

PARADIGM SHIFT

△ **par·a·digm shift (noun)**

par·a·digm shift (*par·a·digm shifts*)

radical change

a radical change in somebody's basic assumptions about or approach to something

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There is without a doubt several technologies that will assist in the prevention of loss of life and property in the 21st-century.

There's a lot of common misconceptions as to the use of technology for the benefit of average citizens. There is no doubt that the invent of social media for example has assisted in the decline of community as it existed in the 20th century. For example, with the advent of text messaging for example, people simply started texting each other to share information and to briefly or "abbreviated" discussions about things that would normally be talked about for example at a coffee shop or bowling alley to get together as they did in the 50s and 60s.

Now in the 21st-century with the advent and progressive growth SMS messaging and of social media technologies such as Twitter, Facebook, Skype, Google plus, those technologies are starting to exhibit a new style of "community" of like-minded people coming together in online groups or discussions or forums or for causes that virtually replace, the historical physical types of community meeting places and encourages on-the-fly or coming together almost immediately to assist virtually. There are so many things that social media, smart phones, and chat applications can do to enhance locally economic resilience and communication paths between citizens and government and businesses at the local level as never before. It's not just for disasters, but if in place for other things in a local area and being encouraged by the local government and business, should a disaster occur it becomes an extra communication channel for requesting assistance went traditional 911 or other services are down. But it also provides something that 911 simply doesn't have enough resources, it is the recovery aspects both labor and goods that can be shared through social media, as 911 was not designed to do that.

One of the outstanding capabilities that is emerging on a progressive exponential scale is the use of social media for the benefit of assisting people in affected areas from natural or man-made disasters as well as starting the sharing of proactive preparedness that totally makes sense to . The compelling story is even more so amplified in the fact that the average person when they see a disaster on the news, they feel bad. Those people can now once they've been introduced and trained on new and emerging tools for capturing social media requests from people in the disaster area, they can participate in linking those requests to response entities such as nonprofit, faith-based, and local emergency operations and enhance response with the results of becoming a more prolific exchange of private sector participation then has ever occurred for the benefit of a common cause in history.

Some of the things that are challenges are in getting the response entities to not only look at social media as a benefit, but to actually wrap their arms around it to enhance the response capabilities. What is it that are the holdups, well, there are many. One of the most profound slowdowns of governments adopting social media is the fact that they are not in total control of it and in fact the control remains in the hands of citizens in the private sector. It's obvious, government because of legalese, regulation, and privacy laws, when the government at the federal level or local level makes changes to its processes and procedures such as adopting a new methodology or practice, it must pass all of the legal challenges, including the avoidance of backroom deals of billion-dollar companies and political influence that they have.

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The amazing thing about social media, is the speed at which when a topic is of interest, it can go viral and spread across the Internet worldwide within just a few hours.

Government also has great concerns in regards to leveraging social media for antisocial behaviors. Some countries have been completely changed in regards to the political landscape, if we take Egypt for example, social media played a primary role in overthrowing a government that had impoverished its citizens, and because of social media and the Internet providing insight as to how people lived in other countries, played its role in stimulating an uprising in the youth to plan, communicate, and carry out prolific demonstrations against a government that obviously did not put its people first.

But something interesting also is appearing on the landscape through the use of social media in direct retrospect to how it has been used after a disaster. There are nonprofit organizations whose total focus is to assist people in need by connecting their requests and their providing local information about lack of or availability of resources to assist before during and after a disaster. Even though the assistance must occur at the local level, because of the Internet technologies and social media, you have the creation of virtualized armies of people that can help connect those in need with those that provide needed goods and services, and do it literally from the comfort of a living room at home. I mentioned this because when I talked about people that see bad things happening around the world in the news and they say to themselves those poor people, we pray for their safety, etc. those people can now participate in directly helping them. This again is a paradigm shift, and fortunately even though there are bad elements out there that will try to take advantage of disasters and social media for their own terroristic or misdirection or criminal endeavors, the good far outweighs the bad, this has been proven time after time now historically est. In 2011.

There is also a growing incredible contributing community of geeks and hackers for the good, that are enabling even greater capabilities of empowering volunteers wishing to assist in responding to disasters and helping people. Just to mention a few, Crisis Commons, Standby Task Force, many, many hacker groups that develop or augment existing open source technologies such as Ushahidi, and even universities and students contributing to the development of technologies that augment the real-time searching for people in a geographical area requesting help.

One of the last bastions of change that needs to occur at an accelerated rate to empower citizens at the local level, is with the VOAD groups of nonprofit, NGOs, faith-based, organizations that interface directly at the local level with the EOC or emergency operations center representative of law enforcement, fire Dept., and medical response, to adopt a strategy that incorporates social media into their daily routine. But look upon it as an "augmentation" to their current interface to the public at the local level, instead of a "rip out and replace" to the existing infrastructure procedure and est. flows. You can look upon social media as simply another method of communications with those entities, but for it to operate correctly, the local government and private sector business community must agree upon things like twitter hash tags for their local area/city, that they share as instruction to their community, a webpage that people can go to that is put out in public service announcements as well as SMS text messaging to the local area/city incorporating either paid for, or open source GIS technology with a map of their particular city showing resources in real time during and after a disaster. I know that sounds like a lot, but it's getting easier by the day, and as you'll see a little later in this documentation an incredible group called Humanity Road literally can provide training virtually and in house, they know as they have been doing this for a couple years starting just after Haiti disaster tragedy.

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If the path of traditional isolation continues to occur in all of the organizations and local governments responding, social media will not progress to its optimum capability of getting and connecting people in need with those that can provide the services and needs required.

What is information currently, is one of the next things that must occur. All organizations must look towards a "common" area virtualized specifically for a geographical locality/city or county that all social media monitors provide everything that they find as far as requests from the local citizens and businesses into that virtualized "common" source, let's call it a database or a map of a particular area that all requests for assistance appear, as well as offers of resources for that particular local area. But it needs to be a common ground area that "all" of the agencies have agreed upon together that they will monitor and respond to. Otherwise, as exhibited especially in 2011 with the overwhelming amount of natural disasters, that because there was no common ground single virtualized repository, most of the organizations functioned as they have for generations, in only looking upon and within their own resources of finding information, and not communicating what's been found and what they are responding to with resources, ending up with duplication of effort, wasted time, and sometimes missing requests for assistance. Almost like in isolation.

The amazing thing that is one of the most profound positives, is that because everything is happening in near warp speed in the private sector, the simple ability of getting all of these organizations to commit to the common ground virtualized data centric social media captured information, is simply that they need to agree to it, login, and monitor for things that their services and resources can provide answers to in respect to needs, that's all that is necessary to make this work. Simply agreeing to the fact that a common ground that is shared with all responding resources without question will enhance the response capability accelerating the time to "feet on the ground" in affected areas and avoid wasting resources due to duplication of manpower and resources. At the same time will help to reduce the missed items and request for assistance the way that they occur in the isolation mode that most organizations currently operate in. I realized that that was a duplication, in the last 2 paragraphs but each one has its unique challenge. But a common end result.

One of the organizations that I personally have not only been attracted to, but respect the steady and progressive aspects recognizing the successes they have had utilizing a constant process improvement methodology, and the incredible challenges they are faced with which is documented on their website and in testimonials, is an organization called Humanity Road. Humanity Road in my opinion have the right plan by coming up with regimented processes and procedures that must be in place for consistency in response and identifying future needs, and the fact that they are becoming pioneers in constantly applying new methods, procedures, and technology as soon as they become available, train what they know to new volunteers expanding worldwide the ability of citizens helping citizens, they literally will be part of the history in the success of applying social media, for the benefit of humanity before during and after disasters.

This report is simply my attempt of identifying the paradigm shift that is occurring and a brief list of items that must occur for its success in being part of assisting in the prevention of loss of life and property through the use of technology in volunteerism.

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This environment and the purpose is easily broken down into the following pieces that if you apply common sense, is very compelling and inviting to those which have an intrinsic desire to help people.

A Premier Leader in building a consistent social media response:

Here it is; Humanity Road, and emerging groups that work with them, exhibit the highest form of caring that can exist from this new virtual response entity. Efforts to assist people "people helping people" without regard to politics, hidden agenda, or greed in this day and age provides a spark to reignite citizen participation in common good for humanity. In fact, the self-policing nature of the volunteers within this group literally provides an astounding almost self-monitoring process in that each request that comes in via social media at least currently, has a response that multiple volunteers virtually "touch". It's amazing to see, and to participate in this as things move forward.

I encourage you to visit <http://www.humanityroad.org> and see for yourself the progressive and positive nature of what they have done since there founding a couple of years ago after Haiti, and more recently the incredible response the organization has done just since January of 2011.

The other fact that is amazing about this group, is that they have volunteers from around the world that gladly and rapidly responded to things that occurred here in the United States without hesitation, in trying to help, just like those volunteers based in the United States Humanity Road and affiliate organizations, have assisted through humanity road of over 108 incidents, from over 24 countries and that's just since January of 2011.

The changing landscape of donations, and organizational transparency

Because they are a non-profit, their existence and forward momentum is based upon donations and contributions, and on that topic I must say I applaud humanity road for their "transparency" in providing you and me as contributors, we get to see where the money. I have said before on my radio program EM Connection, that personally my donations to non-profits and charities, in the future, will only go to those organizations that publicly share where the money I donate and contribute to the organization is spent.

Again, that is a another paradigm shift against the traditional way that nonprofits operate. Most of them historically have not been transparent, and there really hasn't been too much in the aspects of investigating them to see where billions of dollars have gone that have been contributed by private citizens and companies. I guess I am making somewhat of a political statement, although I'm just functioning on common sense, and trying not to do it in such a way that it could be identified as a political statement. I simply say, do you want to know where the donations that you give, even more so now in economic hard times, where those donations for a cause actually get spent.

I could certainly use some assistance on coming up with a common ground effort that because someone is raising their hand and asking that question, if proliferated correctly, will affect change in those organizations that currently function without transparency. And in the end, ensure that monies

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contributed get to the affected groups of why the donations were provided in the first place, and the only way to ensure that all, is transparency.

The questions about anonymity, and a new way of Volunteer Vetting

Volunteer Vetting is a new process and concept to complement at the local level expediency of messaging for those that choose at low-cost to have themselves background and sexual predator registry checked. Knowing who is requesting assistance, and who is being dispatched as a volunteer is an important factor.

More on that later. Stay tuned :-)

Please support Humanity Road, Donation information is available on their site
<http://www.humanityroad.org>

This was created by me without request or compensation,

Thank you,

Steven Longmire
Founder, EM Connection
October 17, 2011