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## COMPETITIVE DIVISION – GRADUATE STUDENT

### Utilizing Open-Source Information To Mitigate and Respond To Emergencies

Open-source resources can not only help prepare government agencies for disasters but also help agencies respond to disasters. By utilizing tools to harvest open-source information, government agencies can respond to daily emergencies, prepare for planned events, and respond to unexpected disasters in a more effective manner.

The majority of disasters are everyday emergencies that are handled at the local level (i.e. a house fire, domestic disputes, etc.). Decision makers tend to use information that is relayed to them via radio. However, if a video of an incident is available on the internet, decision makers would be able to utilize the footage to assess what services are needed and how many personnel are required to appropriately respond to an incident before first responders arrive on-scene.

Emergency managers also need to prepare for planned events. Planned events includes but is not limited to Sporting Events, Concerts, and Commencement Ceremonies. All of these events require more than traditional security measures, such as metal detectors. Emergency responders need to prepare for inclement weather (i.e. the risk of slipping increases when the ground is wet and the risk of fatigue is increased when

it's warmer). If threats against a person or event are known to Emergency managers, there is a higher possibility that the threat can be mitigated.

Emergency managers could benefit from open-source information when responding to unexpected disasters. These events could be anything from terrorist attacks, to chemical spills, to natural disasters. During Hurricane Katrina, the media saw how Citizen Journalism could drastically improve reporting. Utilizing footage captured by citizens would allow emergency managers to obtain an understanding of the response required much more quickly.

**Presentation Theme:** Utilizing digital tools to respond to disasters more effectively.

**Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research:** Collaborators:

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