Topics: News, Technology, Disaster Response, Environment, Oil Spill, CrisisCommons, OilReporter

Oil Reporter Enables Crowd-Sourced Spill Response

WASHINGTON DC – CrisisCommons is excited to announce the launch of the *Oil Reporter* (www.oilreporter.org) mobile application for iPhone and Android. This application, available for free download, allows users to submit geo-tagged information and photographs of oil-spill affected areas to a centralized server. That information, such as spill intensity or affected wildlife, is then made freely available to the public and relief organizations to help map the spread and scope of the damage caused by the contamination.

Using this application, residents of the Gulf Coast can report signs of the oil spill, using a 1-5 rating system for visible water contamination, and how it is affecting the beaches along the coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. All the submitted data is sent to San Diego State University, where it is aggregated, organized, and made freely available to any group or individual. The data can be mapped, linked to information about each GPS-tagged submission, along with photos of the affected areas. The application is also an open-source project, so other developers are free to make modifications to the code, building new features into the software.

Oil Reporter web application for iPhone and Android was built for CrisisCommons by Brendan Lim, Chris Selmer, Jonathan Nelson and Sean Soper from Intridea a web products and service company based in Washington, D.C Through Intridea, CrisisCommons met Jeff Haynie and Scott Schwarzhoff from Appcelerator who volunteered the use of its open source mobile development applications such the Titanium Developer. This was the product which was used to create Oil Reporter. Appcelerator's team then created Oil Tracker, the companion app to Oil Reporter, to enable real time mapping of Oil Reporter data.

Also associated with this launch is the Adopt-a-Beach campaign. This citizen mapping initiative between CrisisCommons and San Diego State University is designed to allow for people from around the world to monitor beaches via high resolution imagery to identify oil, wildlife and other data elements from beaches from Louisiana down the Gulf Coast of Florida. All of this software and data is freely available and open, maximizing its exposure to the public. With more eyes on it and more brains behind it, this information can have a greater impact on addressing clean-up and containment issues.

This is just one application was developed by volunteers working in CrisisCamps, weekend meetups of programmers, coders, developers, and other technology-minded individuals, organized by CrisisCommons. Through online collaboration, CrisisCommons has inspired more than 2,000 volunteers in seven countries to contribute to computer projects aimed at helping relief efforts in disaster stricken areas. Born in the wake of the recent Haiti earthquake, CrisisCamps have sprung up all over the world to help aid organizations address technological problems associated with the Chile earthquake, the Iceland volcano, and now the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

Crisis Camps planned for this weekend include Washington DC on Saturday, June 5 and Montreal on Sunday, June 6.

More information:

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www.oilreporter.org or @oilreporter on Twitter

Appcelerator:
http://www.appcelerator.com/save-the-gulf/

Other Media:
CNN: http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/tech/2010/05/29/nr.armstrong.oil.spill.tech.cnn
NPR: http://www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2010/05/26/127135431/oil-spill-iphone-android-app