INFORM

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ABC MD, MARK SCOTT, ON THE ROLE OF PSB IN DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES

GOOGLE.ORG ON CRISIS MAPPING AND THE POWER OF ONLINE TOOLS

REUTERS INSTITUTE FELLOW, MONIKA KALCSICS, ON MEDIA AND AID AGENCIES

PANOS PICTURES PHOTO ESSAY

THIS ISSUE
MEDIA LEADERSHIP IN CRISIS, DISASTER AND EMERGENCY

37-year-old Josephine Mpongo practises the cello in the Kimbanguiste neighbourhood of Kinshasa. She plays with the Kimbanguiste Symphony Orchestra, who practise here five days per week.

ANDREW MCCONNELL | PANOS PICTURES

CONTENTS

CBA

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FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Welcome to *Inform*, the new journal of International Public Service Broadcasting from the CBA. The CBA's Secretary-General, Sally-Ann Wilson, sets out plans for the journal, its purpose and strategy.

AUTHOR
Sally-Ann Wilson

The Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) was established in 1945 to support and promote the qualities that remain central to Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), namely media freedom and broadcast excellence. Today the CBA is the largest global association of Public Service Broadcasters, providing a unique forum for global broadcasting organisations to share knowledge and experience, as broadcasting evolves in the digital era.

Since being appointed Secretary-General in 2010 I have worked with the team at the CBA Secretariat to refocus and consolidate the association. Our core purpose going forward is to support Public Service Broadcasters through digital transition. Digital switchover provides both challenges and opportunities for PSBs. There is no doubt that the Internet has democratised public access and engagement with the media, however, many of us share the belief that broadcasting still provides an essential public media space for people to come together and share news and views, tragedy and triumph.

Lord Reith, the first Director General of the BBC, established the principles that public broadcasting should follow; to educate, inform and entertain. With so much choice available in a digital media world, entertainment is certainly a key factor for audiences, while the notions of 'educating' and 'informing' have perhaps become less central. The web has undoubtedly enabled audiences to become producers but in an age of information overload broadcasters are still required. It is broadcasting that can use its wealth of experience to cut through the noise and provide trusted and relevant information to audiences.

Much of the information and news about the CBA is available via our website, but we also recognised that an intelligent and accessible specialist journal, available both in hard copy and via the web, would be of value to members. I was recently fascinated to discover how much research and comment was generated by the academic world about public broadcasting. I was also surprised by how little of this debate reached the senior managers who were practitioners and leaders of public broadcasting globally.

Our aim is for *Inform* to provide a bridge between the academic analysis of Public Service Broadcasting and the views and experience of senior managers working within the industry. It is our intention to publish two volumes a year, providing a stand-alone guide to the topics that concern both commentators and practitioners of PSB.

Trust and relevance are accepted as central pillars for the future of PSB and it is at times of national crisis that audiences turn to Public Service Broadcasters for the essential information on which they can rely. This first volume of *Inform* focuses on the theme of the 29th CBA General Conference in Brisbane, Australia; **Media Leadership in Crisis, Disaster and Emergency,** highlighting situations when to be informed is vital.

We welcome feedback and, above all, we hope you enjoy reading *Inform*.

SALLY-ANN WILSON, SECRETARY-GENERAL, CBA.

CRISIS: WHO THE PUBLIC TURN TO

Managing Director of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Mark Scott, discusses the important role of PSB during times of crisis, disaster and emergency.

AUTHOR
Mark Scott

PHOTOGRAPHY
Panos Pictures, London
& ABC News

It's the 2nd March. Autumn began in Sydney yesterday. As I write this, police and emergency workers are preparing to evacuate people from the Hawkesbury river region, just north of Sydney. State Emergency Service crews have already helped almost two thousand people to get away, many in flood boats. Weekend rains are expected to tip swollen rivers over the edge. Dams are overflowing. Evacuation orders have gone out in Goulburn, Cowra, Cooma and Bega on the south coast. Highways have been cut. Bridges are expected to follow. In Australia's national capital, Canberra, Lake Burley Griffin (the National Gallery, National Museum and the High Court sit on its shores) has been closed for a week because of contamination. There are major flood warnings for the Murray River, which spans three Australian states and emergency crews are at work in Victoria's north, sandbagging properties where floods are expected this weekend. I have just looked at the ABC's emergency site, which aggregates all the available information about emergencies, and see there are currently 22 warnings and alerts in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory and a further 14 in Victoria.

Throughout all this ABC local radio stations in the regions affected by these rains and floods will be switched into emergency broadcasting mode. Providing alerts, weather updates, flood warnings, news about the power situation and road conditions, every piece of information, relevant and local, is getting out to the communities the ABC serves. To ensure comprehensive coverage, talkback is also turned over to these updates and information.

Even though we are not funded for it and it does not appear in our Charter, emergency broadcasting is so readily identified in the public mind with the ABC that in a crisis, the public naturally turns to us. It reflects the special place we occupy in public life. If the matter is serious, Australians are confident the ABC will give it the coverage it warrants. These are the kinds of expectations that come with the job of all public broadcasting and living up to them is one part of the responsibility we have.

Over the past decade the ABC has provided emergency broadcasting during fires, cyclones, heatwaves, tsunamis, equine flu outbreaks, storms and epic floods. We have been there during locust plagues as well. These almost biblical displays of nature's power occurred in every State and Territory in the country and ABC staff worked through them round the clock, seven days a week, providing emergency broadcasting services for as long as was needed.

The ABC is not short on emergency broadcasting experience, everyone here can tell you the difference between El Niño and La Niña. The ABC's local radio network, sixty stations spread across the entire country

and heard just about everywhere, is the engine room of emergency broadcasting. Each station has established relationships with emergency, police and rescue agencies. Local radio staff live in the regions their stations cover. They endure the same disasters their listeners endure. Every step forward, every setback that affects the community, they are a part of. This 'localness' is an important element of the trust that people place in the information they are getting from the ABC.

Each ABC local station has an Emergency Broadcasting Plan, reviewed annually, which ensures emergency warnings are broadcast repeatedly and for as long as necessary. Since conflicting information is so dangerous, we have a network alert system, a single source of information used to ensure the same alerts get to air. In these situations, information is preparation, sometimes a matter of life or death, it has to be fast, accurate and comprehensive. As wave after wave of information, often anecdotal and unverified, is rushing through the social networks, the ABC is regarded as a rock in a raging sea. People are increasingly following us on Twitter and Facebook and getting ABC information on digital radios, phones and tablets, and online.

Yet instinctively, when the lights go out and the wind is howling, people connect with ABC radio. So many times during emergencies we hear, "I was glued to the radio" or "I would have been lost without the ABC" when people talk about their experiences.

No one is waiting until a disaster unfolds to understand the risks or to provide information – it is happening well in advance. In Darwin, for instance, at the start of the cyclone season, we run a *Cyclone Awareness Week*. Someone from local radio also usually takes part in the meetings of State Emergency Management Committees.

Yet no matter how familiar each crisis and disaster seems or how much each has in common, the unpredictable and the unprecedented are also intrinsic to it. This has meant we keep learning each time there is an emergency, about the communities we serve and about ourselves, lasting lessons about what we can plan and just as significantly, what we cannot.

As Managing Director, I am part of an ABC crisis management team of senior executives and managers that works throughout the country. Every year, those in the team practice how to handle a range of crises, including natural disasters – far beyond anything we experience in our regular roles. We take part in drills and simulated scenarios that require very quick decisions and responses. This helps us to identify risks and vulnerabilities and prepare for unfamiliar, fast changing and stressful situations where we will not necessarily have all the information.

We review the crisis management program regularly. We get external advice. I keep two copies of a crisis management folder, one at home and one at the office, in case something happens. It is a reminder of what we need to be thinking about when crisis hits. Prevent, prepare, respond, recover.

Yet while you can be well trained and a crisis plan is invaluable, so much still depends on a mix of adrenalin and instinct, which cannot be anticipated. Empathy too. So much is happening in the moment that cannot be imagined – only experienced. So much relies on improvisation. But since improvisation without a plan is a bit like tennis without tennis balls, we plan a lot. We plan everything we can to cover the known contingencies, plus what Rumsfeld memorably called the *known unknowns*. Plans like these help get the job done but I am not sure they make it any easier. Why is that? While no two disasters are the same, the toll they take on the people affected and the broadcasters and emergency teams who serve those communities, seems to repeat itself in different towns and different circumstances at different times.

Organisational vulnerability is one thing. The right procedures help you negotiate through this. But human vulnerability is very different. Emergencies do not keep office hours. People are exhausted and stressed. Emotional resilience is hard to sustain under these conditions and people are tested in ways we have no hope of imagining.

In the Summer of 2011, Australia's most northern state, Queensland, went through some of the toughest times in its history, a series of emergencies that began in December and did not let up for months. Heavy rains were followed by floods and then cyclones. Then the rains returned. During unprecedented flooding, lives were lost in places all over the state – Bundaberg, the Lockyer Valley, Toowoomba and Brisbane. Then more again during cyclones, as Cyclone Anthony led straight into Cyclone Yasi the next day. The Premier later called it the 'summer of sorrow'.

As that summer went on, ABC local radio staff all over the state were either in emergency broadcasting mode or in the wake of it – mopping up, repairing, cleaning, helping their communities get back on their feet – for months. For many of our staff, Christmas simply did not happen because people who were due for leave – holidays or long service – gave it up to return to work. Their kids added new words, like evacuation and sandbags to their vocabulary. They found out where to buy ice. They grew accustomed to the eerie sight of empty shelves at the supermarket.

Rolling coverage is a relentless, hungry beast. Information must flow as rapidly as the waters and winds are rising. The same questions must be asked and answered again and again. What has happened? What is on the way? Our people were galvanised by a sense of common purpose. Some turned away from their own losses and hardships to keep emergency broadcasts going. They drove themselves hard, racing to keep up, because the turnover of events is so rapid. But they kept going, carried along sometimes on nothing more than that rich and complex diet favoured by rescue workers everywhere – a sandwich, a cup of tea and adrenalin. Many found that no matter how they tried, sleep tenaciously evaded them.Of course none of this was possible without all the people who stood behind them, that largely invisible support network of partners and families and loved ones. From our experience at the ABC we have found there are two phases – there is what a community experiences when the fire goes through or the flood waters rise and then there is what you go through when the fires have gone or the waters have receded.

That is when advice is particularly important – in a community that has been through a traumatic event you have to recognise that people will be very tired and very sensitive. If it starts to rain again, for instance, they brace themselves to relive what they have just come through. Someone said it is like a collective midlife crisis. People ask: "What am I investing my life in? Is there more than this?"

But you do not tend to reach for the manual at those times either.

As he looked at Brueghel's *Icarus*, W H Auden observed "how everything turns away quite leisurely from the disaster … the expensive delicate ship that must have seen something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky… had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on." What W H Auden understood of suffering so long ago is even more relevant in 21st century life, with its sped-up news cycle, tweets and Facebook updates, in which tragedy, like other stories, has our attention for a while before we simply move on.

Life *does* inevitably go on after a disaster and people who were struggling to put their lives back together after the floods of 2011 soon found that attention had moved on to revolutions in the Middle East, to earthquakes in Christchurch or Japan. The struggle of those affected by the floods to rebuild their lives was, however, still going on.

So when the disaster is over, it is particularly important that as the nation's public broadcaster, we are still there when the news crews and cameras have left and moved on to the next assignment. By staying beyond the time the disasters are in full swing, being there for the aftermath too, we can provide a sense of continuity at a time when continuity and sometimes hope, seem to be in short supply.

"Rolling coverage is a relentless, hungry beast. Information must flow as rapidly as the waters and winds are rising. The same questions must be asked and answered again and again. What has happened? What is on the way?"

People who have suffered and lost need to know they have not been forgotten and that the support will not stop there. The story of the aftermath, the rebuilding and recovery must also be told.

After Victoria had experienced the greatest tragedy in its history, the fires of February 2009, we developed guidelines for 'recovery broadcasting'. Just as during the life of an emergency we support communities best by working with all the relevant emergency agencies, we also work with the recovery agencies afterwards. We had the producers from *ABC Open* – who work with regional communities to produce and publish photos, stories, videos and sound through the ABC – create an interactive online project, *Aftermath*, to follow the stories of people as they rebuilt their lives and their communities following those disasters in 2011. Many of those who contributed their stories to *Aftermath* told us how sharing those stories was part of the healing process. It also helped all of us better understand what our fellow Australians were dealing with, long after the waters had receded. The emergency may have passed, but the work goes on.

MARK SCOTT HAS BEEN MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTER, ABC, SINCE 2006.

Previous page: Residents of Berowra, Sydney, flee flames, 2002, © Dean Sewell, Panos Pictures

Opposite clockwise from left: Firemen battle flames in Glenorie, Sydney, 2002, © Dean Sewell, Panos Pictures; Aerial view of flood waters in Lismore, New South Wales, Australia, 2009, © ABC News; Man surveys flood damage from rooftop, Australia, 2009, © ABC News

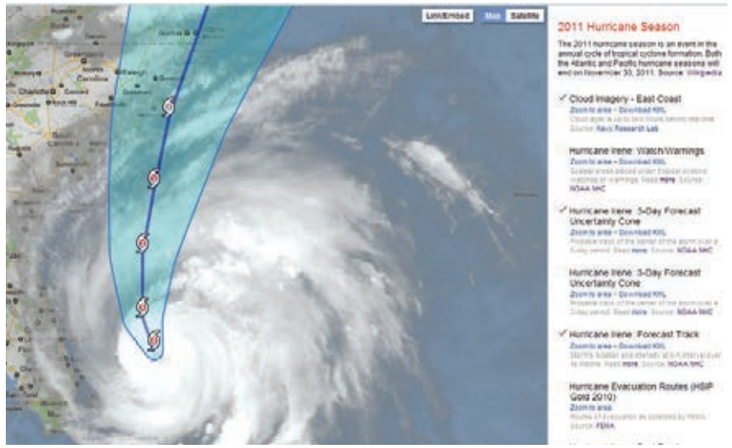
Left: Charred road sign following 2009 Australian bushfires, 2009, © Jocelyn Carlin, Panos Pictures

BRINGING DISASTERS ONLINE

Google.org's Crisis Response project team outlines how the open Internet can be harnessed to improve the speed and effectiveness of disaster response.

AUTHOR
Dorothy Chou and Nigel Snoad

PHOTOGRAPHY
Google Crisis Response



Since ancient times, societies have invested in working out how to deploy effective mass alerting systems. From references to simple fire beacons being lit to signal the need for additional troops, in Homer's Iliad, to the French Semaphore lines of the 19th century, used to relay warning signals across long distances, we have never given up on meeting the challenge of a distributed communications system that will trigger public action in response to a collective problem.

Today the Internet is starting to fill that role. Studies show that people are increasingly going online to share and receive information, as well as to organise relief efforts when disasters hit. Within the first 48 hours following the earthquake in Sendai, Japan, for example, Google.org saw 36 million page views of our Internet-based Person Finder tool. Similarly in response to the earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand last year, university students came together on Facebook to coordinate rapid relief efforts.

Google's Crisis Response team is dedicated to building tools that make emergency information more readily accessible to affected populations and responders. While our work is modest in comparison to relief organisations and governments, our experience has given us a unique vantage point on how powerful and robust Internet-based technologies can be when disasters strike. In particular, we believe that broadcasters, Internet companies and relief organisations can work together more closely to target emergency information to the right groups of people and not only generate awareness, but also provide instructions that save lives. To do that, we need governments to commit to open data in open formats.

As a proof of concept for improved mass alerting systems that make use of the open Internet, Google Crisis Response launched a project called Google Public Alerts earlier this year. The Public Alerts platform is designed to bring relevant emergency alerts when and where users search for them on Google Maps. When major weather, public safety or earthquake alerts are distributed from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Weather Service, and the US Geological Survey (USGS), users searching for local information will receive those warnings. Users who want more detailed information about the alert can choose to click 'more info', which will take them to a page that has a full description of the warning with links to other sites. For those interested in seeing all active alerts that we collate in a single location, they are all displayed at www.google.org/publicalerts. All of this is possible solely because these agencies have ensured that their information is available in open formats like the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), which can easily be used by others to create visualisations and distribute the alerts on their own platforms. In the future, a mobile alert targeted specifically at those who are directly impacted may help increase the chance of getting to safety. It may even be possible to give specific evacuation instructions and shelter information to different people based on their location.

Beyond supplying relevant alerts, Google Maps and Earth can also help organisations visualise regions at risk, the location of relief assets geographically, and make it easier for affected populations to find nearby emergency resources. While many people are familiar with Google Maps for finding directions, responders can easily create custom maps using My Maps when they need to supply critical crisis information to their teams or to the public. Broadcasters clearly have a role to play here, as they can easily take advantage of these web-based visualisations to illustrate and target alerts, warnings and emergency information.

In anticipation of the worst floods in 50 years to hit Thailand last autumn, UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT) created maps using our products that displayed at-risk areas across the region. Collecting geo-referenced photos using an Android app called GEO-PICTURES, the Asian Pacific Development Center could assess and monitor the potential and actual damage once flooding began.

The information was published in an open format – Keyhole Markup Language (KML) – meaning that it could be easily accessible and widely distributed. Any person or organisation can take that KML, see it over a map and easily determine whether or not a location is at-risk. Our team members also published information, using the Google Maps Application Programming Interface (API), to make it possible for UNOSAT to embed their data, along with contributions such as photos, road closures, shelter locations and donation centre data from other individuals and organisations on a Google Map within their website. UNOSAT took advantage of the API and circulated the information to relief organisations and local residents by publicising it through email, podcasts, blogs, traditional and social media.

Using the Internet and open tools to integrate flood and relief information from various sources means that anyone can have access to it and that we can automatically improve the accuracy of the information distributed to a wider audience in a time of need. By working with organisations like UNOSAT, government agencies and groups like ours to create and distribute these visualizations, broadcasters can help ensure that critical emergency information reaches those who need it most. In fact, they often have the widest reach. Four years ago, American broadcast station KPBS created a map that provided real-time updates on the San Diego wildfires that received more than two million views within just a few days.

To compare before-and-after images, we often see broadcasters use Google Earth, a virtual globe that provides great geographic detail and allows extensive customisation. People can customise Google Earth with editing tools to draw shapes, add text and integrate live feeds of information, such as earthquakes, as they happen. In extreme circumstances, we also work with partners to provide updated satellite imagery for quick damage assessments from thousands of miles away. This information can help journalists and relief organisations alike to navigate disaster zones with, for example, crowd sourced information on available roads.

> "Four years ago, American broadcast station KPBS created a map that provided real-time updates on the San Diego wildfires that received more than two million views within just a few days."

Following the recent 7.0 magnitude earthquake in Haiti, we updated high-resolution satellite imagery from our partner GeoEye within 24 hours and made it available for public use. This imagery and subsequent updates continue to be used to conduct wide-scale damage assessments, plan response and recovery efforts, such as clinic and hospital placements, and raise worldwide awareness of disasters today.

Finding loved ones is a further very real, not to mention emotionally charged, challenge in the wake of disasters and emergencies. Google Crisis Response's Person Finder is an open-source web-based application that allows individuals to check and post on the status of relatives or friends affected by a disaster. Before Person Finder was developed, those seeking missing loved ones had to sift through multiple websites, posting the same inquiries over and over, hoping that the person they were seeking happened to register with one of these websites. In Haiti, for example, we noticed that there were 14 different missing persons databases. They were not integrated, were all running on different infrastructure and all had a different amount of data, which together represented all missing persons records.

To make this process more effective and efficient, while continuing to leverage the power of crowdsourced information, our team built Google Person Finder to act as a central database, pushing and pulling the feeds from all 14 databases and

Previous page: Google Crisis Response map giving Hurricane warning information for Hurricane Irene

Below: Google Earth before and after views of refugee camps in Haiti

allowing users to search across the information in all of the databases. Google Person Finder accepts information in a common machine-readable format called PFIF (People Finder Interchange Format), which was created by Hurricane Katrina volunteers in 2005. Our team worked around the clock to build and launch Person Finder in less than 72 hours during the early days of the crisis in Haiti. We have now made this resource available in more than 42 languages.

The product is purposefully simple, fast and easy to use. This means that different sites can update missing persons lists automatically using the common format – and broadcasters and media can help drive that traffic. For example, The New York Times, CNN, NPR and a number of other websites quickly integrated Person Finder following the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, increasing the reach and resulting in a more complete list of missing persons. In total, we managed more than 600,000 records of missing people.

But the ability of the Internet to capitalize on its potential of assisting in crises depends on companies, governments and organisations improving how they share information. Using divergent or closed standards or imposing licensing restrictions on mapping data slows collaboration and response time. The troubling truth is that many organisations gathering missing persons information, for example, as well as other critical data such as public health information, continue to do so on paper. The result is that we find boxes of unprocessed forms sitting in offices long after we have lost the chance to use them to help people.

During the Black Saturday fires of 2009 in Victoria, Australia, Google became a firsthand witness to these difficulties. Hoping to use our technology to assist in some way, our engineers contacted the government asking for emergency information in order to help surface it on a map. We found, however, that the agency that held emergency data did not have it in an open format and would not license it for third party use. Nevertheless, we decided to create a flash map and convert their data for public consumption. The map was widely used by the media and responders alike.

Since then our experience has changed dramatically, as the Australian government has quickly become one of the most forward looking national governments in addressing disaster relief, for example, by promoting the use of CAP for all emergency alerts. Mark Kempton, winner of a 2011 Pride of Australia award, used Google Maps on his mobile phone to navigate Queensland while flying a helicopter, locating people in distress in the aftermath of last year's flooding. He and his team worked around the clock throughout the crisis and rescued 43 people from rooftops and treetops in the town of Grantham. Without open and licensed mapping data available well ahead of the disaster, that effort may never have been possible.

Google Crisis Response encourages broadcasters, governments and organisations to use our tools to increase awareness of both the technical and non-technical aid that is necessary to prepare for and recover from a disaster. Specific steps they can take include:

1) getting familiar with our products and joining lists for distribution of materials so they can be the first to receive them,

2) ensuring that alerting and other emergency data is available in open formats like CAP, unencumbered by licensing restrictions and

3) distributing information, such as shelter locations, escape routes and emergency plans, ahead of time, possibly in a KML format to be shared across a map.

When collaboration occurs in advance of a disaster, rather than in the middle of an emergency, the probability of expedited relief and recovery increases tremendously. We believe that by adopting new models of crisis response that leverage the power of the open Internet, all of us can fundamentally shift the way we approach and manage disasters to save and improve lives around the world.

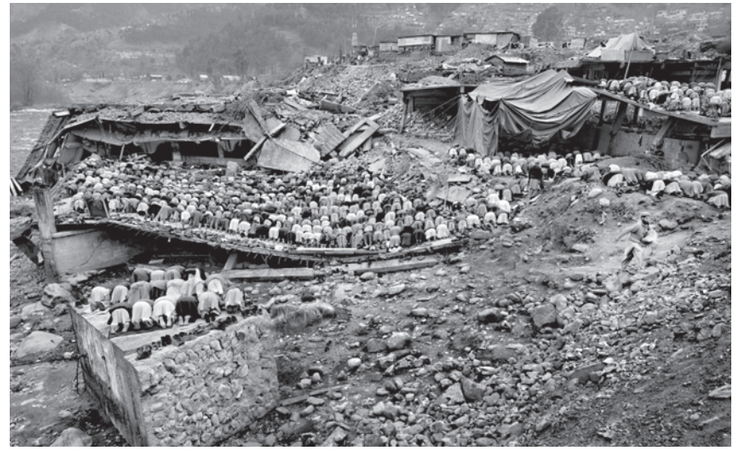
DOROTHY CHOU IS THE SENIOR POLICY ANALYST AND NIGEL SNOAD IS THE PRODUCT MANAGER AT GOOGLE CRISIS RESPONSE. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GOOGLE CRISIS RESPONSE VISIT: WWW.GOOGLE.ORG/CRISISRESPONSE

HOW WE REPORT THE WORLD

Dr Martin Scott argues for the importance of balanced coverage of crises and considers the role of media leadership.

AUTHOR
Dr Martin Scott

PHOTOGRAPHY
Panos Pictures, London



In this article I argue that the importance of media leadership during crises, disasters and emergencies extends not only to questions of how the media respond to such events in their own countries, but to if and how they report on crises occurring elsewhere. I also suggest that such media leadership should extend to ensuring that crises, disasters and emergencies are not the only occasions in which other parts of the world appear in the media.

There are two conventional sets of claims about media coverage of disasters. The first relates to which disasters get covered and which do not. It is relatively uncontroversial to claim that there is often little correlation between the severity of a crisis and the amount of coverage it receives. Indeed, a study of Western media reporting of six relatively recent major disasters by CARMA International concluded that, 'there appears to be no link between the scale of a disaster and media interest in the story' (2006:6). Other factors that determine the amount of coverage a disaster receives include cultural affinity and geopolitical significance of the country affected (CARMA International 2006).

Professor Simon Cottle from Cardiff University describes this as a 'calculus of death' (2008:43), whereby judgements over which disasters receive coverage and which do not are based on crude body counts and thresholds as well as proximities of geography, culture and economics. This 'terrible calculus', he argues, has 'seemingly become institutionalised and normalized in the professional judgments, practices and news values of the western media' (2008:47).

The consequence of this is that a relatively small number of crises, disasters and emergencies receive disproportionally large amounts of coverage while other, often seemingly more traumatic events, receive very little. Oft-cited examples of this include the disparity in coverage received by Hurricane Katrina, which hit the United States in 2005, and Hurricane Stanley, which hit Guatemala a few weeks later. Or the Kashmir earthquake in 2003, which attracted similar media interest to the earthquake in Bam, though causing 3.5 times as many deaths (Cottle 2008:46). Indeed, a recently published content analysis of Flemish news media coverage shows that over 70% of all disasters in the world do not receive any coverage (Joye 2010).

Every year Médecines Sans Frontières (MSF) publishes a list of ten humanitarian issues and crises in the world that received little media attention. Recently these have included crises in Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as well as issues such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and malnutrition. Without media leadership that

"Every year Médecines Sans Frontières (MSF) publishes a list of ten humanitarian issues and crises in the world that received little media attention. Recently these have included crises in Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)."

Previous page: Worshippers attend Friday prayers at a collapsed mosque that was destroyed in the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, 2006, © Espen Rasmussen, Panos Pictures

Clockwise from top left: French television record testimony from an MSF worker in Mogadishu, Somalia, 2008, © Yann Libessart/MSF; Women carrying firewood in Jamam refugee camp, south Sudan, 2012, © Robin Meldrum/MSF; Refugee, Amani, with her daughter, Harrap in Jamam, South Sudan, 2012, © Robin Meldrum/MSF

actively leads the way in challenging the 'calculus of death' and actively prioritises such issues, audiences will remain ignorant about the major challenges that confront their fellow human beings around the world. Indeed, a recent survey by the British Red Cross (2008) found that when asked to name countries currently experiencing conflict, less than 1% of respondents were able to name either the DRC, Sudan or Somalia.

The second conventional set of claims associated with media coverage of disasters in foreign countries concerns the nature of that coverage. Researchers John Hammock and Joel Charny (1996) argue, as do others, that most coverage of international humanitarian emergencies conforms to a well worn narrative, or a 'scripted morality play'.

> *The crisis arrives with the suddenness and power of an earthquake. Then the international community… responds as rapidly as possible. Initially the response is heroic, with the Red Cross and private relief agency personnel portrayed as being close to angels in their selfless sacrifice to assist the victims. The increasing military involvement brings patriotism into the mix and provides the media with the essential local angle. But [also]… there have to be problems and the villains that create them… [which] tend to be the easy targets – the UN bureaucrat or the local military authorities. The set piece story never quite comes to a neat ending. Ultimately there are more failures than success* (Hammock & Charny, 1996:115).

The problem with this well-worn morality play, Hammock and Charny argue, is that it avoids asking hard questions of the credibility and capacity of relief organisations themselves, it overlooks the agency of local actors and it avoids an analysis of the root causes of disasters. As Cottle argues, perhaps even the term 'natural disasters' is itself somewhat misleading because it masks the human actions (or inactions) that govern vulnerability, anticipation and response to disasters (2008:46). Was the recent food crisis in East Africa, for example, presented simply in terms of a lack of food and as a product simply of the weather or of bad luck or fate, or were the long term, structural causes of risks to food security discussed?

Furthermore, the academic Susan Moeller has famously argued that such formulaic chronologies, combined with sensationalised language, contribute to a sense of 'compassion fatigue' – or 'form of audience apathy towards the wider world in which the public are subsequently less inclined to engage in overseas giving' (1999:3). In other words, by conforming to the same disaster narrative each time crises are reported, audiences are left with a feeling that they are watching 'the same old story' and that nothing ever changes.

In relation to such claims about the nature of media coverage of disasters, media leadership refers to broadcasters finding new ways of reporting on the complexities and unnatural aspects of seemingly natural disasters. Amongst the recommendations proposed by Hammock and Charny for avoiding the scripted morality play, for example, are journalist training and exchange programmes as well as focussing on the agency of local people. More recently, a report which reviewed UK media coverage of the recent crisis in East Africa (IBT 2012) made a number of recommendations including: further development of mutual understanding between the NGO sector and the media, as well as greater use of the variety of communication tools now available through new and social media.

Such ambitions are, admittedly, often at odds with audience demand. According to a recent survey by the British Red Cross (2011), the subject UK audiences are least interested in finding out more about with regards to countries affected by disasters is the historical and political context of these countries.

I have thus far articulated two fairly conventional accounts of the nature of reporting of overseas crises and what role media leadership might play in each account. But rather than ending the discussion here, as is so often the case, I want to further suggest that media leadership should also extend to ensuring that crises, disasters and emergencies are not the only occasions in which other parts of the world appear in the media.

Another common observation regarding overseas coverage is that many parts of the world only appear in the media when there are 'coups and earthquakes' (Rosenblum 1979) or 'conflict and war' (Dover & Barnett, 2004:27). As Cottle puts it, 'wars are quintessentially newsworthy because they resonate with deep-seated news values, especially conflict, violence, deviance and drama and, in the case of visual media, provide a succession of spectacular scenes' (2006:76). Indeed, there is some empirical research to support this argument (although my own recent research has also contradicted this – see Scott 2009). A three month study of UK television coverage of developing countries by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), for example, found around one third of news coverage is characterised by 'war, conflict and terrorism' (2000:3).

"In other words, by conforming to the same disaster narrative each time crises are reported, audiences are left with a feeling that they are watching 'the same old story' and that nothing ever changes."

"A three month study of UK television coverage of developing countries by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), for example, found around one third of news coverage is characterised by 'war, conflict and terrorism'."

Such a focus on crises arguably serves to reproduce assumptions and stereotypes about other parts of the world as being places dominated by violence, disaster and despair. According to the results of audience research published by the volunteer-based charity Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), for example, 80% of the British public strongly associate the developing world with doom-laden images of famine, disaster and Western aid (2001:3). If we want the media to play a role in promoting understanding of people around the world and challenging rather than reinforcing prejudice, then broadcasters have a responsibility to report on the world in all its conditions.

The BBC, for example, has a public service commitment to 'bring the world to the UK'. One part of that remit is specifically to 'broaden UK audiences' experience of and exposure to different cultures from around the world' (BBC Trust 2006). This is mandated to be achieved, not only through news coverage of earthquakes, famine and floods, but through a range of different genres and subjects.

> *BBC Two will offer – in concert with BBC Four – non-news output that reflects international themes: the best of global arts, music, documentary and film, for example, helping to bring a sense of place to UK audiences and giving context to ongoing news stories by exploring cultural developments* (BBC Trust 2006).

In conclusion, questions of if and how broadcasters report on overseas disasters are important for understanding how well they keep their audiences in touch with what is going on in the world. Yet crisis reporting alone, however comprehensive, is not sufficient for giving audiences the opportunity to understand the dynamic and complex global issues that affect all our lives.

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A WAR ON JOURNALISTS

The deaths of Marie Colvin of The Sunday Times and French photographer Rémi Ochlik in a Syrian army bombardment of Homs on 22 February this year jolted the world into realising the unprecedented dangers of 21st century news reporting.

AUTHOR
William Horsley

PHOTOGRAPHY
Panos Pictures, London

The frontlines of conflict and danger today are mobile and undefined. Communications are instant and easy to trace. Often, journalists are no longer seen as neutral observers of conflicts; and autocratic rulers routinely set out to silence media voices that expose abuses of state power, as a strategy for their own survival and to tighten their grip on power.

So it is that in many countries, journalists and Internet activists have become the special objects of targeted violence, including kidnapping, torture and murder, by the armies and security forces of unscrupulous regimes, and in many cases also of ruthless insurgent groups or well-armed organised crime syndicates. At least 12 other journalists were killed worldwide this year before the news broke about the deaths of Marie Colvin and Rémi Ochlik.

The great majority of journalistic casualties of targeted violence are not western reporters but locally-based journalists who persist in reporting truths that the powerful want to keep hidden – among them, in recent years, Lasantha Wickrematunge in Sri Lanka, Saleem Shahzad in Pakistan and Anna Politkovskaya in Russia. International media organisations increasingly rely on those vulnerable local journalists, fixers and internet activists to tell the major stories of our times.

In the face of what the Hungarian press freedom champion Miklos Haraszti has called this 'peacetime war on journalism', pressure is growing for Public Service Broadcasters, and other major media organisations, to consider radical new strategies themselves. The media are being pulled into an arena of international politics where they are among the main stakeholders in a struggle for the freedom to report without fear.

Already, major broadcasters and news organisations employ large teams of people who deal with 'government relations', seeking to ensure that laws and regulations allow them to prosper as businesses. Now 'big media' are being asked by the United Nations itself, and by vocal journalists' organisations, to devote the same kind of attention to the matter of saving lives and stopping the spread of censorship and self-censorship based on fear.

As for physical safety training and support, big western media have taken impressive strides over the past 20 years to ensure that their own people have hostile environment training and the best practical support while they are deployed to conflict or emergency situations. The European Broadcasting Union, which provides transmission facilities for all comers in war-torn places around the globe – like Libya, Iraq and Sarajevo – aims to train and insure all members of its teams, regardless of whether or not they are employed as staff. BBC news teams, like those of other big networks working in conflict zones, take security specialists with them whose services sometimes save lives.

In natural disasters too, international public broadcasters are increasingly called on to play an integrated planning and rapid response role, collaborating with disaster relief operations to disseminate vital information, as the BBC was able to do after the 2010 Haiti earthquake through its 'lifeline' programmes in Haitian creole, advising the stricken population where they could find aid and shelter.

"At least 12 other journalists were killed worldwide this year before the news broke about the deaths of Marie Colvin and Rémi Ochlik."

"In natural disasters too, international public broadcasters are increasingly called on to play an integrated planning and rapid response role, collaborating with disaster relief operations to disseminate vital information."

But few organisations have the resources for such complex tasks and too often media employers take little responsibility for their own journalists' personal safety, while freelancers, who often face the highest risks, have the least protection of all. Rodney Pinder, Director of the International News Safety Institute (INSI), says that globally only a tiny minority of news organisations properly observe their duty of care for staff and freelancers in dangerous situations.

INSI, which was set up in 2003 with the backing of the biggest names in international news media, has trained journalists in over 20 countries, including Rwanda, Iraq and Sri Lanka, but is desperate for more funds as the global demand grows exponentially.

Some Commonwealth states are among those with the worst records in terms of attacks and imprisonment of journalists and the stifling of press freedom. That grim reality dominated the conference of the Commonwealth Journalists Association held in Malta this January, which adopted a communiqué condemning state repression of independent media.

The meeting heard accounts of abuses of state power designed to subdue or control the media in Gambia, Uganda and other African states. Police beatings, violence by hired thugs, intimidation of family members and threats of arbitrary criminal prosecution are all common means of achieving that goal; regrettably, the corruption of media workers through bribes as well as threats is also widespread in some states.

The respected Committee to Protect Journalists now lists Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India among the worst offending states on its Impunity Index, which is based on the number of journalists' killings that go unpunished, often because national justice systems are also corrupted and not fit for purpose. A Sri Lankan journalist told the Malta gathering: "Impunity is reinforced by international inaction".

An important test is approaching for the Commonwealth itself – and for the world's media: will the Sri Lankan government be obliged, when it hosts the 2013 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), to relax its stranglehold on the media at home?

The authorities there have rejected all pressures for an independent international inquiry into war crimes claims and stand accused of turning the country's media into a tool of government propaganda. But Sri Lanka, like every state, wants to avoid open public censure. At the CJA conference, editors and journalists from many parts of the Commonwealth voiced support for

Clockwise from top left: Marie Colvin in Tahrir Square, 2011, © Ivor Prickett, Panos Pictures; Mourners outside the home of murdered Russian journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, 2006, © Justin Jin, Panos Pictures; World press pack on the outskirts of Gori, Georgia, 2008, © Chris Stowers, Panos Pictures

Right: OMON Special Forces beat a German Reuters photographer, as he tries to cover a protest march in Moscow, 2007, © Justin Jin, Panos Pictures

the goal of using the CHOGM to exert overt pressure for more openness. Parallels were drawn with other cases, such as China at the time of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, when the spotlight of international media attention was seen to bring some limited advances in press freedom.

Senator Hugh Segal of Canada, the Special Envoy for Commonwealth Renewal, encouraged journalists' organisations to stand firmly for what he called 'fundamental Commonwealth values', including press freedom. Speaking with unusual candour, he warned that hypocrisy "risks overtaking the purpose and direction" of the Commonwealth unless it demonstrates the will to stand up for those values, in the way it deals with lapses in behaviour by its member states.

The arguments against Public Service Media assuming a more active public advocacy role for protecting the safety of journalists may be summarised as those of in-house ethics and of access: broadcasters do not wish to be seen to 'take sides' or to favour their own kind over other categories of victims of state oppression or lawlessness and they generally accept the need to deal with government authorities as they are, rather than being seen to confront them and risk losing their reporting access to countries where journalists are being attacked or killed with impunity.

The case for more explicit public engagement to protect journalists' safety embraces arguments that it is necessary on humanitarian grounds and has become an accepted goal of good governance, enshrined in various international treaties.

In fact, Public Service Broadcasters and other international media have backed various public statements and campaigns down the years, though so far with little effect. They include intense lobbying for UN Security Council Resolution 1738, passed unanimously in 2006, which identified targeted attacks on journalists (as on other civilians) in conflicts as 'war crimes'; the 2007 Medellin Declaration calling for stronger measures to ensure compliance with international rules on safeguarding media workers and for coordinated publicity campaigns on unpunished crimes against journalists; and the Joint Statement of 2008 by the BBC World Service, Deutsche Welle, Radio France Internationale, Radio Netherlands and the Voice of America, which deplored the evidence that some governments were implicated in harassing, detaining and killing journalists.

Yet the number of deliberate attacks on journalists worldwide is rising inexorably, reflecting the fact that journalists and independent media, together with human rights defenders of all kinds, have become prime targets of widespread violence and harassment because of their function of providing reliable information for people to make their own choices.

In response the United Nations has at last drawn up an Action Plan involving all its relevant agencies, designed to give a high priority across all the UN's activities to countering these unacceptable patterns of violence and impunity.

This presents PSBs and other media with a major test of their own. The IPI, the World Association of Newspapers and the International Federation of Journalists have all taken part in consultations leading up to the Action Plan, but the giants of global mainstream media have so far paid little attention to an initiative that will help to determine the framework of law and practice, in which future generations of journalists risk their lives to report from dangerous places.

Many senior editors in news organisations also remain unaware of important developments in international law on journalists' rights– including a landmark 2011 text by the legal experts of the UN's Human Rights Committee, which for the first time sets out the positive obligations of all states to protect journalists under threat and ensure that the perpetrators of attacks and killings are punished.

Jane Connors of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights publicly called on journalists' organisations to make more active use of UN mechanisms, including individual complaints about attacks on journalists and the collection of evidence that can lead to formal commissions of inquiry and other UN interventions.

If the UN Action Plan on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity gets active support from leading international media it is more likely to lead to effective protection mechanisms and an end to the scourge of impunity. If not, the UNESCO-led initiative may end up as just another failed plan, with yet more journalists in jail, living in fear, or dead. Logically, the only way to reverse the tide in the long term is to raise the political cost to the perpetrators of being named and shamed for killing the messenger.

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COVERING EMERGENCY: A GUIDE

Former Head of BBC Caribbean, Debbie Ransome, outlines the skills journalists and broadcasters need to cover disasters and emergencies.

AUTHOR
Debbie Ransome

PHOTOGRAPHY
Panos Pictures, London

Flying into Montserrat on the tailwind of Hurricane Hugo brought home to me early on the need to keep your journalistic head in covering a crisis.

As we landed on the remnants of the airstrip, we could see a scene that resembled Dante's Inferno. My pilot was determined to leave before sunset (air traffic control had been wiped out) and we had to climb over fallen trees to make our way to what was left of the capital. But most importantly, my head was full of the skills needed to ensure good coverage.

That was in September 1989. My views on disaster coverage, forged in the heat of that moment, have stayed with me to this day.

In my experience, coverage of an emergency does not require you to develop new skills when that crisis takes place. Coverage of an emergency is about turning your day-to-day journalistic standards to focus on the breaking story.

In my career at Radio Trinidad, the Caribbean News Agency (Cana) and the BBC, those guiding day-to-day principles have steered me and my colleagues – whether it is hurricane destruction, an attempted coup or a devastating earthquake.

I have seen journalists who will go the extra mile on a pre-planned Friday afternoon to fill a gap in the rota, who are the same journalists to step up to the plate to cover a major breaking news story.

So what skills are needed to cover times of disaster and crisis? Over the years reporting on day-to-day activities and breaking news stories alike, I have found they come back to the basic journalistic principles encapsulated in the editorial guidelines of many media organisations – independence, balance, accuracy and above all, a sense of decency and humanity, which makes sure that we journalists do not reduce the victims to mere spectacle.

I shall use three case studies from my own direct experience.

I will start with the most recent disaster in the Caribbean – the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Although not a Commonwealth country, Haiti is a member of the regional political and trade grouping Caricom (the Caribbean Community), so its devastation was as much an issue for its immediate Commonwealth Caribbean neighbours as for the more high-profile US disaster response teams.

As the Head of BBC Caribbean at the time I had a three-pronged challenge, which faces many of today's newsrooms when disaster takes place.

1) Sorting out deployment of people on the ground. Haiti was already a country with long-established reporting difficulties. Our existing contacts and understanding of the complexities of covering Haiti gave us the head start the BBC needed in such a rapidly developing global story.

2) The job of beefing up the newsroom rota to get a team to continue their daily duties, while also taking on a wider role for the

"Coverage of an emergency does not require you to develop new skills when that crisis takes place. Coverage of an emergency is about turning your day-to-day journalistic standards to focus on the breaking story."

Previous page clockwise from top left: A group of men survey the remains of a church in Petionville, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 2010, © William Daniels, Panos Pictures; The aftermath of Hurricane Ivan, Grenada, 2004, © Alex Smailes, Panos Pictures; The ruined neighbourhood of Le Fort, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 2010, © William Daniels, Panos Pictures

Left: Devastation in Cable Bay, Jamaica, following Hurricane Ivan, 2004, © Neil Cooper, Panos Pictures

Bottom right: A home in Grenada destroyed by Hurricane Ivan, 2004, © Alex Smailes, Panos Pictures

rest of the BBC and handling special coverage.

3) We took on a role, which is now becoming increasingly important – lifeline programming for the people at the heart of the disaster. The thinking behind this is simple: the people on the ground know what has happened to them. What they need is lifeline information about medical assistance, food, water and other relief.

With a core team, including some resources on loan, BBC Caribbean fulfilled all of the above roles including: constant updates to the website, reflecting the quickly developing story; regular programming focused mainly on Haiti; two-ways and despatches for the rest of the BBC's international and domestic radio and TV outlets. In addition, those with Creole-speaking skills dropped everything to travel to Miami, where they helped staff the lifeline programme that accompanied our coverage of the quake and its aftermath.

Meanwhile, I had to keep tabs on our stringer on the ground in Port-au-Prince and track our man in the neighbouring Dominican Republic as he made his way to Haiti as quickly as possible. The job came to include briefings for BBC Newsgathering correspondents booking their journeys to get into Haiti. I also discussed the provision of trauma counselling for a team of people who had compassionately chosen and edited often gruesome website pictures from the stream of agency pictures showing the deaths and devastation.

The kudos came in afterwards from across the BBC, as well as aid agencies and Haitian diaspora groups. But the one I was most proud of was the 2010 Association of International Broadcasting (AIB) award later that year, for the lifeline programme that reunited a mother with the son she thought had perished in the quake.

I am also proud of the follow-up coverage, which experience has taught me is more important to the people on the ground after an emergency. Some of my team, this time working with the BBC's Brazilian Service, visited Port-au-Prince in December 2010 to film and record what became the Haiti Tent Tales TV and radio series. This allowed people to describe their lives one year on in their native Creole, with the Brazilian peacekeepers retelling their experiences in Portuguese (www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2011/01/110112_haiti_anniversary_2.shtml).

When Hurricane Ivan hit Grenada in 2004, the vital role that BBC Caribbean output provided in linking up a group of island nations was never more important.

Prime Minister Keith Mitchell, his own home destroyed by Ivan, was airlifted to safety by the Royal Navy. They provided him with a phone for emergency calls. He asked to call BBC World Service. The Intake desk took the call and one of the bigger news programmes came on the line immediately. Mr Mitchell thanked them kindly but told them he wanted to talk to BBC Caribbean. Why? Because his immediate priority was to let his fellow Caricom neighbours know what he needed – power supply, security, reconstruction and disaster response experts from the rest of the region.

"The people on the ground know what's happened to them. What they need is lifeline information about medical assistance, food, water and other relief."

Once again, that ability of fast-thinking journalists to drop a day's prepared material and go with the homeless Prime Minister on the line was typical of the way any newsroom must react quickly in covering emergencies.

Again, the follow-up was key. Our Christmas special, looking at how the people of Grenada still marked Christmas under their tarpaulin roofs and in roofless churches, was much used by partner stations across the Caribbean.

This article may seem like cheerleading for the BBC Caribbean brand but the team I have just mentioned are some of the colleagues it has been an honour to work with over the years in different media houses.

The response of the then Caribbean News Agency (Cana) to Hurricane Gilbert in 1988 followed equally high professional standards. While the mainstream US and British media focused on Jamaicans looting damaged shops, Cana and associate stations in Jamaica told the in-depth story about the impact of the storm on an already economically fragile country.

"Once again, the follow-up was key, when the main news agencies had packed up their bags and left, as the attraction of pictures of devastation had worn itself out."

Once again, the follow-up was key, when the main news agencies had packed up their bags and left, as the attraction of pictures of devastation had worn itself out. The continued coverage of the rebuilding of life in Jamaica was almost as important as the breaking news story.

Follow-up coverage after an initial story came home to me personally when I found myself at the centre of the attempted coup in Trinidad in 1990. As the Cana correspondent with a bird's-eye view of the Trinidad Parliament, while a group known as Jamaat-al-Muslimeen held the Prime Minister and other MPs hostage for a six-day stand-off, I had also been the 'in-the-curfew-area' journalist, interviewed at length by the large news media outfits that had camped at a hotel outside the siege area.

Here, the basic journalistic need to cross-check sources became essential in such a confused and fast-moving crisis. Had the Prime Minister signed an amnesty at gunpoint for the Jamaat-al-Muslimeen? Who was telling the full story – the remaining cabinet members at the Trinidad army main camp or the Muslimeen claiming to have taken over the country? Were the army or the police in charge?

The story put Trinidad on the world news agenda for the best part of a week. But by the time we witnessed the Muslimeen surrender under the watchful eye of the army, Trinidad was quickly losing international attention as Saddam Hussein prepared to march into Kuwait.

After the Muslimeen surrender, I slept on my desk for the last night, determined to see the story through to its end. I was woken by my newswire machine pinging the breaking news from Kuwait. By the time I got out of the curfew area, the international media corps at the hotel had left with orders to return home as new deployments were being made to Kuwait.

As one young journalist once said at her job interview, news is what takes place when you are getting on with your life. I will add to that a fact that I have learned over the years: when that news happens, you need to be able to fall back on the basic journalistic skills you have been using all the time.

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TALKING TRAUMA

Turn on the television, launch a browser or pick up a newspaper and we are likely to see a violent and capricious world out there. Gavin Rees of Dart Centre Europe outlines how trauma is integral to the news.

AUTHOR
Gavin Rees

PHOTOGRAPHY
Panos Pictures, London

Over the last year we have had a Tsunami in Japan, the terror attack in Norway, violent protests sweeping North Africa and the Middle East and then open warfare in Libya and Syria. Then there is the perpetual undertow of less high-profile, privately enacted tragedies, such as the traffic accident, the street stabbing or the sexual assault. As news professionals we are understandably reluctant to turn the lens on ourselves, but if we are going to do journalism well, we need to look with accurate and unsentimental eyes at the impact trauma can have on news teams.

Disaster reporting starts with an often-observed paradox: just as the affected population is streaming out of a disaster zone, journalists are jostling to get in. We seek out what others are actively avoiding. Sometimes journalists will be on the scene, powering up their camcorders and phones, long before anybody has seen an emergency worker. We expect the people in our stories to be affected by devastation and trauma, but somehow we are not factoring in how that might apply to us.

"Sometimes journalists will be on the scene, powering up their camcorders and phones, long before anybody has seen an emergency worker. We expect the people in our stories to be affected by devastation and trauma, but somehow we are not factoring in how that might apply to us."

There are some good reasons for this. It can feel indecent to talk about ourselves when the impact seems to be far worse on the primary victims and survivors – they are the story, not journalists. Most of the time, we handle trauma well. Studies of emergency workers suggest that being on the scene of a crisis with a job to do is better than being the victim of a situation one feels that one has no control over. The journalistic mission to bear witness is protective but unfortunately it does not confer absolute immunity, just as a press card is not a charm against bullets.

Two misnomers need scotching. First, potential trauma impact does not just concern war correspondents in life-threatening situations. The toxicity of trauma can seep into the psyche through other vectors. Think, perhaps, of a reporter who may also be a parent, listening to hours of court testimony documenting the torture of a child. From 2003 onwards, newsrooms were faced with a flood of disturbing images, particularly of beheadings coming in from Iraq and other places, which highlighted that video and picture editors who work with violent images are also at risk.

Secondly, the idea that the more one does it, the more one gets used to it, is not necessarily true. Overload is possible at any point in a career. The veteran US war reporter, Ernie Pyle, knew when he had seen too much. "I've been immersed in it too long," he wrote. "My spirit is wobbly and my mind is confused. The hurt has become too great." Training and a supportive work team can expand one's capacity to work with traumatic material but the epidemiology suggests that both younger and older journalists are likely to experience trauma trouble. Like handling radiation, trauma has a dose relationship.

Epidemiological data on the impact of trauma on journalists is patchy. Depending on the study, research on US journalists in general suggest that between 86 to 100 percent have witnessed a traumatic event as part of their work. Research world-wide has found possible rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, ranging between 4.3 and 28 per cent, depending on the group studied. War reporters are at the upper range, with high rates of PTSD, as well as depression and alcohol abuse. Given the density of atrocity and life-threat they are exposed to, that 28 percent figure is a testament to resilience. Unfortunately, good data is lacking on media workers who find themselves stuck in a perpetual disaster situation that also happens to be their home, for instance, journalists caught up in the drug wars in Mexico, or the political violence in Pakistan.

To use the psychology jargon, working with trauma also has a sub-clinical, i.e. non-illness making, impact. PTSD can hog this discussion and blind us to the wider picture. In traumatic situations our judgement may be affected in subtle ways that we may not connect to the content we are covering. Individuals in a news team, reporting on a disaster, may experience sharp irritability, fixation on limited dimensions of a story, or lapses in concentration and memory. When trauma is in play, the unconscious mind can zone in and out. It is not unusual to oscillate between moments of intense presence and befuddlement.

"Depending on the study, research on US journalists in general suggest that between 86 to 100 percent have witnessed a traumatic event as part of their work."

As MacDuff put it in *Macbeth*, there are horrors that "tongue nor ear cannot conceive nor name." But it is our job as journalists, to do just that and to package the mess of the world into neater narratives. On occasions that may mean swimming against the tide of one's brain chemistry.

Trauma awareness is about understanding how these processes operate so that one can make more informed working decisions. Really it should be as integral to journalism as colour theory is to painting. Knowing how survivors and victims process trauma can prevent some costly interviewing mistakes. There may be reasons as to why an account is inaccurate or incomplete. Similarly if a colleague is irascible and impossible to work with, is that their normal behaviour or is it the trauma talking? Perhaps there is a connection with the multiple-fatality train crash he or she reported on last week?

Trauma reactions by themselves do not imply a diagnosis of PTSD. That condition develops when the normal, routine responses to abnormal material become so enlarged that they start to etch their way more permanently in the psyche. Nevertheless, when PTSD does occur, it is a serious condition that can derail careers and wreak havoc with personal relationships.

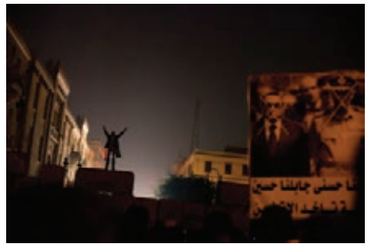
But what is to be done? Here are some brief thoughts:

1. We need to talk about trauma.

CONTINUED PAGE 24

Top opposite: The feet of victims killed by the Japanese tsunami in Rikuzentakata, Iwate Prefecture, 2011, © Adam Dean, Panos Pictures

Clockwise from left: People protest ongoing drug violence in Cuidad Juaraz, following the death of a local newspaper photographer, 2011, © Teun Voeten, Panos Pictures; A girl stands amongst the detritus of the 2004 tsunami, Sri Lanka, 2005 © William Daniels, Panos Pictures; Exhausted press spokeswoman in Oslo at a hearing of Anders Behring Breivik, who committed terrorist attacks in Norway in July 2011, © Tom Pilston, Panos Pictures















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"Trauma is a management issue. In other words, those at the top need to take responsibility."

People in every level of a news organisation need to feel they have shared ownership of the issue. Avoidance will snuff out opportunities to bed down good traumatic stress management practices and is also likely to create a culture of stigma, which is dangerous. PTSD is an eminently treatable condition. If a journalist, however, suspects that their job is at threat if they seek help, they are more likely to hide it. Rather like a physical injury, such as breaking a leg, it is better to get seen as soon as possible rather then let it fester.

2. Prevention is better than cure. Simple self-care strategies – pacing one's exposure to traumatic images, good nutrition, maintaining a good balance of exercise and sleep – can all make a tremendous difference. That may sound like common-sense, but the funny thing about common-sense is that it is not necessarily there at the times we most need it.

3. Trauma is a management issue. In other words, those at the top need to take responsibility. In the military, one of the surest indicators of psychological fall-out is poor unit leadership and inconsistent decision-making. Editors should lead by example and make sure that the focus is on the newsroom mission and not on the personal issues that can derail the work.

4. Out-sourcing support is not enough. A good employee assistance programme (EAP) can be helpful but it is only a supplement. If a news organisation constantly relies on psychologists or outside experts to provide help, it sends some mixed signals. First, it can imply that the organisation is too embarrassed to discuss the issues itself and secondly it implies that trauma management is an arcane mystery that only outsiders with specialist qualifications can do. Good peer-led social support, colleagues looking out for colleagues they already care about, is known to be protective. Again, building this capacity in a newsroom is not hard but making the right kind of 'common sense' automatic might require some initial priming. For instance, we can all struggle to find the right words when there is a death in the newsroom and some limited technical input can be a great help.

Over the last few years, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation has been innovating in this area. With the aid of Dart Centre Asia-Pacific, it has built up a peer-support structure that provides one model for how colleagues might boost each other's trauma resilience.

In concluding this brief survey of what is a complicated area, we should not forget that trauma is not just an occupational health issue, in the same way that repetitive stress injury is. It is fundamentally entwined with journalism. Producing accurate copy, treating sources with fairness and empathy, in other words, the key facets of good journalism, are also likely to lead to higher levels of staff well-being. Journalists, who are supported in maintaining a resilient work-life balance when on traumatic assignments, will also be better placed to produce their best work. This is an issue that should be engaged with actively at all levels of a news organisation. It is not something that should be confined to a memo buried in a stack of papers somewhere in the human resources department.

GAVIN REES IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE DART CENTRE FOR JOURNALISM AND TRAUMA IN EUROPE.

Left: Journalists arrive in Faizabad, Afghanistan, 2001.

A LIVING DOCUMENT

CBA Travel Bursar, Siobhann Tighe, outlines how a Tongan broadcaster's innovative approach to reporting on the 2009 tsunami provides a case study of the complex role of the public service broadcaster in the post disaster context.

AUTHOR
Siobhann Tighe

ILLUSTRATION
Soakimi Finau, Tonga

Niuatoputapu is one of the most remote islands in the Pacific. Even though it is closer to Samoa it belongs to the Kingdom of Tonga and is one of two tiny islands known as the Niuas. When a natural disaster struck, immediate coverage proved challenging for the state broadcaster, Radio & TV Tonga, but a few months later a documentary was made, which is regarded as a 'living document'.

At the end of September 2009 a tsunami hit. It came in the morning but reporters in the Radio & TV Tonga newsroom far, far away on the main island of Tongatapu, had no idea what was happening. It was only when listeners started to call in with descriptions of high tides suddenly dropping to low ones that they realised something unusual was going on. By mid morning a tsunami was confirmed, but no one knew the scale of it. Nanise Fifita, General Manager of Radio & Television Tonga explains, "At first we thought it was both Niuas but after a day we found out that only Niuatoputapu had been affected. We were told that everyone had been wiped out, then, only some. We just didn't know exactly how many. The information we got was mostly hear-say." Looking back Nanise remembers feeling very frustrated. First because of the Government's refusal to let one of her staff on the first plane going to the island and second because it was keeping information to itself. "The Government released information bit by bit. I don't understand their rationale. As someone in the middle of government and the people, I was desperate to get information out, as long as it was reliable." The third frustration was over Radio Tonga's transmitter, "Our transmission mast was 50 years old and people in the two Niaus found it difficult at times to tune in."

Nine people died that day, many more were injured and more than 130 households were affected. That is half the households in Niuatoputapu.

In 30 years of working at Radio & TV Tonga it was the first time Nanise Fifita had to deal with a tsunami. Tropical cyclones are part of life for Tongans but not tsunamis. When the dust had settled, a Japanese television producer, cameraman and editor from NHK, who was doing voluntary work in Tonga, suggested making a documentary. "I agreed," says Nanise Fifita. "It could be a learning tool for everyone. Initially the idea was to document everything and then produce a programme plus a booklet to inform and educate people, based on the experiences of the survivors."

So three months after the tsunami NHK's Masaharu Ando flew out to Niuatoputapu with Tongan reporter, Anau Fonokalafi. Anau had her target audience in mind even before take-off, "We focused on students. The kids here don't know about tsunamis. Whenever people hear a tsunami warning on the radio they go to the waterfront to have a look!"

One of the most difficult tasks for Anau was getting people's trust, "The camera really scares people. Even the mic. Whenever they saw me coming up to their doors they turned around." It was gentle persuasion on her part and pragmatism on theirs, that encouraged some to talk. "People thought that being interviewed would get them aid and funding, but I didn't promise them anything. What convinced them to open up was me telling them: *your* information is very important. A lot of people will

Left: Poignant message left on a truck in Samoa following the 2009 tsunami, which hit Samoa as well as the surrounding Pacific Islands, 2009, © Jocelyn Carlin, Panos

learn from it and it will help Tongans if there is another tsunami. It is not your physical appearance that really matters, it is your information. *You* are a very important person".

The other difficulty Anau had, which she shares with many other reporters who have been to the scene of a natural disaster, is the mixture of emotions that people are going through. "The Government had a relocation plan, so I asked people about their plans for the future: will they stay or move? This is when they showed their anger towards the Government. They wanted to stay on their existing land. They didn't want to move to higher ground inland, which would have been safer. I had to explain that I was independent and that I wasn't there to build a house for them. Even after three months some were still nervous and scared, especially the elderly and the children."

Having recorded the experience of children who survived Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh in 2007 I recognise Anau's experience. The children's descriptions that I collected for a BBC World Service documentary were quite matter-of-fact, understated even, yet their voices were so vulnerable and shy. I can also appreciate another of Anau's challenges: keeping your interviewee, who is probably still traumatised, on track. "If I'm looking for one answer," Anau says, "I'll have to ask the question eight times until they tell me exactly what happened. It was really hard to follow their information and also see whether this person is telling me the truth or telling me what other people have told them." In a culture that wants to please visitors and provide answers that will satisfy them, this can be genuinely difficult for reporters.

"As the state broadcaster, Radio & TV Tonga are quite clear about their role during a natural disaster. It is to provide clear and up-to-date information, which means that Radio Tonga 1 remains on air with a mix of guests from organisations like The National Emergency Management Office, The Red Cross and Government."

One of the most effective devices within the documentary ended up being the use of 31 coloured pencil sketches. Even in pre-production, Anau and Masahura knew they had a fundamental problem: there were no pictures. So Masaharu came up with the idea of recruiting an artist to draw survivors' stories. The documentary confidently starts off with one of his pictures and over it, without a musical track, we hear a man, on the verge of tears, telling his story. It sets the reflective tone of the whole piece and each sketch gives the viewer the chance to pause for breath and reflect. "This is something new for us, totally new. It has never been done before at Television Tonga," says Nanise Fifita. "Yes, it's a sketch, not a moving picture, but I could feel what had happened. One islander explained that he was still in bed when the tsunami struck and when he woke up the water was bed-high. Listening to what he said and looking at the sketch I could imagine what happened. It's powerful."

The documentary was first broadcast in March 2010. Some Tongans have bought their own copies and it gets rebroadcast from time to time. TV Tonga believes it is still relevant and can be passed on from generation to generation, "We can never tell when an earthquake or a tsunami will happen, so repeating it is a good way to remind people what they should do if it happens again," says Nanise.

As the state broadcaster, Radio & TV Tonga are quite clear about their role during a natural disaster. It is to provide clear and up-to-date information, which means that Radio Tonga 1 remains on air with a mix of guests from organisations like The National Emergency Management Office, The Red Cross and Government. Anau Fonokalafi is very straightforward about it, "Tell people what to do, which roads to use, and how to get to higher ground." Nanise Fifita goes further and includes the part faith plays in this deeply Christian country, "Since Radio Tonga was established over 50 years ago, whenever there is a natural disaster people regard Radio Tonga 1 as 'the lighthouse'. Radio Tonga 1 reaches even the most remote and scattered islands. People know to switch on and get the latest weather update, advice from people on the ground and even a short prayer from a church leader."

"The mandate for Radio & Television Tonga is to inform, educate, and entertain but since the tsunami, it's also to comfort. I didn't notice that before. The tsunami happened in the same year that the Tongan ferry, the MV Ashika, sank killing over 70 people. So listeners were calling us to say they wanted religious songs, they wanted church leaders to say a prayer and they wanted comfort. That's when it really clicked for me."

So what happens as time goes by? These days it is considered quite normal for well-known, international, rolling-news broadcasters to give considerable air-time to anniversaries but marking the 2009 tsunami poses a dilemma for Tonga's state broadcaster. "We hate to be accused of stirring up emotions," says Nanise. "People say "leave us alone" but then we don't want to make people feel isolated either. So we've decided to look forward. Our role now is to report on reconstruction and ask whether the Government has delivered on what it promised. Or, two years on, has nothing been done?"

SIOBHANN TIGHE IS A BBC JOURNALIST CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING A CBA TRAVEL BURSARY IN TONGA AND THE PACIFIC.

EDUCATE AND INFORM

UNESCO Communication and Information Advisor, Arya Gunawan Usis, outlines his views on the role of public service broadcasters in the aftermath of crises, disasters and emergencies.

AUTHOR
Arya Gunawan Usis

PHOTOGRAPHY
Panos Pictures, London

For four months from March 2011, every Friday and Saturday night, Rashida Batool never missed an opportunity to listen to her radio. The young woman from Punjab province in Pakistan was enthusiastically listening to Umeed e Sehr (Dawn of Hope), a drama series produced through collaboration between the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) and UNESCO and broadcast by Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation to various parts of the country. This drama featured fictitious characters in a fictitious village in Pakistan, recovering from serious flooding. Various important messages were inserted, such as life-saving measures during a flood, how to prevent and deal with disease following a flood, the importance of community participation to mobilise collective efforts to face difficult situations, how to obtain emergency assistance

Previous page, clockwise from top left: One year after the tsunami, 22 year old Rusdiana, sits in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 2005, © Abbie Trayler-Smith, Panos Pictures; Electronics salvaged from the mud following flooding in Bangladesh, 2009, © G.M.B Akash, Panos Pictures; Staff record a weekly radio programme, sponsored by the Red Cross, to support people affected by the tsunami in Banda Aceh, 2005, © Jenny Matthews, Panos Pictures

Left: Presenters of The Suara Aceh (Voice of Aceh) radio show in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 2005, © Dermot Tatlow

and how to earn income related to emergency work after a disaster.

This programme was the reason why listeners like Rashida were tuning in. Rashida and others like her claimed to have experienced direct and tangible benefits from the programme. There was a listener who claimed that it was through Umeed e Sehr that he found out about the existence of the 'cash and/or food for work' programme offered to communities in flood affected areas. This listener then gathered more information and managed to get emergency work, which earned him a living for his family.

Before this, in Aceh, Indonesia, an emergency radio station was successfully established and went on air on January 6, 2005, a little less than two weeks after the tsunami hit the province on December 26, 2004. This emergency radio station, named Suara Aceh or Voice of Aceh, came into existence thanks to the extraordinary efforts and militancy of activists both in the humanitarian field and the field of broadcasting, through the initiative of Indonesia Private Broadcast Radio Association, with support from a number of agencies including UNESCO.

Suara Aceh was on the air for about six months only, since it was established to serve communities during the emergency period, while waiting for other radio stations that were destroyed by the tsunami to be rebuilt and operational. Although its lifespan was short, Suara Aceh will never be erased in the history and memories of the people of Aceh, because of its pivotal role in delivering a variety of emergency information, ranging from how and where the public could obtain emergency assistance, to reuniting families that had been scattered by the tsunami.

The previous two examples are sufficient to demonstrate the tremendous potential of radio in particular and of the media in general, to be one of the important elements in disaster reduction and management. Radio conveys information during the phase shortly after the disaster (in the case of Suara Aceh), and can also help to rebuild public confidence following a disaster (in the case of Umeed e Sehr drama series).

In times of disaster, the roles played by the media range from the upstream to downstream. From the period before the disaster occurs, to the moments when a disaster takes place; for the several weeks and months thereafter; and throughout the reconstruction and rehabilitation process. Broadcasters, particularly PSBs, have the power to restore the confidence of communities affected by disaster.

In the earliest stage, when a disaster has not occurred, broadasters can contribute in producing educational programmes, containing information and knowledge about various aspects of disaster. At this stage, broadcasters are encouraged to be proactive and become "educational institutions" to educate citizens and help to build

"In the earliest stage, when a disaster has not occurred, broadcasters can contribute in producing educational programmes, containing information and knowledge about various aspects of disaster."

preparedness at a community level. Broadcasters can also play a role in continuing to remind government authorities that are tasked to deal with disaster management about the need for the government to be better equipped in anticipation of a disaster, especially in areas historically known as disaster-prone areas.

In the phase in which the disaster is taking place, the media – especially public service broadcasters – play a role in early warning. With a good early warning system, there is a golden period, although of about one minute only, before a disaster occurs. Many things can be done in that short time by those who have been well trained to reduce the scale of the disaster. For example, the evacuation process can be implemented more effectively and somebody trained could turn off the electricity and gas.

During the period shortly after, and some months after, the disaster, the broadcasters' role shifts slightly so that it becomes part of the humanitarian relief effort. Broadcasters can carry out various tasks, ranging from fundraising through to providing information on the distribution of humanitarian aid and reuniting scattered families. In the case of post-tsunami Aceh in 2004 a private television station in Indonesia managed to collect donations from the public. One television station, for example, raised more than 40 billion Indonesian rupiah (equivalent to $5 million). The public broadcaster NHK, in Japan, also played a crucial part during the earthquake and tsunami that hit parts of the country, in March 2011.

In Haiti, during the emergency phase after the earthquake struck in January 2010, many residents were using new media technologies (SMS, Twitter, etc.). But it was also evident that radio was the most effective tool for serving the public's needs and access to information. The earthquake had destroyed most Haitian radio stations. The only one that remained was Signal FM, which managed to continue broadcasting to an audience of nearly three million throughout the crisis.

The station produced round-the-clock information for families and rescue teams desperate for information. It helped locate missing people, spread news to families searching for lost loved ones and delivered messages to Haitians on water resources and hospital information. Additionally, Signal FM helped save the lives of Haitians by providing numerous reports to rescue teams describing where immediate aid was needed. Signal FM went on to receive an award from a foundation in America, due to its tireless efforts that had truly exemplified the crucial role broadcasters play in providing information and resources to millions of people during times of crises.

After all the critical stages have passed, it is by no means time for the media to pack up and leave. The public service broadcaster particularly, is still required at the end phase, that of reconstruction and rehabilitation, not only in the physical sense of rebuilding the ravaged buildings but also in encouraging and building the self-confidence of the survivors of disasters. In this phase public service broadcasters could also become frontrunners in overseeing the reconstruction process, as well as acting as a watchdog.

The process of reconstruction and rehabilitation in any post-disaster situation is vulnerable to irregularities. Caused by the sudden flow of large amounts of money, goods and services, at the same time as there is tremendous pressure to deliver aid quickly, the mechanisms that are used may not be in accordance with rules and regulations applied during normal times. In addition, there are often substantial economic opportunities that arise from large-scale reconstruction, which easily create an opportunity for corruption, waste and mismanagement. Irregularities range from the most severe type, such as corruption in reconstruction projects to rebuild infrastructure destroyed by the disaster, to the simplest form, such wastefulness of humanitarian aid.

Post-earthquake Haiti may be a good example to illustrate irregularities in the form of wastefulness. A news report published by *Newsweek* magazine, for example, stated the following:

Another example of not the best use of money: portable rock crushers that convert rubble into sand and gravel, which can then be used as building material. The microcrushers, which cost about $50,000 apiece, have been a godsend in some British cities, where they were originally employed. But in Petit-Goâve, a coastal town that sits at the Jan. 12 quake's epicenter and where 10 such machines are stationed, critics say they are a waste. "Equipment like this needs constant maintenance," says one development worker who did not want to be named criticizing a USAID project. "It's great to train Haitians to use and repair them, but when a hose blows or some other part breaks, where are the replacement parts going to come from?" And it's unclear, she says, how useful sand and gravel products will be in neighborhoods already overwhelmed by debris. "Some of the private companies that are here could remove three to five times as much rubble for the amount of money we'll end up spending on this."

"The role and the potential of the media, particularly public service broadcasters, is widely recognised. But on the ground there is still a wide gap between the knowledge and its practical application."

Post-tsunami Aceh similarly resulted in an unprecedented response from the national and international communities, with a total of $7.2 billion pledged and nearly $7 billion committed. The funds were administered and managed by a newly-established agency responsible for coordinating and jointly implementing the recovery program. Media later reported a number of alleged cases of irregularities in this recovery process, which came in many forms, such as assistance that was not received by the intended recipients, or embezzlement of the aid for personal use. For example, according to the Government's reconstruction blueprint, each internally displaced person was to receive aid in the form of cash and rice. The reality was that not all IDPs received the full aid that they were entitled to and some received no assistance at all. In another case, a UN agency planned to build 150 new schools in the neighbouring province that was also affected by the disaster. That plan was encumbered by local officials who consistently asked for more money than was originally agreed, often for undisclosed reasons.

In the case of post-tsunami Aceh, I personally witnessed many agencies involved in rebuilding Aceh wanting to implement their projects using the funds they received, with their main goal being how to spend the funds immediately, without thinking of the real benefits, let alone the sustainability of the projects.

With these potential irregularities, it is clear that the media, particularly PSBs, should act as an independent institution overseeing the recovery process. If corruption had taken place without the knowledge of the media in the first place, then they must find a way to scrutinise the situation.

Transparency International (TI) has included the role of media in its manual in dealing with abuse of aid in disaster situations. TI believes that ensuring public access to information about aid activities is an essential first step for enabling beneficiary involvement. Comprehensive information strategies must also be put in place by humanitarian agencies and local /national authorities, to ensure aid effectiveness by providing beneficiaries with the means to engage with aid and oversee activities. Such strategies should ensure the accessibility of information to all sections of crisis-affected populations.

The role and the potential of the media, particularly public service broadcasters, is widely recognised. But on the ground there is still a wide gap between the knowledge and its practical application. For example, it is still very rare to see broadcasters voluntarily dedicate themselves to produce programmes on a regular basis to educate the public about various aspects of disaster. Not many broadcast organisations have a good early warning system in place and if they do, the system is rarely simulated and drilled. For broadcast organisations, particularly public service broadcasters, the task of producing educational information and to put an early warning system in place should be mandatory. Public broadcasters should also have a Standard Operating Procedure to be applied in the event of a disaster. Finally, PSBs should further enhance their role as a watchdog in the process of recovery.

ARYA GUNAWAN USIS IS THE ADVISOR FOR COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION AT THE UNESCO TEHRAN CLUSTER OFFICE HAVING WORKED FOR 10 YEARS WITH UNESCO JAKARTA. PRIOR TO JOINING UNESCO, HE WORKED FOR AROUND 15 YEARS AS A JOURNALIST WITH THE, JAKARTA-BASED KOMPAS NEWSPAPER AND THE BBC WORLD SERVICE INDONESIAN SECTION.

"With these potential irregularities, it is clear that the media, particularly PSBs, should act as an independent institution overseeing the recovery process."

NO WOMAN'S LAND

Deputy Director of the International News Safety Institute, Hannah Storm, discusses INSI's work on safety and their new book documenting the experience of female journalists reporting in dangerous situations.

AUTHOR
Hannah Storm

PHOTOGRAPHY
International News Safety Institute, London

I joined the International News Safety Institute a few months after visiting Haiti as a producer with a London-based television news crew to cover its devastating earthquake.

It was a country I had fallen in love with six years earlier as a young journalist, trying to carve out the career I had dreamt of for as long as I can remember.

In 2004, Haiti was a dangerous and dark place – with a curfew, the nightly reminder of a lawlessness that manifested itself in kidnappings, beheadings and rape. My days were spent reporting on this violent, vibrant scene. In the evenings, gunfire provided the exotic chorus as we drank local rum in the hills above the chaotic capital, sharing stories and confidences with the motley crew of foreigners who flock to a country on the edge.

It was an adrenalin-fuelled existence. I was naive and ill-prepared. The gunshot across the bow of the Brazilian UN vehicle I was travelling in through the slums tested my reflexes but not my resolve. I vowed to return to Haiti to tell the story of its people but when I did everything had changed.

Camped on the runway of the airport in Port-au-Prince in the aftermath of the earthquake, listening to the planes landing with aid, I remember thinking about the lengths to which news people go to shine a light in dark places, to tell the tales of those whose lives are turned upside down by war, disaster and unrest.

Earlier that day, in the hilltops above Petit Goave, close to the epicentre of the earthquake, I had met a little girl whose eyes seared their way into my soul. She had lost her mother. I thought of my little girl back home and I knew then that this was a job for those braver than me – but that perhaps I could help tell the world the story-tellers' stories too.

Fast forward a year and the conversation in the newsrooms was about a very different kind of news story and a very different kind of challenge to news crews working in dangerous places.

The Arab Spring has provided one of the most challenging safety backdrops for journalists in recent years.

During the early days of the unrest in the Middle East and North Africa, INSI established a secure email forum, allowing news desks and field teams from all over the world to share sensitive information affecting journalists working in places where their safety might be compromised.

We coordinated a flow of information directly to around 70 journalists from more than 20 countries and indirectly with many hundreds more, exchanging details about shifting frontlines, exit plans, safe houses, trust-worthy fixers and communication shortages. We sought to help organisations whose journalists had been detained, and collated advice about best safety practice as our colleagues reported from some of the most chaotic news frontlines for years.

We worked to help identify and mitigate risk, knowing that no war zone can ever be truly safe but still not anticipating the magnitude of the risks that some journalists take to bring home the story.

In the 12 months since the start of the Arab Spring, 30 journalists died, many more were detained, hurt and countless numbers were threatened,

"The events of the past year should be a wake-up call to all public service broadcasters and their commercial counterparts that they have a duty to protect those who daily go out in search of the news."

simply doing their job.

On February 11, 2011, the CBS correspondent Lara Logan was subjected to what her network has called "a brutal and sustained sexual assault". This horrendous episode opened a new chapter in the issue of the safety of women journalists.

At INSI, we were inundated with requests for advice and tips for women journalists in dangerous situations.

At the time there was no single point of reference. As we worked to create one, we realised that there could be no 'one size fits all' approach to the debate about the safety of women journalists.

Should women be treated differently from their male colleagues? Some women said yes and others said no. Others said no and then secretly admitted they did not dare say yes, lest they ruin their chances of being deployed to dangerous places.

Were women at a greater risk than their male colleagues solely because of their gender? The answer to this depended greatly on the situation and story.

We decided to pull together the first book dedicated to the safety of women journalists. 'No Woman's Land – On the Frontlines with Female Reporters' is a tribute to all the brave women around the world who work in the media.

Lara Logan wrote the foreword for the book which contains articles written by wives and mothers, sisters and daughters, colleagues and friends. Its 40 contributors come from more than a dozen countries, work in radio, television, newspapers and online, cross five continents and span generations, religions and cultures.

Some of the women detail their daily struggle to work in countries where women are barely accepted in the media. Others tell of situations where they felt safer because they were women. Others pay tribute to the men they work with who also found their safety at risk.

Their contributions cover war and conflict, disaster and civil unrest, corruption and terror. They include episodes of harrowing assault, awe-inspiring bravery, lucky misses and planned escapes.

They are many things. But above all they are journalists. And they are women.

Their experiences and voices are their own. But for every contributor to 'No Woman's Land', there are other women who wanted to take part. Some of them could not because of sickness and injury, the physical and emotional toll of their journalism experiences still lying heavy with them.

There are others who had hoped to but could not because of work or family commitments. There are still more we could have and should have asked.

I know that some of the contributors found writing their accounts to be a very painful process. I know that many of the women underestimate quite how brave and remarkable their achievements and those of their colleagues are.

As one of our contributors eloquently wrote, I am very much the understudy to the brave women in 'No Woman's Land'. I feel immensely privileged to have worked with these ladies in compiling their stories. Stories which have inspired me and terrified me, made me laugh and in Lara's case, made me cry.

They strike a chord for many reasons. Not least because – two years on from Haiti – I believe that the cacophony of safety challenges that journalists face in writing the first rough draft of history have never been greater.

Worldwide, only a small number of news organisations take the issue of safety seriously. Many are simply not doing enough. The events of the past year should be a wake-up call to all public service broadcasters and their commercial counterparts that they have a duty to protect those who daily go out in search of the news.

'No Woman's Land' is available to buy online at www.newssafety.org. Proceeds from the book will go to support INSI's safety training for women journalists.

HANNAH STORM IS THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS SAFETY INSTITUTE. SHE WAS A JOURNALIST FOR OVER A DECADE, DURING WHICH TIME SHE REPORTED FOR MAJOR NEWS ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING THE BBC, REUTERS AND THE TIMES AND WORKED ACROSS NEWSPAPERS, RADIO, TV AND ONLINE.

A REPORTING DISASTER?

In an excerpt taken from her longer Fellowship Paper, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism Fellow, Monika Kalcsics, discusses the interdependence of media and aid agencies in a competitive compassion market.

AUTHOR
Monika Kalcsics

PHOTOGRAPHY
Panos Pictures, London

The title had an explosive word in it: truth. 'Haiti and the Truth about NGOs', a 45min radio documentary, aired on 11th January 2011 on BBC Radio 4. The timing of the programme was no coincidence, exactly one year after a massive earthquake hit the Caribbean Island. Around 250,000 people had lost their lives and another 1 million were affected.

A year on, BBC radio journalist Edward Stourton travelled to Haiti to look at problems in the aid industry. "How far has the way we help gone bad?" he asked, concerned that the billions of dollars of donations and aid pledges were not reflected in the living conditions of survivors. "Is what has happened in Haiti symptomatic of a wider crisis of humanitarianism?" The radio documentary generated strong debate in online discussion forums amongst aid agencies. "It went for the jugular", wrote John Mitchell, director of the humanitarian think tank ALNAP [The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action], on AlertNet, a newswire dedicated to humanitarian issues, "It seemed to me that Stourton was persuading the listener the humanitarian system, in Haiti and by implication elsewhere, is a system that has lost its moral compass and is tired if not completely broken."

Six months later the BBC dispatched TV news presenter Ben Brown to a disaster area. He reported on a drought the Western public was largely unaware of. On 4th July Brown sent a 2:05min report from the world's largest refugee camp, Dadaab in Kenya, to a Western viewership.

The report showed emaciated children's bodies with flies around their eyes, and suffering, speechless adults. This time there was no public criticism from aid agencies, although the report used images of hunger which ignore a basic principle of aid agencies to "recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects" (Sphere Project).

But this report came at the beginning of an untold crisis, one which needed the focus of a big broadcaster to become visible. Four days later, Brown's report 'Horn of Africa: 'A vision of hell' was accompanied by the news that the UK Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) had launched an emergency appeal to help the more than 10 million people affected by severe drought. On the BBC website 'To make a donation' information, including a direct donation call number, was added to the report.

These two events are symptomatic of the relationship between aid agencies and the media: mutual need and mutual mistrust mark their complex interdependence. Either the audience is given simplistic donations stories that do not give time or space to question the 'how?', or the audience is confronted with sharp and increasingly polemical criticism of aid agencies. Neither of these two extreme attitudes helps to understand the complex realities on the ground. Aid agencies are desperate to raise awareness and public funds for their humanitarian work and the news media are determined to generate readers, ratings and revenue.

The world looks likely to face an increasing number of catastrophes in future. The World Disasters Report 2011 looks back on a decade of catastrophes concluding that more people died as a result of disasters in

"The World Disasters Report 2011 looks back on a decade of catastrophes concluding that more people died as a result of disasters in 2010 than in any other year in the last decade."

2010 than in any other year in the last decade. In two years alone, we were confronted with four major disasters: the Haiti earthquake, flooding in Pakistan, the Japanese earthquake and tsunami and the famine in East Africa. With the last of these not included in the report, it still concludes that these disasters "mark an 'exponential change in crisis scale and impact' and foreshadow a time of increasingly complex crises and multiple, simultaneous disasters" (IFRC, 2011).

Does this mean that disaster reporting will be more important than ever? What are the conditions for a disaster becoming newsworthy? Amongst many studies on this issue, the CARMA Report on Western Media Coverage of Humanitarian Disasters summarises the complexities of communicating distant suffering with these strong, radical words: "Western self-interest is the pre-condition for significant coverage of a humanitarian crisis' and national political and economic interests are a better guide to press interest than human suffering."

The amount of attention a disaster receives also influences how much humanitarian assistance and donations it attracts. At the same time, it is well established that foreign news reporting is facing turbulent times. "Are foreign correspondents redundant?" asks Richard Sambrook in his recent study about the changing face of international news. He says, "The economic pressures of maintaining overseas newsgathering have seen the numbers of bureaux and correspondents persistently reduced by major Western news organisations over the last 20 years or more." This lack of foreign news coverage directly affects aid agencies' ability to communicate from disaster zones. Their focus lies in transmitting the aid message to a Western audience of potential donors. So will disasters continue to be covered in the media, and if so by whom?

In a report last year, Glenda Cooper claims that in addressing this question, aid agencies have become more adept, "turning themselves into reporters for the mainstream media, providing cash-strapped foreign desks with footage and words gratis" (Cooper, 2011). While there is an increasing void in foreign reporting by the conventional media, there is a hugely competitive 'compassion market'. On the one hand the major humanitarian agencies have become slicker, PR-focused media operations that want to feed a content-hungry disaster news market. On the other hand, the disaster area has become much more crowded. The last two decades have witnessed the rise of new aid agencies, especially MONGOs, [an acronym for My own NGO, small NGO's set up by anyone who wants to help].

At the same time, the changing nature of technology opens up new and diverse ways of collecting and distributing information for both reporters and aid workers in the field. Live blog formats – which

Previous page: A young boy escapes the violence that erupted in Haiti following the earthquake in 2010, © Christian Als/ Berlingske, Panos Pictures

Left: Children walk among dust and shelters in the Dadaab refugee camp, Kenya, 2011 © Frederic Courbet, Panos Pictures

journalist Dan Gillmor defines as the '1440-minute news-cycle' – are replacing the TV-based 24-hour news-cycle, writes Nicola Bruno in his research for the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Bruno quotes Joshua E. Keating in *Foreign Policy* that the earthquake in Haiti was the first 'Twitter Disaster' (Bruno, 2011).

Where does this leave us? Although the use of social media in covering news is much discussed, there is much less analysis of the impact on the quality of information we get. "News is also, what journalists make it", reaffirms Natalie Fenton of Goldsmiths in 'New Media, Old News', "Their working environment is shaped by economic, social, political and technological factors, all of which form a dense inter-meshing of commercial, ethical regulatory and cultural components." (Fenton, 2010) These are the challenging conditions in which humanitarian organisations and news media meet nowadays in disaster zones.

Are we getting ethical information when reporters and aid workers are so dependent on each other in a disaster zone? Both are communicating disasters in a media market that is in transformation. While the ethics of journalism in disaster zones is widely discussed, there is a lack of research into the relationship between aid agencies and the media, as well as the implications of this.

In 2004, the Fritz Institute, together with AlertNet conducted the biggest ever report about humanitarian relief and its struggle to make the news agenda. The report showed some fundamental problems in the relationship between aid agencies and the media, "The focus the NGOs put on the need to satisfy donors, whether that's the need to raise money or to show donors what they are doing, means the main focus is on international media" (Ross, 2004). But AlertNet's Tim Large argues that the humanitarian response needs to be opened up much more to local media, since most of the work is done by local players, "Given that it is so trendy to say we work with local partners, there is still very little attention paid to local media."

The self-regarding nature of international media and aid agencies in communicating a disaster leads to local voices still being surprisingly rarely heard. This applies not only to local aid workers and beneficiaries as Simon Cottle and David Nolan suggest, but also local media, which play a key role in informing the local population in the aftermath of a disaster. What surprises Tim Large about this is, "with all this lip service about accountability to beneficiaries, lip service to working with local partners, all this sort of stuff, you would think this would be just basic – communication with affected populations via local media. But it's still seen as a radical idea, not at all mainstream."

Disaster reporting will be more essential than ever in the future, because disasters have consequences in an interconnected world. The internet has shrunk the world. We now see pictures of despair instantly, through diverse communication technologies, and hear unmediated voices from chaotic situations. There are flows of people around the world following many of these catastrophes and those who arrived in previous waves may well influence a country towards reporting and contributing to the rescue of those affected. People travel more these days and may well have experience of countries in which disasters unfold. Moreover, there will in future be more disputes over vital resources we all share, such as water, food, oil and habitable land.

Instead of regionalising global humanitarianism, a process which gazes at the world from a Western perspective, the media and aid agencies need to include more local voices. It has become common for aid agencies to say they work with local partners, yet there is little attention paid to local media, who are central to informing the population in the aftermath of a disaster. Media organisations should put the foreign into foreign correspondent. It makes sense for stories to be told from the perspective of journalists familiar with the situation on the ground. Parachute journalism from a Western perspective reinforces the Western-centric view of humanitarianism and it prolongs the cliché picture of the 'active white saviour' and the 'passive indigenous victim'.

Communicating from disasters is experiencing a transformation, not only because of new media. For the future of information gathering, it is interesting to note that the reduction of foreign bureaux is principally a Western phenomenon, according to Richard Sambrook. "In Asia, with the prospect of major economic growth, news organisations may be set for an era of expansion. And in the developing world countries and continents are building their own journalistic capacity – with long-term consequences for the global flow of information and the character of public debate."

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IN FOCUS
NAMIBIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

In Focus takes a look at the internal workings of a different international Public Service Broadcaster every issue. This time we travel to Namibia and hear from NBC's Director General, Albertus Aochamub. Speaking to the CBA's Mandy Turner, Aochamub argues as long as there is openness and transparency, he sees no reason why the NBC should not become a world-class broadcaster.

AUTHOR Mandy Turner

The NBC operates a single television channel, primarily in English, with some news programming in German and indigenous languages. It had a monopoly on free-to-air television in Namibia until 2008 when One Africa Television, a new privately owned television station, was launched.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CURRENT BROADCASTING SCENE IN NAMIBIA?

It is an open market where we face stiff competition, especially in the radio space. With the advent of digitalisation we expect competition to further intensify as more frequencies become available. But we shall be geared up for that onslaught. We are a public broadcaster with a commercial mind set and will compete for audiences through providing the right programming to stay relevant.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE KEY REMITS OF PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING?

Public broadcasting is an essential cornerstone of any democratic society. We are publicly funded and thus need to drive the national agenda of unifying a previously divided nation as a result of the racist Apartheid system. The accent has to be on forging a united Namibian identity borne out of the desire for giving all our citizens a sense of belonging as we reflect our complex national heritage. This is certainly true in Namibia but also across all countries beset with the evils of one or the other –ism. Whilst we inform, educate and entertain, we as public broadcasters have the added challenge of remaining commercially viable so that we do not rely on the public purse alone. A need, therefore, exists for striking a careful balance between the commercial imperatives of business and our public mandate to serve.

HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT HAS NEW COMPETITION, EG PRIVATE TV STATIONS, HAD ON NBC?

Advertisers now have more choices when deciding on where to place their materials. In that sense we cannot be complacent when planning our programming. Having said that, our competitive advantage still lies in the area of national reach and coverage. We are the only broadcaster that offers 10 Namibian language services and covers most of the country. Ironically, many of our competitors share our infrastructure, which we gladly agree to in order to minimise duplication of resources and pollution of our natural environment. To what extent this is sustainable in the long term remains to be seen.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES SURROUNDING PUBIC SERVICE BROADCASTING IN NAMIBIA?

10
different Namibian language services are offered by NBC Radio

422
members of staff make up the total NBC team

94
percent of the Namibian population is reached by NBC Radio and 84 per cent has access to NBC TV

The model needs to be understood and evolved within the realms of our national reality. Generally, there is no argument against ownership of the broadcaster through a complex web of stakeholders. What remains a challenge is how to fund the operation in the public interest and to provide content that speaks to the diverse nature of the country. Additionally, when you have divergent interests at board level, it often causes conflicts, which render the broadcaster ineffective as well. Having said that, if the mandate is clearly defined and understood, most of these challenges can be managed.

HOW IS NBC ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES?

We are in the early stages of a long road. Generally, our attitude is to simply implement the key building blocks for PSB without too much debate and fanfare around it. We know that it is an imperative for the future and too much debate and arguing would result in undue delays. We just need to get on with it.

WHAT ARE NBC'S KEY RESPONSIBILITIES TO THEIR AUDIENCES?

Our mandate is to educate, inform and entertain. Our key concern at present is the extent to which we need to stay relevant by providing content that speaks to the needs of our audiences.

"Public broadcasting is an essential cornerstone of any democratic society. We are publicly funded and thus need to drive the national agenda of unifying a previously divided nation as a result of the racist Apartheid system."

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR NBC?

The future is bright. We have started off on the road to DTT and hope that we can begin to implement the ambitious promises that DTT holds. Our business model will change to embrace this new reality. We are confident that we will leave this place in a slightly better shape than we found it in 2010.

ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR PSB MODELS OUTSIDE OF NAMIBIA THAT YOU ADMIRE?

We know that 4 models are worth exploring. They are found in the UK, Canada, Australia and recently South Africa, with its numerous challenges.They all have some merits within their national contexts but ultimately the final offering has to be home-grown, building on the firm conceptual frameworks that have been developed over time.

BRIEFING
NATURAL DISASTERS

Anthony Frangi provides an introductory guide for programme and newsmakers, programme directors and radio managers on what to do before, during and after a natural disaster

When natural disasters strike, it is not just another day at the station – additional staff will be called in and required to work extended hours, emergency agencies will want to broadcast information. Never take it for granted that people know what to do in an emergency.

It is the role of the radio to:

- Help listeners prepare for emergencies (even before disasters strike).
- Reassure listeners that everything possible is being done.
- Assist emergency service agencies in broadcasting information on matters such as road closures, floodwaters, shelters, food drops, medical information and rescue co-ordination.
- Stimulate volunteerism and donations.

Presenters are expected to know what to do in an emergency and to demonstrate leadership in the community. If you want your station to work during a natural disaster, here are a few tips:

- Develop an emergency broadcast plan for your station. This should include back-up plans for temporary studios and transmission, should they become inoperable.
- Conduct annual training sessions/workshops for staff on how to broadcast emergency information effectively. Invite emergency agencies to assist you.
- Foster a strong knowledge of the broadcast area. Have a map of your region in the studio.
- Encourage staff to engage with the local community.
- Develop a comprehensive contacts book with essential phone numbers for government agencies, emergency services, local community organisations, schools, hospitals, experts etc. Update these lists regularly.
- Become familiar with the technical equipment so that it does not fail you on the day.
- Have an emergency travel kit for reporters and include items such as wet weather clothing and portable broadcast equipment, such as a mobile phone.
- Promote your station for its emergency coverage and education.
- Establish an emergency page on your station website.
- Set-up Twitter and Facebook links to inform listeners of a storm or to promote an upcoming segment. Share vital information with your followers.

When there is a crisis such as a bushfire or rising floodwaters, do not expect people to be glued to the radio, it is most likely they are out defending their home or community. Repeat essential information frequently and broadcast only what you know to be true. It is not unusual and is also beneficial to hear the same info repeated every 15 minutes or at specific times. After each emergency update, advise your listeners when they will hear the next one – even if there's nothing new to report. Their life may depend on it.

It is important to be aware of how emergency agencies operate. Take the time to visit the various agencies, including NGOs that handle emergencies and talk to them about what they do. In return, they will have greater respect for what you do on the air. Building strong partnerships is vital for your station to operate effectively.

Following a disaster, you will need to decide on the degree of live coverage and when it is appropriate to suspend rolling coverage. Listeners will want to know the level of damage, the state of essential services such as power, drinking water and sewerage, safety of others and how soon life will get back to normal.

Set aside hourly, daily or weekly spots devoted to the recovery process. Make them practical and do not dwell unnecessarily on the negatives – introduce stories of hope and resilience.

Be mindful of the information you gain from social media and consider verifying matters of concern with the relevant authorities. That way, your station will remain a powerful and credible tool for listeners during times of crisis.

CHECKLIST: YOUR EMERGENCY BROADCAST PLAN

BEFORE

- Activate your emergency broadcast plan. Check staff contact details.
- Broadcast warnings at regular intervals and regularly check weather radar.
- Arrange interviews with various disaster agencies.
- Ask listeners for information – you may want to put some of them to air, others are purely for information gathering. Remember to take down their phone number in the event you want to call them back.
- Liaise closely with your newsroom.
- Remind listeners of your ongoing coverage and to remain safe.
- Educate them on the dangers and how to prepare.
- Refer them to your website (emergency page) for information.
- Monitor other media.
- Access social media reports and post information to your followers on Twitter and Facebook.

DURING

- Continue to broadcast warnings at regular intervals (every 15 minutes).
- Continue to interview various emergency agencies for up-to-date information.
- Continue to broadcast emergency contacts and advice to listeners.
- Ask listeners to report what they can see.
- Encourage listeners (if safe) to upload photos or video to your website.
- Continue to post information on Twitter and Facebook.
- Continue to monitor other media.
- Report damage (road closures, flooding, damage to buildings, power, water and other essential services).
- Remind listeners about staying safe (don't drive unless essential, seek shelter, stay away from fallen power lines).
- Remind listeners of your ongoing live coverage.
- Refer them to your website (emergency page) for relevant information and tips on how to stay safe.

AFTER

- Continue to broadcast warnings (where possible) and emergency contacts at regular intervals and urge listeners to contact the relevant authorities if they need assistance.
- Ask listeners (if safe) to report what they witness.
- Encourage listeners (if safe) to upload photos and videos.
- Promote website.
- Report power outages.
- Report damage (road closures, flooding, damage to buildings and essential services such as drinking water etc).
- Report evacuations (if any).
- (If required) Interview disaster coordinators (or appropriate person). Has an emergency centre opened? Is emergency funding available to the public?
- (If required) Report changes to transport i.e. flights/train services.
- (If required) Report messages from schools, businesses etc.
- (If required) Consult health departments for information
- Interview experts on the extent of the disaster.
- Remind listeners about staying safe (driving, damage to property, drinking water).
- Determine extent of rolling coverage (consult with PD or Manager).
- What are the volunteering agencies doing. Do they need your help?
- Is there a donations register?

OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS:

- Is the radio building safe?
- What is your back-up plan if the building is damaged?
- Is the generator operational? Is there enough fuel?
- What are your plans if the transmitter fails? Is there a portable transmission device available?
- Check emergency numbers
- Does the station have sufficient food and water supplies for extended hours of broadcasting?

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TECHNICAL REVIEW

FIELD COMMUNICATIONS IN AN EMERGENCY

The CBA's Technology Consultant reviews the current technology that is available for reporting from the field in an emergency.

AUTHOR Neil Dormand

In an emergency situation one of the biggest technical problems faced by any broadcaster is ensuring that they can get radio and TV reports back from the disaster area in a timely fashion; live if possible. This is particularly the case when the disaster, crisis or emergency is in a remote area or at times when all normal methods of communication are compromised.

Satellites are often relied on to provide the solution but sometimes even they cannot be used because of difficulties in getting a dish in place fast enough.

A new option, which seems to surmount this problem, is **BGAN (Broadband Global Area Network),** a system developed and operated by the UK company **Inmarsat**. The service provides satellite access to the Internet from almost anywhere in the world. The speed of the connection is up to 500kbps data (450kbps streaming) and you only pay for the amount of data used. The size and nature of the terminal determines the connection speed, the smallest measuring 217x168mm and weighing 1.4kilos (3lb) and the largest measuring 399x297mm and weighing 3.2kilos (7lb), both of which are a similar weight and size to a laptop. The system uses IP and therefore can carry data, voice and video. Voice quality is excellent for radio, however video quality is restricted, although good enough in an emergency for live pieces to camera and static shots of the scene. Store and forward techniques can be employed for high quality pre-recorded shoots. The terminals are available from a number of manufacturers but all the interface are common and easy to use by non-technical staff. What is more, BGAN can be used in any country, although local regulatory restrictions may apply.

Whilst BGAN offers the most compact and universally available system for video communication, there are other small transportable satellite terminals of a more traditional nature. One of the newest is **Man Pak** from **SISLIVE**. It is a single unit VSAT terminal weighing 12kgs and provides a high bandwidth connection capable of high speed data and HD SNG transmissions. It is IATA compliant, having a total dimension of 62 inches, meaning that it can be carried as standard aircraft luggage and is rucksack transportable. The unit features a high performance 60cm parabolic antenna and can be used in X, Ku and Ka bands.

There are further transportable satellite terminals on the market, such as the **Rockwell Collins SWE-DISH CCT120 Suitcase System**. This is not a single unit however it does pack down to a similar size to the ManPak. The downside is that it weighs 41kgs.

For low cost voice-only communications, service providers such as **Marlink** use the Iridium network of 66 low orbit satellites. The whole of the earth's surface is covered including, unlike BGAN, the Polar Regions. All that is required are small hand held telephones. Data speeds up to 128Kbs are available and the system connects into the public telephone service so all that is needed is the country code and telephone number to make a connection.

It is important that whatever system used it is not left to collect dust in a cupboard to be used only in the event of an emergency. The best systems are those that can be integrated into normal operations and so get daily use.

But what if the broadcast station itself is out of action? Most broadcasters will have emergency facilities in place. This could be a regional site equipped to take over the control of the channels or news service, a reciprocal arrangement with a fellow broadcaster or a standby arrangement with a service provider, maybe in another country. If none of these are an option then an off the shelf channel in a box solution on a separate site, maybe the main transmitter site, could be the answer. Products range from the low cost **NewTek Tricaster** to **Miranda**'s top of the range ITX system, with many choices from the likes of **Autocue**, **Pebble Beach**, **Play Box**, **Snell** and others in between. This solution is particularly beneficial if the broadcaster already has a file based system in place, as the standby system merely mirrors the media in the main system so that the planned output can continue.

In the situation of extended outages, graphics requirement might be beyond what the broadcasters' standby arrangements provide. In this case use can be made of cloud services from companies such as **Chyron**. All that is needed is an internet connection of at least 1Mbs and a PC or laptop with a browser. The normal graphics power expected from a company such as Chyron is then available without any further kit needed on station. Of course cloud computing is not restricted to graphics preparation. Services for editing and back offices processes are also available.

Clearly all of these products are not confined to emergency use. It is preferable that they are in daily use or regularly checked to ensure that they will perform when all else has failed.

TECHNICAL CASE STUDY:

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IS PAYING THE DIGITAL DIVIDEND

AUTHOR Jonathan Marks

I remember sitting next to a station manager from one of the Pacific islands who explained a problem to me. He had been advised by a Government department that the International Telecommunication Union in Geneva has ruled that TV broadcast networks need to go digital by 17th June 2015. This is largely due to the fact that compression systems now available for digital television systems allow the transmission of up to six standard definition digital television channels in the radio-frequency spectrum that was previously used by a single analogue channel. The ITU is anxious to increase the efficiency of terrestrial broadcasters, so that the space freed up can be allocated to other users, especially the mobile operators. The station manager's TV station was producing programmes with digital equipment but the transmission links to outer islands were still analogue. Not enough money was available to re-equip the towers with the right equipment. So what could be done?

We realized that his station was the only network in the country that had nearly universal coverage of the whole island chain. Should a typhoon hit the islands, his network was probably the most likely to remain intact. However, it was only designed to operate one way, sending a signal from the studios to the repeaters on distant islands.

So a plan was made to build a digital network that differed from the existing system in that it was two-way and was content agnostic. It was simply a microwave pipe of data. We analysed who would use such a system in the case of a natural disaster. The answer was three-fold:

- emergency health and welfare services
- the mobile phone networks
- and the broadcasters (both commercial and public) trying to get contributions from the disaster areas to the studio and distribute the programme back to relay transmitters.

We built a plan to be used when the Government declared an area to be a disaster zone, whereby the digital bandwidth via the terrestrial network was distributed fairly amongst the users. We were able to build the new network by applying for grants from disaster preparedness funds set up after the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2005. Until that fateful day comes, the broadcaster tests the network every day by using it to distribute programmes across the nation. It works like a dream.

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