



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

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

TRACK: HUMANITARIAN ACTIONS AND OPERATIONS

CALL FOR PAPERS

FOR A SPECIAL SESSION ON

**IMPROVING ICT USE IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT &
PEACE-BUILDING (ICT4PEACE)**

Session ID: Humanitarian 3

Motivation

Inter-operability, and the meaningful use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in all aspects of crisis management and response, is about saving lives and resources. Information management mechanisms and frameworks that are closed and inaccessible to key stakeholders in crisis response severely undermine the ability of local and international agencies to save lives. Interoperability is not just a set of technical standards that guarantees that systems, tools and mechanisms can exchange information seamlessly, securely and sustainably. It is also about the commitment and political will at all levels of agencies, including senior management, to share information that strengthens humanitarian and relief efforts leading up to, during and after a crisis. Ad hoc solutions can create or exacerbate many challenges to effective crisis response and management. The challenges faced at present through the unstructured growth and haphazard development of information management systems and mechanisms are significant.

Research Area

ICTs can only help in crisis management and peace-building if they are based on open standards based and interoperable, facilitating use even in austere conditions and engendering staff buy-in. Interoperability at its simplest is the availability of baseline information accessible on demand to stakeholders involved in crisis management. Open standards mean the use of information containers able to transverse various information management architectures reliably, effectively and sustainably without any data loss. Both support an approach to crisis management that leverages the potential of ICTs to help gather, disseminate and analyze information as well archive lessons identified and learnt across agencies so as to contribute to institutional memory.



The ICT4Peace initiative and its partners worked in 2005 to get the use of ICTs in preventing and responding to conflict and in supporting and promoting peace included on the World Summit on the Information Society agenda. As a direct result of this concerted effort, the following Paragraph was integrated into the final declaration of the WSIS Tunis Commitment:

"Paragraph 36. We value the potential of ICTs to promote peace and to prevent conflict which, inter alia, negatively affects achieving development goals. ICTs can be used for identifying conflict situations through early-warning systems preventing conflicts, promoting their peaceful resolution, supporting humanitarian action, including protection of civilians in armed conflicts, facilitating peacekeeping missions, and assisting post conflict peace-building and reconstruction."

The ICT4Peace Foundation is anchored to this text and was set up to implement this commitment globally, in particular through international policy making. A key dimension of its work is to facilitate a better approach to, and understanding of, information management during crises. This involves preparing for, warning against as well as supporting and rebuilding societies when natural or man made disasters occur. There is an increasing recognition amongst the international community, including governments, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations agencies that the timely collection and exchange of accurate and impartial information during humanitarian crises requires major improvements. Such improvements could contribute to save thousands of lives and requires the sustained commitment of the international community to effective management of information and knowledge, by using appropriate technologies, including Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs). Used appropriately, ICTs can support all aspects and sectors of humanitarian work. While initiatives have been launched to mainstream ICTs in humanitarian aid and peace-building, none have been able to gain traction at the United Nations, intergovernmental and interagency level. What ICT4Peace Foundation through the International Process for Crisis Management (<http://ict4peace.org/ict4peace-1.html>) proposes is to harvest existing best practices and facilitate an international recognition of the use of ICTs as a means to strengthen crisis information management, response and mitigation as well as humanitarian relief and aid.

Topics

- raising awareness on the use and contribution of ICT to peace-building and crisis management
- best practices of ICT use in peace-building and crisis management
- the importance of open standards and interoperability in the application of ICT in peace-building and crisis management
- the integration of ICT in UN operations
- training in ICT for peacebuilders and peacekeepers



- improved cooperation, collaboration and leadership amongst all relevant stakeholders
- ICT mechanisms to foster trust between civilian groups and the military, and to improve cooperation between business, humanitarian and peacekeeping groups
- partnerships with business to ensure secure, sustainable and current ICT solutions based on open standards and commercially available solutions (and not tied to a certain provider / manufacturer.)

Type of contribution:

- **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:

- 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



About ISCRAM:

The ISCRAM Community is a worldwide community of researchers, scholars, teachers, students, practitioners and policy makers interested or actively involved in the subject of Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management. At its annual international conference alternating between the US and Europe, the ISCRAM Community gathers to present and discuss the latest research and developments in this growing area during an interactive and stimulating 3 day program. The ISCRAM Community also organizes an International Summer School for PhD students and ISCRAM-CHINA, an annual conference for ISCRAM research in China. All information on ISCRAM can be found at <http://www.iscram.org>

This year the conference will be held from 10-13 May at the Göteborg University located in Gothenburg, Sweden. The conference will be hosted by the Viktoria Institute and the IT-university of Gothenburg. All details on this conference will be made available via the ISCRAM website mentioned above.