

**Forschungsgruppe „Communicating Disaster“ (2010-2011)**

Extended Jour Fixe (One day workshop)

**New Social Media and Crisis**

April 27, 2011

Organisers: **Dr. Monika Büscher** (Lancaster University), **Marén Schorch** (ZiF)Contact: [m.buscher@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:m.buscher@lancaster.ac.uk); [maren.schorch@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:maren.schorch@uni-bielefeld.de)**Introduction** (preliminary)

Crisis situations engender intensive information flows not only for official and non-governmental emergency response agencies and the media, but also amongst members of the public. People affected by earthquakes, fires, floods, violence or slow motion disasters such as climate change or soil erosion, their colleagues, friends and relatives, and those who may have helpful knowledge increasingly use social media (Facebook, Twitter) to communicate and make sense of events. This one day workshop focuses on one particular phenomenon of social media use in crises: ‘collective intelligence’.

Collective intelligence is an ambiguous and highly productive, but also potentially treacherous concept. On the one hand, the notion can highlight positive social innovation, including the collective, ‘crowdsourced’ production of intelligence *about* complex problems (Zwass 2010), new ‘means for knowing what we are doing as a group’ (Levy 1997, Malone & Klein 2007, Connected Environments), or new distributed problem-solving capabilities that are ‘best understood as emergent and collective rather than orchestrated’ (Vieweg et al 2007). On the other hand, the concept can mask problematic tendencies. Informational practices and content in social media can fuel confusion in crisis situations, spread simplistic messages with highly affective charge, they can be manipulated by the media or organisations seeking to maximise donations, indeed – far from being emergent and self-organising – some forms of collective intelligence in crisis may be the result of ‘puppetmastering’ to take a term from discussions about totalitarian tendencies in gaming (McGonigal 2006). Alternatively, sensitive orchestration of public informational practices may open up new, genuinely collaborative opportunities for public engagement in crisis response and provide professionals with new resources, resonating with experiences in citizen science (Hemment et al 2010).

This workshop seeks to discuss how members of the public and professionals in emergency response currently use social media in crises. Exploiting the evocative ambiguity of the notion of ‘collective intelligence’, we explore examples of real world practices. Longer term aims are to establish an overview of relevant research, especially within the field of ‘crisis informatics’ (Palen et al 2007, Project EPIC <http://epic.cs.colorado.edu/>), to debate opportunities and challenges for design and to identify needs for new research. Questions might include:

- Are there historical precedents/precursors?
- How is collective intelligence (CI) done in practice? What forms does it take?
- Are different forms of CI associated with different kinds of complex problems?
- What are intended and unintended consequences?
- How do collective intelligence practices evolve over the life-span of a crisis?

# References

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- Palen, L., S. Vieweg, J. Sutton, S.B. Liu & A. Hughes (2007) Crisis Informatics: Studying Crisis in a Networked World. *Third International Conference on e-Social Science*, Ann Arbor.
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- Zwass, V. (2010) Series Editor's introduction. Van De Walle, B., Turoff, M., Hiltz, S.R. (Eds.) *Information Systems for Emergency Management*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, ix-xii.

## Schedule (preliminary)

- April 1, 2011      Background readings online in "stud.ip" (University Bielefeld)
- April 11, 2011     Some post extended abstracts/position papers (1-3 pages)
- April 26, 2011     19:00 – Dinner in town for those already here (pay yourself)

### On the day

- 09:00              *Coffee*
- 09:30              *Introduction – Monika and Marén*
- 09:45              *Pecha Kucha*
- 10:15              *Social media challenges from the perspective of professional responders – Jonas Landgren (IT University, Gothenburg, Sweden)*
- 10:45              *Coffee*
- 11:15              *Crisis Informatics – Video-Presentation by Leysia Palen (University of Colorado, Boulder, US)*
- 11:45              *Puppet mastering/Community management/CI in Alternate Reality Gaming*  
TBA
- 12:30              *Lunch (at ZiF-cafeteria)*
- 13:30              *Connecting emergency management and public use of Twitter in crisis situations – Video-Presentation by Irina Shklovski (IT University, Copenhagen)*
- 14:00              Group Discussions (Small Groups)
- 14:45              Group Discussion – Altogether
- 15:00              *Coffee and cake*
- 15:30              Video Discussion with Leysia Palen and (if possible) Irina Shklovski
- 16:30              What next?
- 19:00              Dinner in town for those staying (pay yourself)

**Post workshop** Depending on our 'What next?' discussions we may continue our online collaboration.

## List of Participants so far (grey indicates online participation):

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