



## After the Floods: Information Sharing, Decision Making and Collaboration during Major Incidents

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014,  
Leeds University Business School  
University of Leeds



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

The aim of the workshop is to explore Information Sharing, Decision Making and Collaboration in light of the recent response to the floods in the UK. Topics covered will include ad-hoc cooperation, improvisation, new models of information management, cross-border information assistance, interoperability and the role of businesses and not-for-profit groups. The workshop will include presentations from practitioners and academics, as well sessions focused on exchanging information and best practice. It will be split into three overall sessions:

### Session 1

Organisations involved in the response to the floods will reflect on the lessons learned and challenges of responding to major incidents. Presentations will be given by.

- Martyn Emberson (Chief Fire Officer) & Joe Finneran (Station Manager) - Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service: who will reflect on cross border assistance in the recent floods.
- Paul Gibson - London Ambulance Service: who will reflect on Interoperability and information sharing.
- Byron Wilkinson (Civil Contingencies Coordinator, Local Resilience Forum Partnership Team, Dyfed-Powys Police) will reflect upon Lessons Learned.
- Laurence Alison - University of Liverpool: who will discuss the current understanding relating to decision inertia, interoperability and effective team decisions. This presentation will give a short overview of naturalistic decision-making and observations made of expert performance in the field, linking back to the live exercise completed at Merseyside. Emphasis will be on the challenges to interoperable function, teamwork and consequence choosing, illustrating how inertia is more common than error. The presentation will also briefly touch on methods to enhance effective timely action-oriented decisions.

### Session 2

Relevant research from current research projects will be highlighted.

- Niek Wijngaards: will discuss lowering the barriers for inter-agency cooperation & information sharing. Drawing on results from the [BRIDGE FP7 Project](#), this presentation



showcases how ad-hoc cooperation can be supported while respecting the autonomy of the involved agencies. Successful cooperation avoids centralised micro-management and exploits the diversity in capabilities.

- Peter Groenewegen, Kees Boersma & Jerone Wolbers: will discuss Net-centric operations in action: getting one's feet wet'. Net-centric operations is a new information management concept currently being implemented in the Netherlands to support flexible disasters operations based on self-synchronisation. It presupposes that information can be collected, sorted and exchanged in an accessible and univocal form. In practice, however, professionals interpret similar information differently. In our presentation we will focus on how emergency responders develop collective sensemaking from information, based on a trading zone perspective, in which information is negotiated in action.
- Anouck Adrot & Pierre Romelaer - Paris-Dauphine University: will discuss improvisation in response to major incidents. Improvisation is particularly frequent in crisis response when planned procedures fail to address stakeholders' needs. Most of the time, though, improvisation remains a local effort and hardly develops at organizational and inter-organizational scales. Therefore we aim to explore how to foster the development of collective improvisation and make crisis responders fully benefit from such initiative. Relying on an abductive reasoning (e.g. literature analysis confronted with empirical data), we identify key organizational factors that can help organizations deal with the complexity of collective improvisation in crisis settings. We go further by analysing the role of information in the emergence and development of these key factors.
- Nigel Wright - Leeds University: will discuss- "Information sharing before, during and after flood events". Nigel Wright has extensive knowledge and research expertise in flood risk management internationally and particularly in the UK and the Netherlands. He will draw on the recent floods in the UK to highlight the importance of planning for the sharing of information in crisis management. He will also report on the EPSRC Project *Organisational Operational Response and Strategic Decision Making for Long Term Flood Preparedness in Urban Areas*. Project members are conducting empirical research into the behaviours of organisations, modelling businesses and not-for-profit groups interactions with other organisations such as emergency responders, insurers and customers. It is also iteratively developing and testing (with end users) a digital communication tool that will provide organisations with practical information in a format that engages users in a tailored and active learning process.
- Garik Markarian - Lancaster University: will discuss the current barriers to cross border communication during major incidents. He will review the work of the EU Project HiGate which will produce develop a generic gateway that allows communications across networks currently used by first responders in Europe.
- David Allen & Alan Pearman - Leeds University: will outline work undertaken on decision-making, information sharing and use during major incidents. The work challenges current decision-making and information management models used by emergency services.



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## **Session 3**

The final part of the day we will identify research and collaboration priorities, which relate to both current gaps in the existing evidence base and the challenges identified by the practitioners.

### Schedule

10:00 – 10:15 Briefing & Introduction at Leeds University

10:20 – 11:00 Session 1: Practitioners

11:00 – 12:00 Session 2: Academics

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 14:00 Session 2: Academics

14:00 – 15:00 Session 3: Where Next?

**If you would like to attend, please let us know as soon as possible by emailing David Allen ([d.allen@lubs.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:d.allen@lubs.leeds.ac.uk)) with your name, the organisation you work for and your contact details. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.**