state line were also receiving multiple cellphone alarms from the Wireless Emergency Alert system.

The system asks adults entering Utah from other states by air or roadway to fill out a travel declaration attesting to their health and reporting any COVID-19 symptoms.
Despite still not issuing a mandatory stay-at-home order in the state, Utah Governor Gary Herbert had announced the system at a press conference just before the Easter holiday weekend.
"It was important for Utah to try every good idea to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our state," said Joe Dougherty, spokesman for the Utah Division of Emergency Management. "Innovations don't always work out exactly how you hope, however."

The text alerts will be replaced by roadside message boards directing drivers to fill out a survey at entry.utah.gov.
The information travelers provide will be sent to the Utah Department of Health for follow-up and officials said that the State wouldn't be "chasing people down" if they ignore the text.
In addition to the technological bugs, the announcement was met with questions and criticism from civil liberties groups including the ACLU of Utah and the Libertas Institute.
Travelers entering the state via the Salt Lake City International Airport will still receive cards with instructions on how to fill out the form from airport staff.
The Division of Emergency Management said that they believed the technology could be used in the future if the geographic accuracy of the messages was improved.