

Open Source Software for Disaster Management

CHAMINDRA DE SILVA

**Thursday, December 11
7:30 p.m.**

Rittenberg Lounge, Mather Hall, 2nd floor



Disasters, by definition, are devastating events that overwhelm the affected society's capacity to respond and mitigate. In this chaotic environment, new alliances, groupings, collaboration, and trust need to be quickly formed between government organizations, civil society, foreign aid groups, and volunteers to effectively muster their energies into a holistic response effort. Information technology can play a valuable coordination role for situation awareness and enable responders to act effectively. In particular, open source software has been found to be a good fit for the dynamic "bazaar"-like environment of a disaster and a good match to the humanitarian codes of conduct.

Chamindra de Silva is the director of the Sahana project, a suite of Web-based, open-source, relief-management applications that grew out of the 2004 Asian tsunami disaster and that have been used to manage other large disasters. He also co-founded the Humanitarian-FOSS community, which uses free, open-source software to solve humanitarian problems. De Silva graduated from Magdalen College, Oxford University, with a degree in Engineering and Computer Science and has worked in software research and development for more than a decade.



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