

Disaster Management and Emergency Services Workshop

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Paper title:

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How can new technologies and approaches improve outcomes, reduce costs and/or improve response times for an emergency?

As mobile devices become far more portable and affordable, they continue to solidify their existence into our everyday lives. With the recent success of smart phones it would not be surprising if almost all cell users in the Silicon Valley had them within the next 5 years, especially with the price point per unit falling. The context of location based services is another niche market on the rise, with such applications such as Locaccino users can track the location of friends / family with ease. Using this app architecture, user's can signal for help remotely even if the mobile device lacks a GPS chip. 4G's utilization of static IP and higher bandwidth speeds makes calls via VoIP through this app more reliable and with higher quality (especially since typical phone lines seem to get clogged after a disastrous event.) The most important factor in times of crisis is the response time, and with the technology now present it can help find users in distress within mere seconds.

If you were offered 10-15 minutes to give a short talk, what would it be?

I would talk about CMU's current role in Human Computer Interaction and their involvement with location based service applications. The two of these fields combined prove to be the future of mobile devices, especially the role HCI plays in a users context – the technology can only be as efficient as the user can understand how to use it.

What are the most pressing business, process, organization and technical issues?

Along with the funding, testing these to be worked for times of disasters can prove to be a little arduous, you would not be able to model a perfect situation. How effective this method could be can only be said once it is used in real time during an actual event. Another issue that could be of highlight is that of privacy, it comes with the entire notion of location-based services.

What is the role of university research in this area?

Given the role of how much research is being put into these technologies, the university projects help accumulate much needed data - which could be extrapolated to real world applications. The constant development of new trials would ensure more efficient software / hardware modules for the end result.

Do you want to propose and help run a new breakout group?

No, I feel this is not necessary.

What is the most important action the DMI can take?

To continue holding events like this, it provides a platform where many innovative people can get together and share their different ideas and expertise.