Open data and the Crowd

Open Data and the Crowd:
Collaborating for action
GIS for the UN and the international community

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Disaster and crises management

Content

- My organization
- My role
- How we are thinking about open data and the crowd

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

187 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

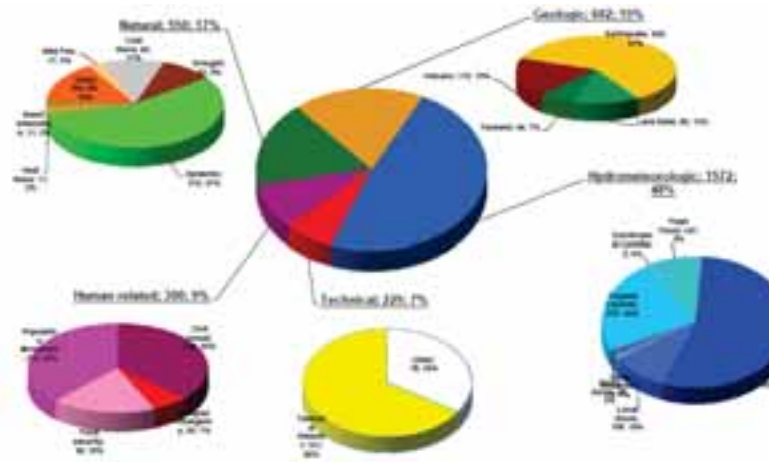International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), founded in 1919

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), founded in 1863

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

- We are a secretariat that exists to provide support to and linkages between our 187 member National Societies

- We provide international coordination services in response to large-scale disasters and health emergencies

- We provide international representation, resource mobilization and advocacy

- We support the capacity building of our National Societies

My role – DMIS – Stats - GIS

Madagascar: Tropical storms

Rationale and background

- Web 2.0, increased connectivity through Internet and mobile phones is changing global communication and volunteering patterns considerably

- More human beings today have access to a cell phone than to a clean toilet (UN, World Bank)

- The way information is collected and shared is changing fast, big NGOs don't

In the beginning was the data

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- Cannot do anything without data

- Especially in countries we are working in

- Can you imagine…
  - … spending two days finding a village in Sudan ?
  - … figuring out which admin boundaries are valid in a country ?

In the beginning was the data

- Open data/Crowd data:
  - Accuracy, quality → trusted sources & processes
  - Fast, reactive, almost live data
  - Free
  - Can use RC volunteers for validation

- BUT:
  - Most of the time, they are on MAIN crises, not neglected ones → 68% of RC responses to disasters are not in international media.

Limitations regarding the use of the crowd

- Staff very limited (1 GIS/2 communication in GVA)

- True vs. False ➜ "There is a common tendency to assume that all unverified information is false until proven otherwise" (Patrick Meier)

- Only recently study the applicability for us to use the crowd

Verification, Validation and Triangulation

- Social media is, by nature, self-correcting[1], BUT:
- ...Due to the virtual anonymity of sources we need to be sceptical of the social media content
- Verification is a 2-step process:
  - authentication of the *source as reliable* and
  - triangulation of the *content as valid*
- Multiple methods for verification (Twitter example):
  - Bio, number of tweets, number of followers, number following, retweets, location, timing, social authentication, media authentication, engaging the source, triangulation, language[2]
- Information forensics of a single tweet can take anything from seconds to hours[3]
- Our extensive network of volunteers could act as vetted sources of information and field validators

Applicability for IFRC?

- Standby Task Force, HOT, … have got a proven track record of providing accurate actionable information fast

- Studies can show that methodology exists for verification

- They are eager and willing to help, *all we have to do is ask*

- Focal point(s) needed from our side for liaising and improving workflows but first of all…

- CHANGE MINDSETS !

Pilot

Mostly activities of
National Societies

Moderated in HQ (GVA)

Target audiences:
Media
General public

Not the channel used to
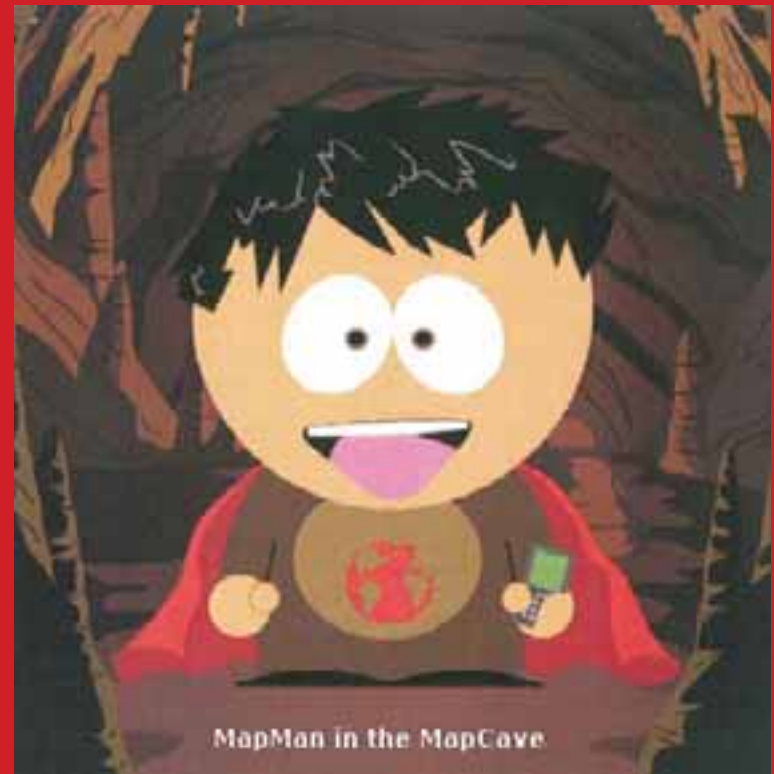Send official reports on
operations

Conclusion

- We are moving forward

- We have a long way to go

- How can we all benefit from the biggest network of volunteers in the world ? Validation ? Participation to HOT ? … How do we involve them ?

For further information on GIS in IFRC, please contact:

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