

Editorial

Emergencies throughout the world recently prompted new attention to the role new mobile technologies and social media platforms play in emergency situations and response efforts. With a century old history of investigation, the sociological study of emergencies is aware that ICT expanded the reach of disaster sociology and is now focused on the emerging trend of the growing citizens' participation through online social media and mobile communications (computer-mediated interaction), providing, seeking and brokering information, connecting those within and outside the emergency's geographical space, with implications for both the informal and the formal response effort. However, Public Safety Organisations (PSOs) and their traditional command and control models, do not easily adapt to the new emergencies' trend of including a global, digitally enabled social arena.



The SOTERIA Project will research the impact of social media in emergencies and develop the SOTERIA Prototype, comprising the:

- SOTERIA Recommendations, to provide guidelines and courses of action for PSOs and citizens in order to create an effective and efficient use of social media in emergencies, that understands its impact, preventing and/or mitigating hurdles and maximising related added-values;
- SOTERIA Toolbox, integrating emergency-related ICT tools and functionality (e.g., social media tools and mobile applications) that offer additional (bi-directional) communication channels between PSOs and citizens and enhance high-quality situational awareness for PSOs and citizens in emergencies.

João Belfo, SOTERIA Project coordinator.

Project's current status

SOTERIA stands for "Online and Mobile Communications for Emergencies" and aims at analysing the impact and relevance of integrating social media in emergency response through four dimensions (THEO):

- Technological – toolbox & platform
- Human – orientated towards citizen participation
- Ethical and Legal – protection of rights and privacy
- Organisational – PSO needs and requirements

In the first phase of the project, the following activities were performed.

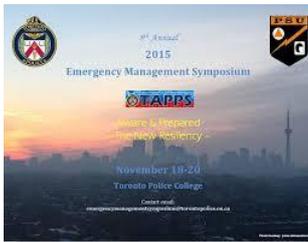
- Analysis of case studies (11 partners involved);
- Analysis of key performance indicators (9 partners involved);
- Interviews with end-users and a workshop in Portugal, which enabled to discuss with Portuguese end users;
- Definition of the communication plan.



Main related events / News & Facts



The 17th Annual Emergency Management Higher Education Symposium organized by the Emergency Management Institute of the US FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) will be held in June in the Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, MD (<https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/educonference15.aspx>).



The 8th annual Toronto Emergency Management Symposium will be held in November 2015.

(<http://www.torontoemergencymanagementsymposium.com/>).

The Toronto Emergency Management Symposium offers a networking opportunity with plenty of time for delegates to interact with other professionals in the field of emergency management.

The speakers for the 2015 edition have not been yet announced, however, the Toronto Emergency Management Symposium continues to garner international interest and praise. With every passing year, the TEMS team presents a host of reputable speakers who are willing to share their real-life involvement in riveting events ripped directly from our nation's headlines.

The SOTERIA Project will be presented in the following upcoming events



Fire research days 2015, Espoo, Finland on 24.-25.8.2015.

Website: <http://www.spek.fi/Suomeksi/Kehittaminen/Palotutkimusraati/Palotutkimuksen-paivat>

21st Nordic Research Conference on Safety, NoFS 2015, Porvoo, Finland on 25.-27.8.2015 <http://www.ttl.fi/partner/nofs/Pages/default.aspx>

The theme of the NoFS2015 is "Global Megatrends – Effects on Safety", which covers a wide range of topics related to safety, such as ageing, globalization, lack of natural resources, climate change, new technologies, digitalization, cyber safety, mobile software on safety etc.



Barents Rescue Exercise 2015 Final Planning Conference at Kittilä, Finland on 9-11.6.2015.

Barents Rescue 2015 Exercise is organised by the Ministry of the Interior and the Crisis Management Centre (CMC) Finland. The Finnish participation is financed in part by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Congress on social media and Civil Protection, at the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK) from July 6th to July 8th 2015.



Campaigns of experimentations

SOTERIA Campaigns of experimentations are conducted in order to collect rich feedback, guidelines and lessons learned from the end-users' (PSOs and Citizens) experience with SOTERIA. They focus on observing in loco, in real and realistic simulated environments how existing emergency management systems operate with and without the SOTERIA tools. Through campaigns of experimentation SOTERIA will be tried, experimented, analyzed, tested and evaluated. The extensive body of knowledge gathered will be instrumental to the production of recommendations on the understanding of the impact and role of social media in emergencies and efficient and effective ways to incorporate mobile technology and social media into emergency response efforts.

The purpose of the SOTERIA campaigns of experimentation is not to be used simply as a verification or validation of the SOTERIA toolbox, but to reduce the uncertainty of what is needed to be developed. Campaigns including continuous testing and observations are carried out in Finland, France, Norway, Poland, Portugal, United Kingdom and Turkey for fourteen months. SOTERIA Campaigns of Experimentation include different actors in the field of emergency response, such as emergency dispatch centers, fire brigades, police, emergency medical care and ambulance services – and citizens.



Each of the Campaigns of Experimentations conducted in parallel in seven countries will include several experimentations: workshops, table top exercises, realistic simulated exercises and experimenting and observing alongside actual operations. SOTERIA workshop in Barents Rescue Exercise in September 2015 will serve as the initial experimentation platform. Barents Rescue Exercise is utilized for implementing the baseline knowledge based on SOTERIA end-user requirements to define the already clear knowledge from the unclear knowledge that needs to be further examined and analyzed. This unclear knowledge is the target of the Campaigns of Experimentation.

Campaigns of Experimentation allow testing, analyzing and gathering of experiences in small parts. When not relied on individual experiments but replicating them, the SOTERIA concept will be tested under a range of circumstances and by variety of actors. The SOTERIA campaigns of experimentation will have two iterations: the first iteration on the campaigns of experimentation will be performed with SOTERIA ONE, a first SOTERIA version of the SOTERIA Toolbox and the second iteration with SOTERIA TWO, a more sophisticated version of the Toolbox, instantiated to answer the specific operational needs of an emergency service.



Focus on two partners

Tekever



The TEKEVER Group (<http://www.tekever.com>) develops creative disruptive technologies for the information technologies, aerospace, defence and security markets. TEKEVER's activity is product-driven and significant investment is dedicated to research activities leading to innovative technologies, since the company's vision is to make the Evernet a reality, that is, to enable everyone, everywhere, at any time, to collaborate towards a common goal.

Upholding this vision, TEKEVER delivers embedded systems, ad-hoc sensor networks, next-generation communications systems, software defined radio technology and unmanned aerial platforms to its aerospace, defence and security clients. With subsidiaries in Europe, Asia, the United States and South America, TEKEVER leverages innovation technology, ensuring an unprecedented advantage to its clients and partners throughout the World.

TEKEVER is the SOTERIA Consortium leader, being responsible for the Project's coordination.

AAHD

The Emergency Ambulance Physicians Association (www.aahd.org.tr) was established in 2004 to increase the capacity and education of the physicians who work in emergency services, ambulances and disaster medicine. The mission of AAHD is:

- to support RTD (+innovation) activities in the fields of disaster response and preparedness and emergency medicine (including first responders),
- to increase capacity of EMS in national level
- to develop injury prevention strategies.

AAHD provides the scientific evaluation of call centres, call numbers and organisational structure, the personnel function descriptions, standards and international procedures to be applied, so as to improve the work and organisation of emergency health care and disaster medicine services.

AAHD intervenes in all types of emergencies, from first aid, basic life support to emergency medical and disaster medical responses.

AAHD gives consultation services to campuses and industrial areas on emergency planning and responding.

AAHD members are experienced in command and control of emergency health services.

AAHD brings a strong and structured end-user view to the SOTERIA Project, beyond the European framework, assisting in the development of the organisational analysis and actively supporting the validation and evaluation of the Project's results, particularly the cost-benefit aspects of social media impact and use in emergency management systems. AAHD supports SOTERIA Recommendations and Social Media Roadmap and SOTERIA Dissemination and Exploitation activities. AAHD is the contact point for the Turkish end-users community.

