

THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY



LOCATION:
*Kissimmee, Florida,
United States*

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
Business and Related Services

NOMINATING COMPANY:
Business Objects

ORGANIZATION:

E Team

PROJECT NAME:

Emergency Management and Reporting System

Summary

In response to Hurricane Katrina, the State of Louisiana used NC4 Public Sector's E Team emergency management software and Crystal Reports from Business Objects to provide greater situational awareness and ensure requests for rescue teams, food, shelter, clothing, and transportation were communicated to the right entities and tracked to ensure completion.

Introductory Overview

Before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina, the State of Louisiana used NC4 Public Sector's E Team emergency operations at a strategic level, providing a big picture view of relief efforts, including the onslaught of requests for rescue and support teams, food, shelter, clothing, fuel, ice, and transportation.

E Team software includes situational awareness and management capabilities to enable organizations to direct daily operational activities for planned and unplanned emergencies, events and disasters, and preparedness and training exercises. E Team is the only incident management application proven to work in large, complex, multi-agency disaster responses with hundreds of simultaneous users. E Team is currently used by public entities throughout the world in a wide variety of applications, including emergency management, homeland security, bio-defense, disaster preparedness and recovery, event management, and training exercises.

E Team has been successfully used in nearly every major disaster or event of the last four years, including the 2005 Presidential Inauguration, the 2004 Republican and Democratic National Conventions, the 2004 G8 Summit on Sea Island, the 2002 Winter Olympics, and the 2002 and 2003 Super Bowls.

E Team has been used successfully to respond to many of the most extreme situations the country has encountered in recent times, including New York City's response to 9/11, the Columbia Shuttle recovery effort, California and Arizona wildfires, West Nile Virus outbreaks, the 2003 Northeastern U.S. blackouts, and Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, Isidore, Lili, Isabel, and Katrina.

E Team supports operations, processes, and methodologies based on organizational rules defined



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by the NIMS (National Incident Management System) and ICS (Incident Command System), a standard for describing how government agencies should organize for and respond to emergencies. Users of the system post information to a real-time repository, called the “virtual whiteboard,” which presents information summaries, tables, and maps. From these, users can drill down for more information.

Louisiana has used E Team software, together with Crystal Reports from Business Objects, for a number of years. In preparing for and responding to Hurricane Katrina, the E Team/Crystal Reports solution proved invaluable. Requests for support or supplies were entered into the system, where specific tasks could be assigned and scheduled. Typically, local and state agencies make requests. Those that can't be fulfilled at the local level are elevated to the state level. Requests that can't be fulfilled at the state level are elevated to the federal level. Crystal Reports was used to quantify the large volume of requests and analyze vast amounts of data. During the Katrina relief effort, the team often relied on 30-40 Crystal Reports per day.

Features of the system used in the Katrina response include real-time messaging, action templates, duty and call logs, GIS mapping with map annotation and hand-drawn overlays, and secure access for different levels of user access.

Benefits

Louisiana emergency management professionals and state agencies had been watching the progress of Katrina, and Louisiana's Office of Emergency Management had taken steps to protect the lives and property of residents within the state. As the first step in opening Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) throughout the state, the Office of Emergency Management had activated E Team to connect officials and operations from a wide range of agencies to gather and disseminate damage information from outlying parishes. E Team was also being used to provide situational awareness on shelters in the state. Katrina moved ashore, dumping rains and pushing gulf waters into coastal communities. State emergency managers worked hands-on with E Team, a powerful tool that allowed effective communication and collaboration to manage the emergency as it progressed.

Connecting Louisiana's 63 parishes with federal agencies including: the National Guard, the Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers; a myriad of state agencies including Health and Hospitals, the Departments of Public Safety, Transportation, Environmental Quality, and Public Services, among many others; and liaisons for nonprofit entities including the American Red Cross, E Team brought a wide range of collaborative functionality to bear on the unfolding emergency.

During the hurricane, the Louisiana Office of Emergency Management used E Team's real-time, collaborative features to enable:

- Information dissemination, reporting and monitoring of all incidents
- A common operational picture
- Resource requesting
- Facilities status reporting



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- Critical asset management
- Geolocation of all incidents, shelters and critical assets

After Katrina swept through, and with FEMA officials still on hand, a second tropical Storm, Hurricane Rita hit the area. Once again, the Office of Emergency Management relied on E Team to manage the response to this second hazardous weather incident that rocked Louisiana with a one-two punch.

Emergencies were declared in 37 Louisiana parishes and 11 had mandatory evacuations. Nearly 900,000 people had been urged to flee. Again, the Louisiana Office of Emergency Management connected parish, state and federal agency services through E Team to gather information regarding weather, incidents, resources and personnel, analyze the situation, and make collaborative decisions to address the emergency.

E Team also assisted in after-storm work to help state and local jurisdictions recover from the multiple extreme weather events. Together, the two hurricanes caused tremendous damage, and E Team was used extensively in the months following for management of resources, reporting, and for after action review and reimbursement purposes.

E Team has been successfully used in nearly every major disaster or event of the last four years. See details in "Success" section below.

The Importance of Technology

As the scope of Hurricane Katrina painfully demonstrated, coordinating response activities is a massive undertaking requiring centralized coordination, precise tracking of complex processes, real-time updates, and instantaneous information sharing. Technology is critical to this effort, and the technology employed by E Team and Crystal Reports is perfectly suited to the task.

E Team was built from software originally developed in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) DARPA program. The system is rapidly deployed, and in a crisis can be quickly scaled to thousands of users who can access it using any standard web browser. The system also supports the national Incident Command System (ICS).

Crystal Reports from Business Objects, which directly accesses E Team data through the ODBC (open database connectivity) driver included with the Crystal application, can be used to create and distribute customized reports from any of the following E Team areas: incident reporting and tracking, situation reporting, resource and asset management, action planning, critical infrastructure reporting, hospital and shelter status, personnel management, tip reporting, duty and call logs, and hazard modeling. Most importantly, Crystal Reports provides the ability to analyze volumes of data, to quantify the information and show trends. For example, during the Katrina disaster relief effort, Crystal Reports helped identify and prioritize requests related to life safety issues. Users could use the analysis capabilities in Crystal Reports to identify any resource requests that mentioned food, water, or ice. These requests could then be given the first priority and routed directly to teams handling life safety issues.

Crystal Reports also offers enhanced reporting capabilities such as ad hoc and user-defined reports, FEMA reimbursement reporting, and historical analysis for every critical field in the system.



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Originality

E Team has used Crystal Reports Server to automate its entire reporting process. During the Katrina relief effort, all resource requests were turned into automatic, scheduled reports. PDFs were automatically emailed out to end users (police, firefighters, emergency managers, military personnel) on a specific time schedule and could be accessed by mobile/handheld devices. This was essential to disseminating information and facilitating cross-communication between the many disparate groups that are part of the emergency management effort. This capability in Crystal Reports is all out of the box, and was set up within a few hours.

E Team is the only comprehensive large-scale incident management software that is integrated with both Crystal Reports from Business Objects for reporting and NC4's National Incident Monitoring Centers, which monitor thousands of incident information sources throughout the United States (including government, law enforcement, and local media) for current incidents.

Success

E Team is the only incident management application proven to work in large, complex, multi-agency disaster responses with hundreds of simultaneous users. E Team has been successfully used in nearly every major disaster or event of the last four years. E Team fully supports communications and collaboration at all levels of response organizations. E Team successfully supported multi-organization communication and collaboration during the following recent activations:

- 9/11 response in New York City: 1700 users from 150 local, regional, state and national agencies and jurisdictions, as well as utilities, non-profit organizations, and private corporations. Supported communications and collaboration between the EOC, 12 disconnected mobile ICP's, staging areas, and DOC's at all levels in NYC and Washington DC.
- 2002 Winter Olympics: 1500 users from 75 local, regional, state and national agencies and jurisdictions. Supported communications and collaboration at the EOC, JOC, 6 Venue ICP's and various DOC's in Utah and DC.
- Washington DC IMF demonstrations: 160 users at several DC city agencies and the FBI, BATE, US Capitol Police, US Park Service and the Secret Service. Supported communications and collaboration at the EOC, JOC, field sites and various DOC's in the DC area.
- 2003 Super Bowl: 250 users from several agencies, jurisdictions and organizations in the San Diego area. Supported communications and collaboration at city, county, regional and state EOC's, two staging areas, three ICPs, and DOC's throughout the area.

Difficulty

Crystal Reports has allowed E Team to overcome challenges by bringing data together, providing a big picture view, and promoting information sharing.