

Thank you for taking the time to watch this module on crowdsourcing data.

During these unprecedented times, we would like to share some guidelines to help you lead your COVID-19 response. With this module we have several questions for you to think through and note the answers to inform your strategy.

Technology is only a small part of what makes an effective tech enabled response possible. One of the first questions you should ask yourself is: What informational gaps exist? what is not known? What information from the public would be helpful to you as you respond to this crisis?

Here's an example from New Jersey: The government response teams do not know how many people are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and where they are. Why is it important to answer this question? Because knowing the answer through crowdsourcing can help inform where to set up test centers.

Responding to this crisis requires that everyone play their part. It is therefore important to make sure that you think about the ways that the public could help or collaborate in effectively responding.

It is important to make the public a part of the solution. One helpful example is what we have seen with the Italian Association of Public Assistants, who are allowing active volunteer associations across Italy to map out all services they are offering in real time. Their goal is to ensure a steady supply of food, medicine, and other subsistent goods for citizens who are unable to provide for themselves in this period of isolation.

It is also important to think about what information you would consider providing to the public and in what form they would consume it. The presentation of that information needs to be relevant to the place where people are.

Collaborative efforts are often more effective than those done individually. Do not reinvent the wheel; you don't have to start from scratch. Find out if there are other groups already working on response and offer your assistance.

If there are no groups doing that kind of work and you're the first, invite others to assist you. Disjointed and duplicative efforts only add to confusion to response activities.

It is important for you to assess the risks associated with crowdsourcing data in such a situation. How can you mitigate these risks and have a strategy that effectively navigates these questions? For example how do you handle personal identifiable information? Do you really need to ask for an individual's name, or is a ZIP code or general location enough for the type of information you would like to gather from the public?

Before publishing any information can you trust in its veracity? Can you trust in the information you are getting in the public? Can the

authorities and the public – people who are consuming this data – can they trust the information shared on the platform? Which information requires a human filter to ascertain its veracity?
What information is clearly useless and can be discarded?

What processes can you put in place to handle the deluge of data which will inevitably come? It is also very important to communicate clearly and manage expectations of the public.

Ask yourself: Have you made any promises of response when somebody submits a report to you? What is your capacity to act and respond, and in what time frame are you promising that response?

If you feel that you do not have the capacity, are there partner organizations that can handle the response side of this response?

Now, who would benefit from crowdsourcing efforts such as these? Those who are looking to help in a particular situation can get clear information on how to.

The public can also inform authorities by sharing data on what's happening around them.

For the authorities and initiators of deployments, they are able to fill informational gaps as well as triage the data that they are receiving.

For example call center staff who are processing calls from the public or decision makers who need certain indicators to improve their response and allocate resources, given the fact that this crisis is very fluid. The situation on one day differs very much from the next day.

And so, crowdsourcing data can help to answer the question: How are things on the ground today?

Communities can also coordinate and self-organize according to their location, needs, end goals.

Now Ushahidi has been focused on providing equal access to resources for people to effectively respond to problems in the communities. We have built an open source technology platform that enables you to gather reports from the crowd, organize it in real time, and analyze the situation.

It also allows for you to triage and respond to this information so that you're able to close out the loop and publish the results to visualize the impact.

Now that we have discussed the considerations and recommendations, if you have an answer to the suggested questions and would like to proceed with setting up a deployment, here's two ways you can do that. You can sign up for our hosted service on ushahidi.com or download the software and host it on your own servers from Github.

We also have extensive documentation available on docs.ushahidi.com.

If you have any questions or would like to explore a partnership with Ushahidi to support your response please feel free to get in touch.

Thank you for your time, remember to wash your hands, stay home, and stay safe.

Bye!