

Groundcrew for Disaster Response

Groundcrew coordinates volunteers and communities in real time, combining maps and text messaging. You see people at-a-glance on a map and coordinate their actions, address problems, run events, ask and answer questions, etc. Groundcrew lets you accomplish more in the field, simplify logistics, and keep your workers and volunteers engaged by staying in touch and encouraging them via text message and mobile technology.

Key Features

See workers on a map, and send assignments in real time to individuals or groups

Label workers by skills, interests, and availability

See many locations, like work sites, meeting places, points of trouble, and more, on the same map

Dispatch workers rapidly around actual needs and timely issues by asking questions and creating events

Works on any cell phone. Push messages to feature phones via SMS, to smartphones (iPhone / BlackBerry / Android) as notifications, and through social networks like Twitter, Facebook, AIM, and GTalk

Real-time geolocation from any phone using cell towers, smartphone GPS, J2ME, and SMS geocoding

Helps action go viral with sharing / recruiting tools for Twitter and Facebook

Integrates easily with existing contact databases, and can be synced with organizing partners



Screenshot of Groundcrew's map-based web application and iPhone client.

Also works over SMS and on other smart phones (Android, Blackberry, etc).

Variety of Uses for Disaster Response

Small, mixed teams on the ground

We have had meetings with national FEMA/DHS contacts and with locals at the Incident Command level about using Groundcrew to coordinate heterogeneous teams (i.e., teams of local firefighters, police, etc, rather than full-time FEMA employees).

The fact that we can sign someone up for a limited time and use in under a minute, featuring full messaging and location and using only a mobile phone number and/or facebook account, appeals to them.

Cross-org volunteer/workforce pools

Many disaster-related organizations have only a small workforce of their own and depend on aggregating helpers from other workforces or volunteer pools. With Groundcrew, it's a one-click operation for an organization to share their worker pool, including real-time tracking data, with another organization on the system.

An organization like FEMA or the Red Cross can quickly build a volunteer pool and personnel data source from many local chapters or subgroups like the United Way, Ushahidi, etc.

Government / large organization overview

When local teams use Groundcrew to coordinate, it's easy to monitor their progress and position at state, national, and international levels within the same organization.

Because we offer so much value even at the local level, this isn't a burden: we offer our technology to local units and then demonstrate what's possible to the people at the top once it is in use.

Peer-to-peer assistance

In extreme situations we rely on neighbors to help other neighbors. Groundcrew has a peer-to-peer dispatch mode which can enable this, even for people who did not sign up prior to the event but for whom we have twitter or SMS and location data.

This kind of deploy is already active in non-emergency situations involving in-home eldercare. We are working with two eldercare organizations that are dispatching neighbors and registered nurses to meet the realtime needs of elderly near them.

Deployments active in:

San Jose, San Francisco, Boston, New York, Pakistan.

System Requirements:

Hosted service works with any modern web browser, and a variety of mobile clients.

Licensing:

Cost scales based on number of people coordinated.

Relationships with:

World Bank, US State Dept., FEMA, Red Cross, Boston Public Health, CrisisMappers, CrisisCommons, Ushahidi, LA Bucket Brigade, Audubon Society, USAID, Google Geo, MIT, Knight Foundation.

Contact

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How Organizations Use Groundcrew

Eldercare Organizations are dispatching neighbors and registered nurses to respond to the needs of elderly people under their care.

Political Campaigns use Groundcrew to organize supporters, sending them out to canvass, attend meetings, and hold signs.

Field Service Organizations are monitoring their workload more efficiently, easily rerouting available workers to customers who need assistance.

Aid NGOs use Groundcrew to track and communicate with workers on the ground, receive useful realtime information about a disaster, and respond to immediate needs quickly and efficiently.