Q&A An Interview with Greg Povolny of Mindshare Technology

POVOLNY

By Dr. TOM PHELAN

With 23 years of experience in software engineering Greg Povolny has developed technology for the Department of Defense, Pennsylvania's National Guard, and Florida's Department of Children and Families. He has seven patents for inventions with data interoperability. He is the founder of Mindshare Technology and the original architect of the SAMS technology and will use his experience and technology framework to deliver on state-wide solutions for emergency management and disaster preparedness.

PHELAN: What do you see as the needs of the not-for-profit sector that can be met with IT solutions?

POVOLNY: From an IT perspective, the not-for-profit sector is left to its own devices with regard to emergency planning and disaster management. Often there is limited budget, lack of technology, limited or no standards and where technology solutions are deployed, they are almost always disconnected from other community partners. Today, with the far-reaching capability of the global Internet and its mass connectivity between stakeholders and partners, online information sharing and collaboration is a must and should be an integral part of the IT strategy.

PHELAN: What is the significance of social networks, and do they play a part in creating synergies between the public, private, not-for-profit, and faith-based sectors for disaster preparedness?

POVOLNY: Social networks have been in formation for as long as people have been interacting. The more organized the social network becomes, and the more accessible the participants are, the more ready and the more proactive stakeholders can be daily, during and post disaster. Emergency support functions, the emergency operations center (EOC), and first responders have a good technology foundation. However, it is all too often disparate from each other. To compound the disparity, non-profits and faith-based organizations also are disconnected from such functions yet remain a critical support function long after the first responders and EOC have completed their tasks. The lack of collaboration and in particular, real-time collaboration makes the ability to organize infinitely more difficult.

PHELAN: Where has Mindshare Technology made the greatest contribution in this market and/or in addressing such gaps?

POVOLNY: Similar to the emergency support function that coordinates and provides services within an EOC, non-profit and faith-based agencies also play a critical role in meeting the immediate needs and facilitating the long-term recovery of disaster affected citizens. The effectiveness of these efforts depends upon the extent to which these organizations, along with government agencies and other public and private entities, can share information in real time, coordinate essential activities, and communicate with persons in need. The absence of data collection architecture across disparate systems, in particular across the formal social services network of non-profit and faith-based organizations, is a significant problem, and threatens the operations of an emergency situation and jeopardizes the safety of all involved. These agencies must be able to work together and communicate situational awareness effortlessly to avoid a fundamental breakdown in delivery of social services before, during, and after a disaster. The SAMS approach to effortless information exchange is to automatically and proactively traverse the human relationships as defined in the social network, which is stored in the SAMS multi-dimensional participant relational database.

SAMS provides a self-defining approach to the natural evolution of community partnerships (social networks). There is inherent information sharing across such partnerships. It is our intention to facilitate the integration between our social network models. The SAMS service includes information sharing across databases that proliferate between community partners such as contacts, special needs, assets, victim registry, volunteers, real-time status, and dashboard solutions.

PHELAN: What opportunities are there for business continuity planners in servicing this market?

POVOLNY: This is a great opportunity for business continuity planners in many ways. First and foremost, the use of such technology can be the core component to the communications plan. Furthermore, recovery plans can benefit through the real-time visualization of contacts, volunteers, assets, inventory, as well as a geographical depiction of situational awareness on a GIS map using local and state layers.

Mindshare is currently working with stakeholders in the City of Tampa and in particular with the community partnerships that interact with the Metropolitan Medical Response Services. We are excited to address the very real requirements that are facing our nation today. The ability to bring together all aspects of human interactions using the global Internet, collaboration technologies, and real-time, mission critical data sharing is here and now.

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