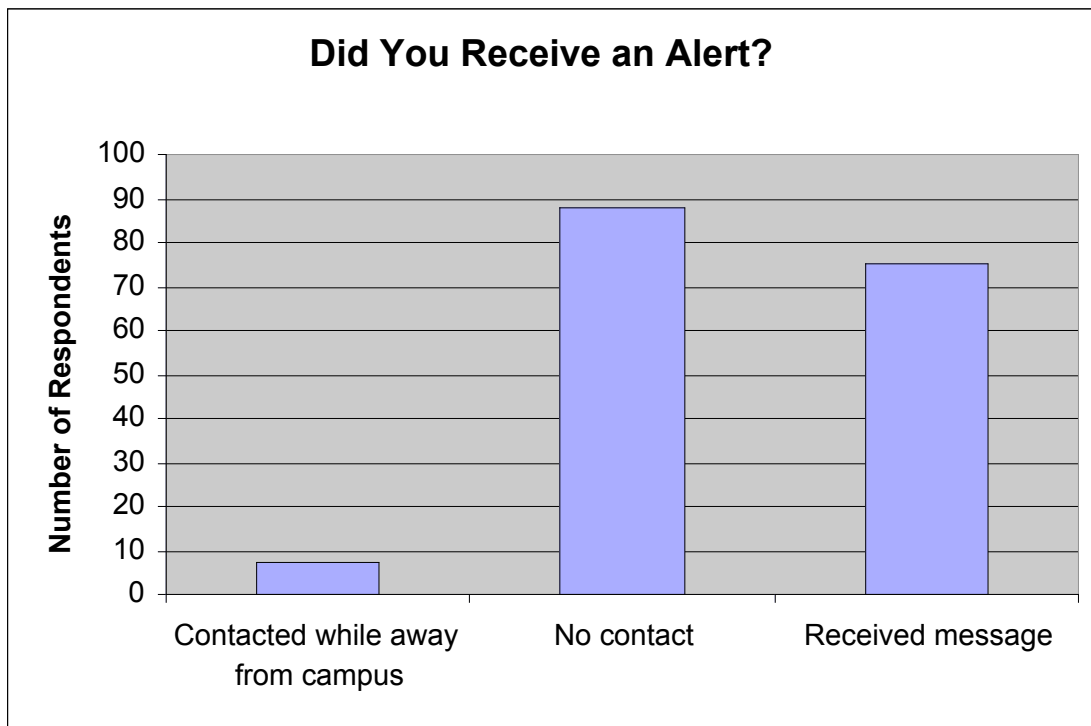


## August 2008 Power Outage Survey Responses

The Emergency Committee of SCRL distributed a survey to assess the functionality of the SU Alert System in the SCRL community during the power outage of August 18, 2008. Many thanks to the 176 neighbors who took the time to complete and return the survey.

The results have been tabulated and are presented in the charts and tables below. The information and insights they provide will help further collaboration with the Emergency Services department of the University and guide the SCRL Emergency Committee in its efforts.

We will follow up with Part 2 next week which will review the information we received from the University Emergency personnel on 9/5 about what issues they had to handle, why we experienced what we did, and what their future plans to improve communications are.



## Functional Assessment of Communication Channels

	Pros	Cons
Cell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>*The most used means for those who got messages.</li><li>*People got voice, text and e-mails.</li><li>*Cell phone coverage included mobile cell phones, Blackberries, iPhone, etc.</li><li>*Advantage was ability to be reached regardless of location</li></ul>	
Landline Phone	Users of tethered line phones (i.e., not wireless) reported receiving calls.	Wireless phones lost power and did not receive calls.
Voice Mail	Voice mail through the telephone company stored messages if users were not present to receive alert.	Home answering machines lost power and were not functional.
E-mail	E-mail accessed through cell phones or wi-fi cards on laptops received email alert. Also computers and router powered by power back-up was able to receive alert.	Desktop computers lost power. Laptops with batteries survived for the duration of the battery life. Routers/modems that required power failed, so laptops with wireless connection were not functional.

VOIP

One user has converted to VOIP, dependent on power, so had no service.

## Assessment of Information Sources

	Pros	Cons
KZSU	No message heard throughout outage	
SCRL	Several said the SCRL message was the only message they received.	Ability to receive message depended on having power or e-mail-enabled cell phone.
University Hotline	Hotline was activated and maintained for a short time.	Calls to the hotline got inaccurate information about when power would be restored; hotline not maintained after 6 PM, while power was still off in the SCRL area.
PG&E		Outage line gave inaccurate information. There were no warnings for handling appliances.
Stanford Police	A bright spot. Some officers drove through some residential areas and checked on residents, even knocking on doors. They gave relatively reliable information about the outage. This effort was very warmly received.	

## **Property Damage from Outage**

Several persons reported that their surge protectors burned out; one person had a good Sony TV fail; one a \$200 external power controller fail; one had a heat controller for floor or baseboard heating burn out with some scorching on the wall; one reported losing all the food in a freezer. The Executive Director, SCRL, has been asked to determine if PGE has any reimbursement policy for these losses.

## **Summary**

1. The SU Alert system performed in a spotty fashion. It appears that no arrangement for alternate contacts is not yet fully functional. Many people who thought they were on the list and who were at home reported they did not receive any calls.

2. The University Hotline messages ignored the SCRL area of campus and the continued power outage after 6 PM. Efforts to coordinate better with the University Emergency Services department continue.

3. The most widely applicable communication system available on campus which does not depend on users having electric power (batteries suffice) , KZSU, was not used effectively. SCRL will continue to press the University's to capitalize on KZSU as a critical channel for disseminating information in disasters of all kinds. An additional issue of programming during disasters needs to be addressed – irritating or offensive material defeat the purpose of staying tuned in.

4. The role of accurate and timely information has been highlighted by this event. Had SCRL known the magnitude of the power outages in the residential area and the likely timing of restoration, it would have been better positioned to decide on activating our emergency response plan.