

# Communication and Volunteers:

## A CrisisCommons Case Study

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# Evolution

- 1995 Kobe earthquake - limited communications
- 2001 9/11 - Listservs activity
- 2004 - Indian Ocean Tsunami - Blogs, Sahana
- 2004 - OpenStreetMap
- 2005 - Hurricane Katrina - People Finder, Wiki, Twitter
- 2008 - Hurricane Gustav - Mapping, 500 ppl in 48 hrs
- 2008 - Ushahidi
- 2009 - CrisisCommons created
- 2010 - Haiti, Chile earthquakes, Gulf Oil Spill, Pakistan Floods, Crisis Commons Global Congress

# Volunteer Technical Communities (VTCs)

Sahana Foundation

- Ushahidi, Swift River and Crowdmap
- OpenStreetMap
- Frontline SMS
- Crisismappers
- Random Hacks of Kindness
- CrisisCommons
- Geeks without Bounds
- And many more



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CrisisCamp Toronto for Haiti earthquake

Crisis Commons is a global network of volunteers who use creative problem solving and open technologies to help people and communities in times and places of crisis.

Crisis Commons members organize response events called CrisisCamps.

# CrisisCommons/CrisisCamps

90 days

8 countries

50 events

+2000 volunteers

## CrisisCamp Paris





CrisisCamp Bogota



# Who volunteers?

**Technical** - Software developers, web developers, web designers, user experience/user interface experts, geocoders, geo mappers, GIS experts, technologists, beta testers

**New Media** - Bloggers, videographers, podcasters, photographers, social media trainers, social media users, collaborators, crowdsourcers

**Organizational** - Organizers, open source community planners, project managers, emergency response planners, crisis communicators

**Other** - Researchers, lawyers, trainers, teachers, librarians, technical writers, event planners, translators, innovators, entrepreneurs, anyone with a laptop

# Types of Tasks

- Code and test tools.
- Translate.
- Map.
- Communicate, collaborate, brainstorm.
- Research, analyze, report.
- Create content, and document process.

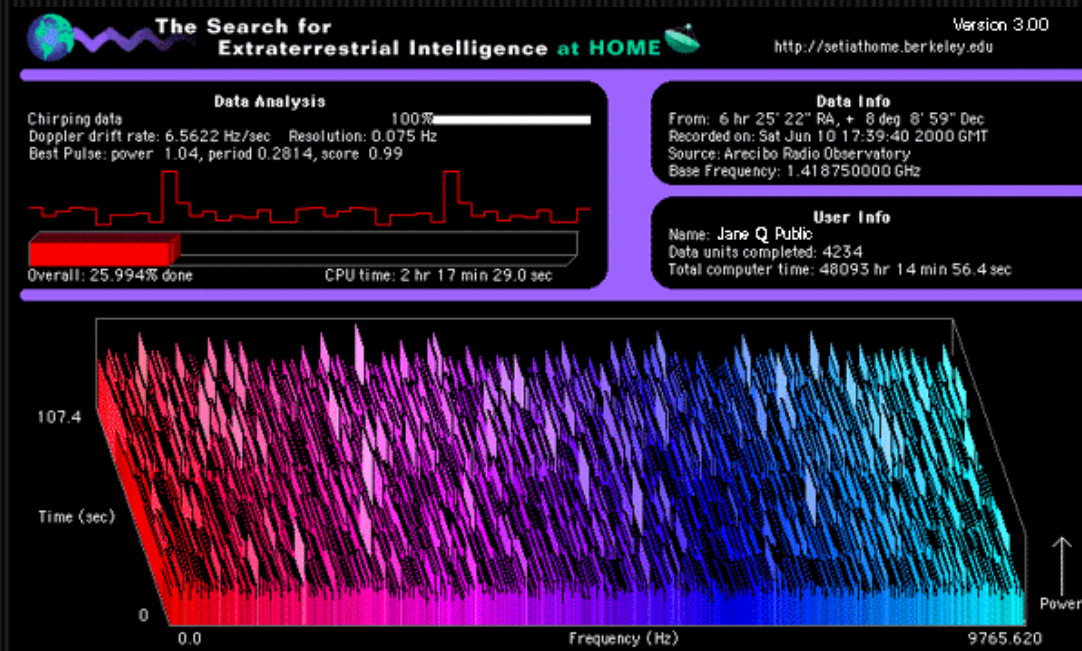
# Crowdsourcing



CrisisCamp Argentina

# Crowd Sourcing

## SETI@Home



Use the “Spare Cycles”

# Spare Cycles

- What does the average person do with his/her spare cycles?



# Objectives

- Recruit technical volunteers
- Coordinate global technical efforts
- Take advantage of spare cycles

# Recruiting Volunteers

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Blogs
- Google Groups
- YouTube
- Flickr
- Traditional Media (CBC, Global, Toronto Star)

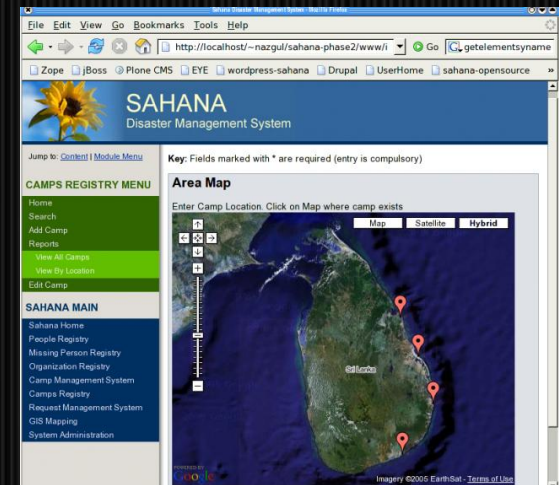
# Global Technical Efforts

- Wiki
- Skype
- Google Docs/Apps
- GitHub
- OpenStreetMap
- Sahana
- Ushahidi
- Conference Calls



# Projects

CrisisCamp Volunteers collaborated on these projects and others.



These were lead by other volunteer communities and private sector groups.

# Obstacles

- **Spontaneous**
  - Organization
  - Duplication of Efforts
  - Inefficient
- **Policy & Protocol**
  - Partnerships
  - Mission
  - Infrastructure
  - Proactive



# Crisis Congress





# Make Volunteers Useful

- See results quickly
- Feel like you're making a useful contribution
- Work on local projects in the “downtime”
- Keep volunteers engaged, educated



# #1 Lesson

There is a vast army of useful, intelligent, and motivated people who can now be mobilized through internet technology...



# What's next?

- Organize on global level
- Maintain motivation on local level
- Keep communication constant & accessible
  - Blog
  - Twitter
  - Wiki
  - Messages: Consistent and Targeted

# Contact and Credits

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