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New emergency notification system coming this fall

written by Rosemary Akpan | October 7, 2019

RyersonSafe will alert community members to emergencies and campus closures

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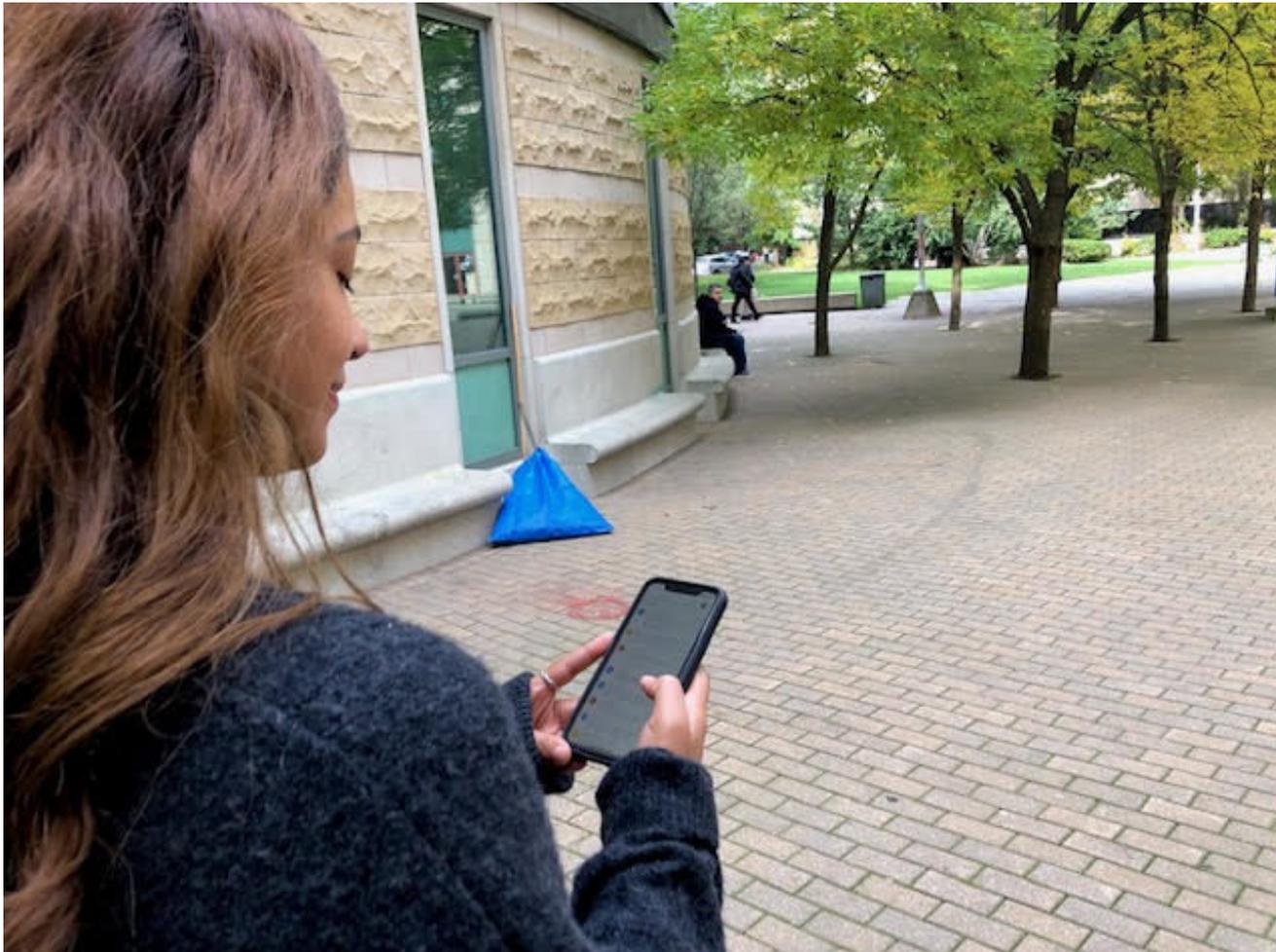


Photo by Rosemary Akpan

A new mass emergency notification system application, RyersonSafe, will be available this fall to alert Ryerson community members in the event of an emergency.

Implemented by Ryerson's Community Safety and Security, the system will also announce campus closures during severe weather conditions.

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"It will promote information sharing, transparency and empower our community members to make informed decisions about personal safety and security while on campus in the event of an emergency," said Jessica Leach, a Ryerson media relations officer.

Downloading the app will not be mandatory, but Leach said Ryerson security "strongly encourages" all community members to use RyersonSafe and allow push notifications and to opt in to the SMS text messages.

Robert Hudyma, a professor of information technology management at Ryerson, said the emergency notification will be a vital information system for circumstances like active

threats on campus.

"A few months ago, they had the Raptors parade and there was a stabbing not far from the Ryerson campus," Hudyma said. "People in the building had no information whether they could leave or whether they were safe inside the building."

He added that most of the information received regarding the stabbing came from people streaming live news on their devices, not directly from Ryerson security.

"Virtually, 90 per cent or more of my students carry a smartphone with them. They have the technology to communicate effectively, so this ... mechanism, if it's used appropriately, could be a real benefit that could save lives," Hudyma said.

Second-year business management student, Parth Patel, said the notification system will better guide the Ryerson community.

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“There are a lot of people who get attacked on a daily basis — it’s not just a school, right? It’s also a city,” Patel said.

Xavier Fernando, an electrical and computer engineering professor at Ryerson, said there are a few problems that can arise from a wireless communications-based emergency alert system.

“One major issue in such systems is usually the false alarms,” Fernando said.

In 2016, Toronto police said more than 97 per cent of the alarm calls received were false, according to [CBC News](#).

However, Fernando said an emergency notification system is also needed for a crowded campus like Ryerson, given the location and the number of regular security-related incidents reported daily.

RyersonSafe is yet to announce an official release date, but it is expected to be available in November on Google Playstore and the AppStore.

By: Matthew Rodrigopulle

HOW RYERSON'S NEW RYERSONSAFE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM WORKS

Ryerson's new emergency notification system is set to roll out in November



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1 Students can download the RyersonSafe app on the Apple App Store for


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2 Once downloaded, students can enable push notification for the app through their phone's notification settings.



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