

Building a Solid Foundation for the Next Generation of Disaster Management and Public Safety



As natural and human-induced disaster events around the world increase in frequency and severity, research in the field of disaster management is evolving and expanding. The emergence of drivers such as climate change, poorly planned developments, poverty and environmental degradation, along with the predicted increased extreme weather events, are prompting responses from researchers and organisations across the globe to envisage the next generation of disaster management.

The Centre for Disaster Management and Public Safety (CDMPS) at the University of Melbourne, Australia, supported by GSDI, is one organisation responding to these concerns. CDMPS has established a number of key research priority areas and a research agenda to address these challenges. Building relationships and collaborating is a key goal

of the Centre, which will help to address the impending challenges the world faces from increased disasters.

A number of initiatives have emerged in response, as well as numerous research programmes, technologies, strategies and solutions developed at both local and international levels to tackle such emergency events. There is, however, poor co-ordination among researchers and governments, including little integration and sharing amongst countries. Without some level of integration, much of the extensive work carried out in the realm of disaster management is often relevant only to the country in which the research was conducted. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an overarching framework to enable better integration of relevant solutions across the board.

An approach to cohesive and comprehensive solutions built on a solid foundation requires greater consideration. While it is a reactive response to search for a solution in times of disasters, the importance of first developing a strong foundation should not be trivialised. Without a base to build on, there will not be the impetus for collective support that underpins disaster management knowledge. Hence fragmented research will continue, with only pockets of the global community benefiting from research and technological advances.

One of the primary overarching challenges to building this framework is to establish principles for information-sharing. This challenge relates to the co-ordination and integration of information. Current systems inhibit both small and large-scale knowledge and expertise-sharing. The establishment of principles for information-sharing could bring together existing information, thus preventing unnecessary duplication. The aim should be to develop them just once and, where appropriate, adapt them for use multiple times. An open-standards platform for the sharing of ideas and research in the realm of disaster management would facilitate closer ties among global communities, which in time will lead to better knowledge-sharing and transfer and a more cohesive, collective approach to providing solutions for disaster management.

There is no 'quick fix' for this problem. However, through developing a solid foundation to support strategies and research outcomes as we move forward into developing the next generation of disaster management, a resilient future may be achieved.

For more information about the Centre for Disaster Management and Public Safety visit: www.cdmps.org.au

Learn more about the GSDI Association and how to participate here: <http://www.gsdi.org/joinGSDI>

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