



ISCRAM2009
**The 6th International Conference on Information Systems for
Crisis Response and Management**

Gothenburg, Sweden
May 10-13, 2009
<http://www.iscram.org>

TRACK: RESEARCH METHODS

CALL FOR PAPERS

FOR A SPECIAL SESSION ON

**ETHNOGRAPHY AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT FOR
CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

Session ID: RESEARCH1

Motivation

Depending on the extent of emergency situations the amount of actors involved in crisis management increases gradually. In the organisations involved, communication needs arise between various actors and departments such as crisis management groups and different operative staff groups on-site, all with different information needs, information and communication cultures and views. In larger cases of emergency such as infrastructure breakdowns (e.g. induced by storms, floods etc.) which affect different organisations and organisational forms (public and private) varying information needs and communication and information cultures challenge inter-organisational cooperation even stronger. Ethnographic approaches such as workplace studies have proven to be very helpful in analyzing fine-grained information and communication needs and in informing according user-centred systems design. But in emergency response scenarios most task/activities are incident-focussed, they happen spontaneously which makes it difficult for ethnographers to capture them and for IT developers to evaluate their concepts. In addition, systems design particularly for *inter-organisational* crisis communication and management is still a big challenge due to different information and communication needs, practices and cultures.

Research Area

Big-scale infrastructure breakdowns may involve different organisations and parties such as infrastructure providers (e.g. electricity providers), local authorities, fire fighters, rescue services and affected citizens. For researchers in the realm of technology development for crisis communication and management support there are many challenges to overcome: How do we deal on the operational level with e.g. legal aspects of private-public cooperation scenarios? How can ethnographic methods, such



as e.g. Participatory Design, (Business) Ethnography, help to consolidate the varying information and communication needs, languages, cultures and priorities? How can situatedness and spontaneity of work practices be acknowledged sufficiently in these highly complex and dynamic circumstances and be integrated in technology development approaches such as End-user Development? How can ethnographic methods help to investigate communication and information support in inter-organisational cooperative contexts by means of ubiquitous technologies? How can technology designers evaluate their concepts in practice?

This special session aims at gathering methodological solutions for ethnography and ethnographically-informed technology development, but also related problems in investigating and technologically supporting inter- and intra-organisational crisis communication and management.

Topics

Some non-exhaustive examples of topics that could contribute to this session are

- *Ethnographic studies of inter- and intra-organisational crisis communication and management*
- *Studies of ubiquitous applications in inter-organisational crisis communication and management and related development of ethnographic methods such as "living lab", user-modelling*
- *Ethnographic and participative approaches which help consolidating different cultures, views and priorities and bring them to successful technology development, such as Participative Design or (Business) Ethnography*
- *Appropriate interplay of ethnographic methods and design approaches to sufficiently acknowledge the situatedness in highly complex and dynamic circumstances*

Type of contribution:

We encourage both academics and practitioners to contribute to the special session.

- **Academic contribution:** we invite researchers from academia or research labs to present their research or research-in-progress papers. Prospective presenters submit a regular research (or research-in-progress) paper.
- **Practitioner contribution:** we invite practitioners to present their practice or experiences in information systems development, use or needs. Prospective presenters submit a short practitioner paper or a Powerpoint presentation along with an abstract.

Important Notice:

- All submissions must be formatted according to the ISCRAM 2009 formatting guidelines. Templates and instructions are published on www.iscram.org.



- All submissions must be submitted through the ISCRAM 2009 conference paper submission web page at www.conftool.com/iscram2009. Instructions for the ConfTool system can be found on www.iscram.org.
- All papers and presentations will go through a double-blind review process, leading to a decision of (conditional) acceptance or rejection.
- Accepted papers will be included in the ISCRAM 2009 program and published in the official proceedings if and only if
 - (1) the paper is formatted according to the instructions,
 - (2) the authors sign the copyright transfer form and
 - (3) one of the authors registers for the conference and pays the registration fee before the cut-off date for early registration.
- Authors who have multiple papers accepted can only register for and present one paper at the conference; co-authors need to register separately.

Session Chairs:



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Important ISCRAM 2009 Dates:

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| • Submission deadline: | January 11, 2009 |
| • Notification of conditional accept: | February 16, 2009 |
| • Final submission revised paper: | March 1, 2009 |
| • Final author notification: | March 9, 2009 |
| • Early registration deadline: | March 22, 2009 |
| • Conference: | May 10-13 2009 |