

# Haiti emergency response: the power of crowdsourcing and SMS

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Mission 4636

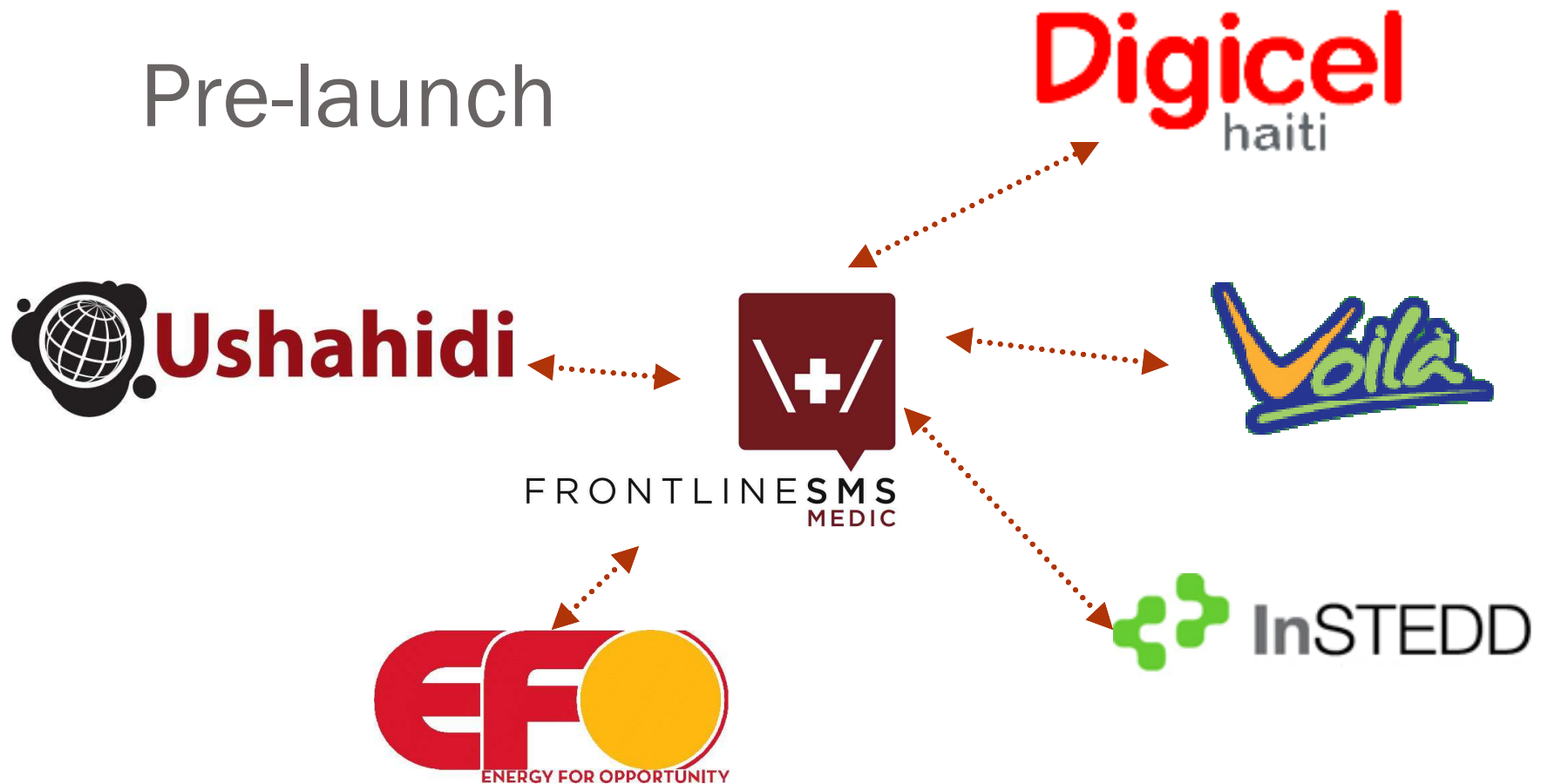
26 Feb 2010

[www.mission4636.org](http://www.mission4636.org)

# Haiti emergency response

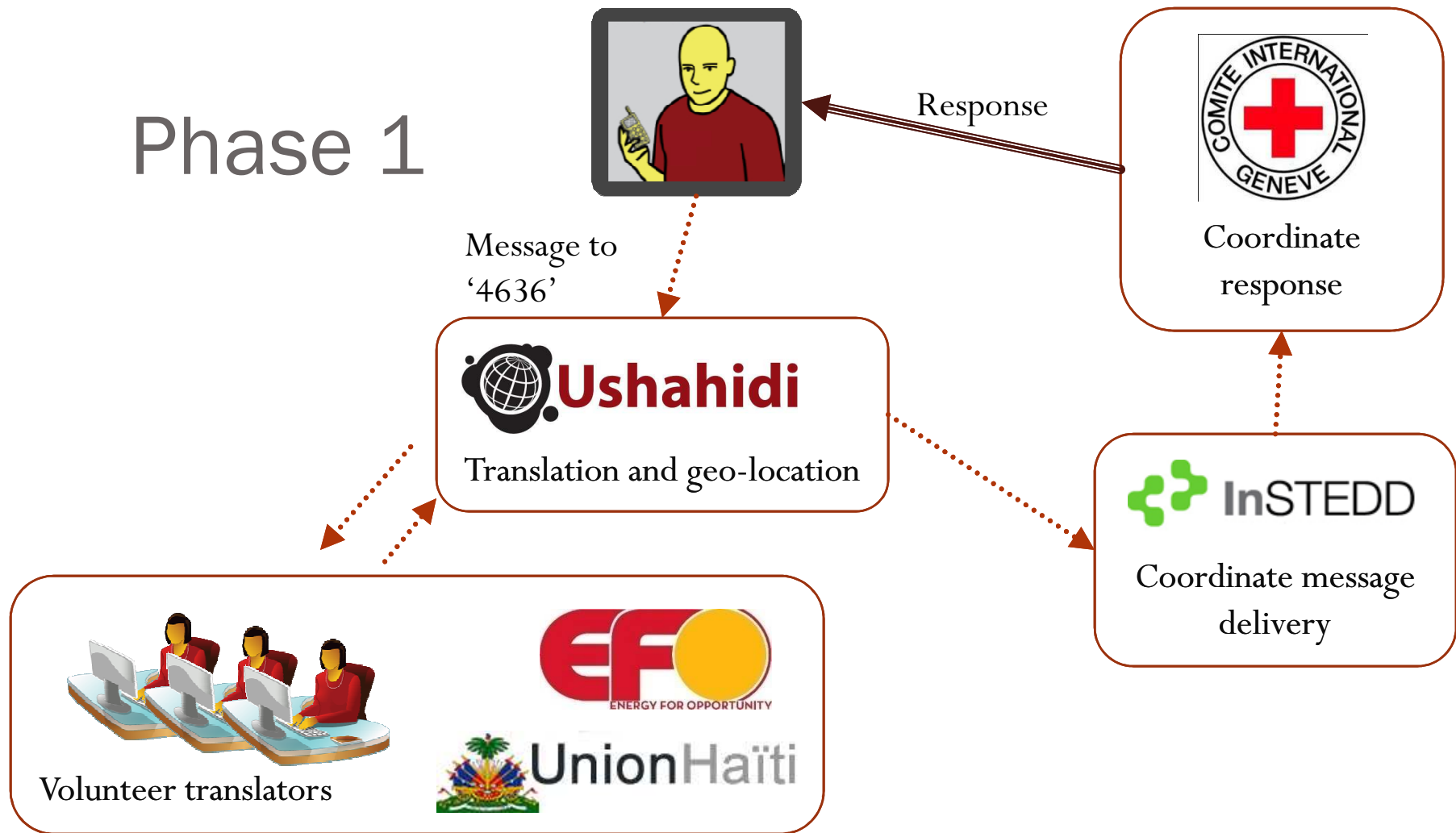
- SMS-based emergency response and reporting  
<http://vimeo.com/9141941>
- 1000s of volunteer translators of Haitian Kreyol
- 100s with a sustained commitment
- We have directed emergency response to save 100s of lives
- First food/aid to tens of thousands:
  - ~1 for each message translated
- Average turn-around of 10 minutes

## Pre-launch



- 48 hours – coming together
- Josh Nesbit of FrontlineSMS brought together the different organizations. With Katie Stanton of State, they organize the '4636' shortcode with the telcos. The two remain as coordinators of the collaboration

# Phase 1



- First 10 days – emphasis on search and rescue
- Brian Herbert of Ushahidi built a crowdsourcing platform, working with Robert Munro of EFO who mobilized the volunteers. In Haiti, Nicolas di Tada of InSTEDD delivered the messages to the responders, the Red Cross.

## Phase 2



Response



Coordinate response

Message to  
'4636'



Translation and geo-location



@Tufts

Refine coordinates and  
identify actionable items



Volunteer translators



- Following 10 days – 10-fold increase in response (including aid/food/security)
- The USCG and Southern command took over the response, expanding the mandate. wUshahidi@Tufts took over the coordination of actionable items (Patrick Meier, Denise Sewell, Jaro Valúch coordinating)

# Phase 3



Response



Coordinate response

Message to  
'4636'

CrowdFlower  
Translation and geo-location



@Tufts

Refine coordinates and  
identify actionable items



Paid workers in Haiti



- Currently rolling out – the shift to a sustainable effort
- CrowdFlower, headed by Lukas Biewald, took over hosting the crowdsourcing platform. Samasource, headed by Leila Janah and working with the 1000 jobs Haiti project, trained workers in Haiti to take over this process.

# Other services

4636 data



Diaspora/volunteers  
Individual replies

Microsoft  
**Research**  
Offline+machine  
translations



Service mapping

Red Cross, Plan International, Charity  
Water, US State Department,  
International Medical Corps, AIDG,  
USAID, FEMA, US Coast Guard Task  
Force, World Food Program,  
SOUTHCOM, OFDA, UNDP

Person Finder: Haiti Earthquake  
English | Français | Kreyòl

What is your situation?

Currently tracking about 32500 records.

PLEASE NOTE: All data entered will be available to the public and viewable and usable by anyone. Google does not review or verify the accuracy of this data.

[Embed this tool on your site](#) · [Developers](#) · [Terms of Service](#)  
powered by  
Google

Google  
Person Finder



CRISIS  
mapping



Ushahidi

Mapping /  
clustering  
incident reports



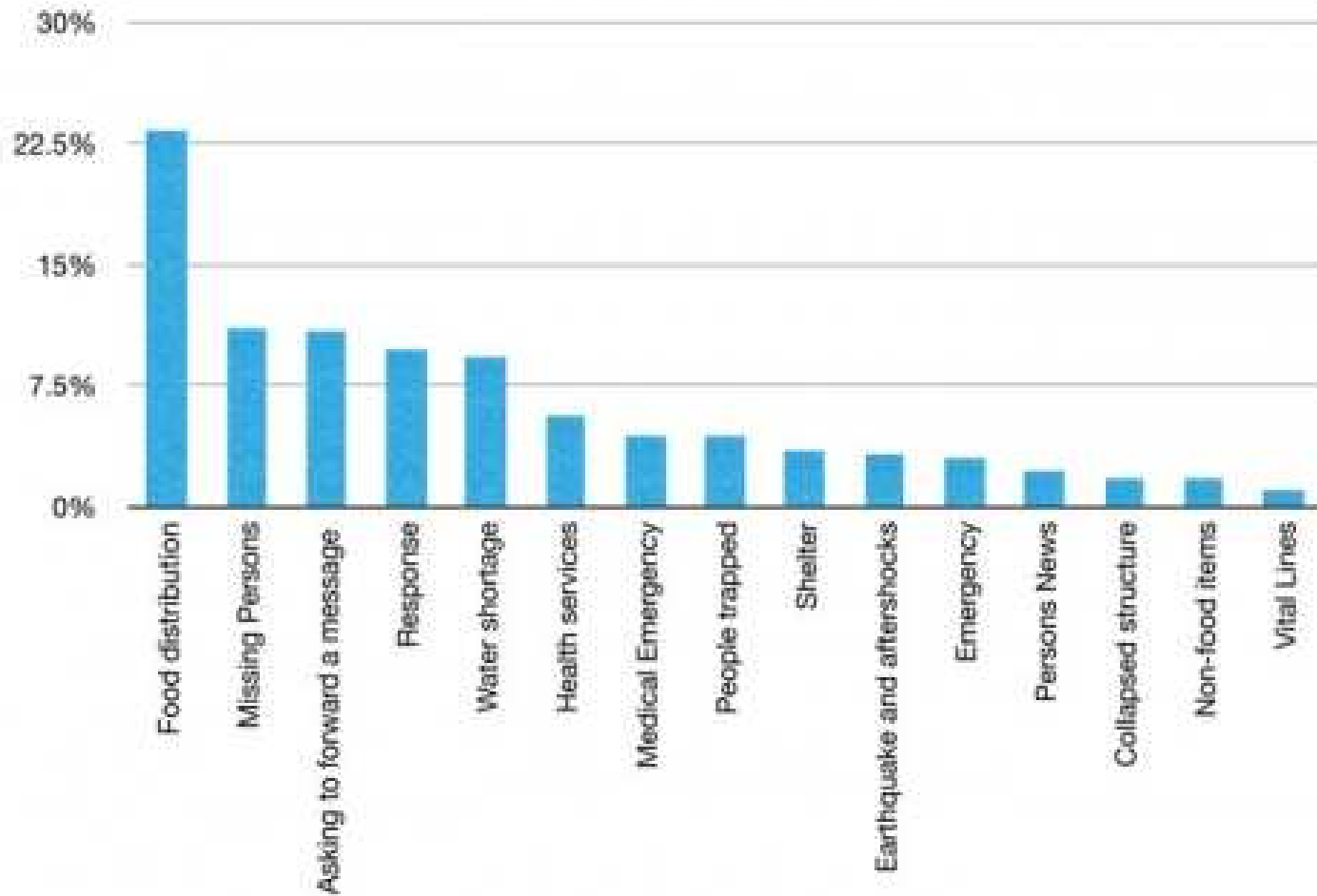
THOMSON REUTERS  
FOUNDATION



InSTEDD

Information  
broadcasts 'EIS'

# Messages: ~1000 per day





# 'Local' knowledge

## Workers collaborating to find locations:

*Dalila:* I need Thomassin Apo please

*Apo:* Kenscoff Route: Lat: 18.495746829274168, Long:-72.31849193572998

*Apo:* This Area after Petion-Ville and Pelerin 5 **is not on Google Map. We have no streets name**

## Feedback from responders:

"just got emergency SMS, child delivery, USCG are acting, and, the GPS coordinates of the location we got from someone of your team were **100% accurate!**"

## The ability for someone to make a real-time difference at any other place in the world:

*Apo:* I know this place like my pocket

*Dalila:* thank God u was **here**

**'here'** = anywhere



# Feedback

- **Clark Craig, Marine Corps:** “4636 is saving lives every day.”
- **Craig Fulgate, FEMA Task Force:** “[The] Crisis Map of Haiti represents the most comprehensive and up-to-date map available to the humanitarian community.”
- **22 Marine Expeditionary Unit:** “We received data on an area outside Grand Goave ... two old women and a young girl with serious injuries from the earthquake. They were evacuated.”
- **Ushahidi@Tufts** “The World Food Program delivered food to an informal camp of 2500 people, having yet to receive food or water, in Diquini to a location that 4636 had identified for them.”

# The power of the crowdsourcing

"Rue Casseus no 9 gen yon sant kap bay swen ak moun ki blese e moun ki brile"

Street Casseus no 9, there is a center that helps people that are wounded or burnt

- From that chat:

(11:56:55) (marc): i will pass it on that is my cousins hospital.

- It is the volunteers, not the technology, that made this work
- We just provided a place for them to come together
  - The best technology is agile *supported* technology

# Acknowledgments

- Every volunteer
- Every responder
- Alex Onsager, Anar Simpson, Bart Stidham, Bee Rynolds, Brian Herbert, Caleb Bell, Carol Waters, Chris Van Pelt, Christopher Csikszentmihalyi, Claire Berlinski, David Kobia, Denise Rosalind Sewell, Eduardo Jezierski, Eric Rasmussen, Erik Hersman, Eric Nguyen, Fiona Moise, Francesca Garret, Fred Michel, Frednel Isma, Giscard Nazon, Henry Ado Hilde Berg-Hansen, Jackie Oriscar, Jacky Poteau, Jaro Valuch, Jean-Robert Durocher, Jenn Sooley-Peralta, Jennifer, Jimi Oliver, Johanne Eliacin, Jon Gosier, Josh Nesbit, Juan Wajnerman, Juliana Rotich, Karina Fillion, Katie Stanton, Kennedy Kasina, Leila Janah, Lukas Biewald, Luke Beckman, Marc P-I, Mark Dow, Mark Prutsalise, Martial Marcellu, Martin Verszli, Mary Jane Marcus, Nicolas di Tada, Ory Okolloh, Patrick Meier, Paul Goodman, Paul Munro, Ronald Beliard, Ronny Hoffman, Ryan Bank, Sarah George, Sarah Bernard, Sarah Robert, Sebastien Cournoyer, Segun Salonke, Sophia Parafina, Steve Michel, Tim Schwartz, Timothy Large, Will Lewis