HURRICANE/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
BY UTILIZING FLORIDA PUBLIC LIBRARIES:
FOURTH QUARTER ACTIVITIES (May 1, 2009 – July 31, 2009)

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**HURRICANE/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
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The Information Use Management & Policy Institute (Information Institute) http://www.ii.fsu.edu/ of Florida State University began work on the grant entitled *Improving Florida Public Libraries Hurricane/Disaster Preparedness and Response*. The *Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center* http://www.stormrisk.org on Aug 8, 2008. The original end date for the project was July 31, 2009. The Information Institute received additional funding, which extends the project through December 31, 2009. This report provides an overview of 4th quarter activities completed, and in progress, from May 1, 2009 – July 31, 2009 and includes planned activities for the remainder of the year (i.e., August 1, 2009 – Dec 31, 2009).

Overall, the goal of this project is to work with public librarians to assist the residents of the state of Florida in preparing for, and responding to, hurricanes. Objectives to meet this goal include:

- Identify and describe the various plans, services, and activities in which public libraries have engaged for hurricane preparedness and response;
- Meet with various local and state officials to better understand local and situational factors that may affect the success with which public libraries can provide hurricane preparedness and responses;
- Assess how libraries can best provide hurricane preparedness and response services, in light of local conditions, as well as the available skills and capacities at the library;
- Conduct six training sessions for public librarians and local officials to describe the project's findings and educate participants about how they can best enhance their skills and services for hurricane preparedness and response; and
- Disseminate materials - which take a very practical and feasible approach, using electronic and print formats, resources, guidelines, recommendations, and best practices - describing the manner in which public libraries can be effective participants in hurricane preparedness and response.

These objectives continue to guide the study team's efforts with this project.

Study Design

The study team designed the original project in four phases: planning, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings and products. For the 4th quarter, the study team continued the data analysis efforts, initiated marketing and promotional activities, and enhanced the web portal design and content. Also completed during this period were the final workshops and presentations on the initial findings of this research, while building awareness of the project and introducing the web portal to the library community.

4th Quarter Activities Overview

Planned Project Activities

Table 1 (below) provides the status of previously planned, or ongoing, 4th quarter activities.

Table 1. Summary of Previously Planned 4th Quarter Project Activities	
Activity	**Discussion**
Completed training sessions presenting initial findings and new project website	Project objectives called for providing six workshops. The project team was able to deliver 12 training sessions to meet demand.[1]
Filed modified IRB report	IRB modified report reflects additional research due to additional funding and extension of project activities through the end of the year.
Continued the Interview and Focus Group Data Analysis	The study team continued the analysis of interview and focus group results. These findings clarified library service roles, identified best practices and associated tools, as well as provided content for the project website. This work is planned for completion during the 5th quarter.
GIS Applications	The study team continues to assess potential GIS applications. The project team worked with the State Library and Archives of Florida to provide Jeff Alexander, *Council Planning Programs Director, NE Florida Regional Planning Council* with accurate public library data for the Florida *Regional Evacuation Studies Project's, Critical Facilities Inventory, and County Emergency* operations maps. This effort is significant because it identifies Florida public libraries as essential disaster services on maps used by emergency managers to respond to Florida disaster threats.
Project Website Development	The project web site at http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/ continues to be developed and improved. Recent additions include periodic updates to the *News Releases* section and the addition of an online training video (available at http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/video). This training video is also available on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbqTZXem2Lk. A website metrics report format was developed and implemented in April 2009.
SEFLIN Regional Severe Disaster Recovery Plan	The study team continues to advise the Southeast Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN) in the development of a first in the nation regional severe disaster recovery plan. The intent is to organize and coordinate library, government, emergency management, and private resources to aid the community in the advent of a severe disaster. The plan should be completed and available by December 2009.
Marketing and Promotional Efforts	The study team completed the development of a project marketing, awareness, and promotion plan; implemented the plan; and will continue marketing efforts through the end of the 5th quarter.[2]

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[1] Training sessions included: 4/9/09, Tallahassee, FL National Hurricane Conference, Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery; 4/13/09, Panama City, FL Panhandle Library Access Network; 4/16/09 Jacksonville Public Library; 4/20/09 Orange County Public Library; 4/22/09 Coconut Creek FL, South East Florida Library Network (SEFLIN); 4/23/09, Miami Gardens FL, SEFLIN; 4/24/09, Brandon, FL, Tampa Bay Library Consortium (TBLC); 4/27/09, Fort Meyers, FL, Southwest Florida Library Network (SWFLIN); 5/6/09, Orlando, FL, Florida Library Association (FLA) annual conference; 5/14/09, Fort Lauderdale, FL; Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference; 5/15/09, Atlanta, GA, Lyrasis/SOLINET Annual conference; and, 5/30/09, Seaside, OR, Oregon Public Library Directors Meeting.

New Project Activities

This quarter saw a major effort to *market* the project and the web portal. The new activities initiated during the 4th quarter include:

1. *Marketing report:* This report describes the approach to be taken to promote the project and to disseminate the findings derived from this research effort;[3]
2. *Fifth quarter evaluation plans*: The project team developed a plan for further evaluation activities during the coming quarter. Activities will include: an e-mail survey of hurricane experienced public library managers, public library directors meeting October 8-9 interviews and survey, WebJunction public library – hurricane response webinar survey, 2009 hurricane affected Florida public library interviews and a project website functionality and usability test. [4]
3. *Statewide conference:* Planning activities have commenced to coordinate a statewide conference. This conference will further promote the project to the top management in the Florida library system. The conference will also extend invitations to key officials and leaders in other stakeholder groups that include emergency management, public administrators, and the academic community;
4. *Training assessment:* The project team assessed the various training sessions conducted during the Spring to (a) improve present and future training activities; (b) to improve the project website based on feedback received; and to (c) re-focus project activities. Summing, Training participants found both the training and project website useful. There were a number of suggestions for refining the website and the project and they have been implemented; and
5. *Seeking additional funding opportunities:* This project has revealed several opportunities for rewarding research that will benefit the library community at the state and national levels. In addition to the library-related opportunities are prospects for follow-on research that relate to improving national emergency management planning. While efforts at seeking additional funding are ongoing, the following identifies those activities that transpired during this quarter:
   a. *State Library of Florida*: The Information Institute has submitted a proposal the State Library to conduct research related to the relationship between the service roles of electronic government and emergency management;
   b. *Lyrasis, Gulf Coast Libraries initiative and regional State Library* support: The Institute continues to work with project partners to obtain additional support.
   c. *National Telecommunications and Information Administration* (NTIA). As part of the national stimulus program, the Institute is developing

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[2] See the *Interim Marketing Report* for more detailed discussion, available upon request from the Institute.

[3] The *Interim Marketing Report* is available upon request from the Institute.

[4] Development of this plan is underway, with completion of the plan and implementation to occur in the 5th quarter. The *Hurricane Web Portal Evaluation Approach* (report available upon request from the Institute) broadly describes the method that the team will use to improve the hurricane web portal. This evaluation will include the use of surveys, focus groups, and interviews to provide an evaluation that is more user-centric in design.

          project proposals that relate to the library service roles during disasters. The Institute is collaborating with various state agencies in an effort to coordinate and consolidate proposal efforts;

d. *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration* (*NOAA*): *NOAA* is a federal agency focused on the condition of the oceans and the atmosphere. The Information Institute contacted NOAA with project concepts, committing a significant amount of effort in trying to structure an acceptable proposal package; and

e. *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):* The project team has approached FEMA with projects and is actively pursuing negotiations.

These activities were promotional and awareness-building efforts that included the dissemination of project findings and recommendations. The dissemination activities focused primarily on the Florida public library community. However, these activities also included public libraries in the Gulf Coast, emergency management organizations, and the academic research community.

Highlights of Key 4th Quarter Activities

Presentation of Initial Findings & Project Website Training Sessions

        During the 1st and 2nd quarters of the project, the study team collected and assembled information from those hurricane-affected public libraries that had made significant contributions to their communities' response to hurricanes. During the 3rd quarter, the study team began to present the findings of that research and introduced the project web site. That work continued during the 4th quarter, with workshops and presentations that:

- Informed Florida public library managers of the roles (and associated best practices and aids) that public libraries have played and might play in helping their communities' respond to hurricanes:
- Made emergency managers and local government officials aware of the roles that public libraries might play to help communities better respond to hurricanes; and
- Introduced the project web portal as a place to obtain detailed information on the roles, best practices, and aids that enable better public library community hurricane response.

Table 2 (below) identifies workshops/training conducted during this training cycle.[5]

Table 2. Public Library – Hurricane Response Workshops and Presentations		
Date	Location	Topic
5/6/09	Orlando, FL	Florida Library Association (FLA) annual conference
5/14/09	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference, Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery presentation
5/15/09	Atlanta, GA	Lyrasis/SOLINET annual conference, Public Libraries and Disaster Response and Recovery presentation
5/30/09	Seaside, OR	Oregon Public Library Directors Meeting[6]

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[5] The *Spring Workshop Report* (available upon request from the Institute) provides additional details on selected training workshops and presentations.

Feedback from these training events continues to be very positive, with indication of an ongoing concern for the continuation of these research efforts. During these events, the project staff distributed several hundred handouts describing the project and the availability of the web site. One indicator of the positive reception of these training sessions are invitations to do more. The project team will be presenting a WebJunction http://www.webjunction.org/ webinar in October 2009. WebJunction is the principal online learning environment for libraries funded in part by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The project team will also make presentations at the Louisiana and Texas Library Associations annual meetings in the spring 2010

In response to the training on the project web portal, Helen Moeller, Director of the Leon County Public Library stated:

> *"After disasters people flock to their public libraries for information, computers, a safe place to be with other people, to relax, to read and to borrow materials. Your website will provide much needed information in a standard framework that is not readily available elsewhere. Great job!"*

At the completion of the training events, the project team developed a plan to assess formally the training efforts. This assessment will serve to confirm the effectiveness of these sessions and to inform the remaining research efforts for this project.

Project Marketing Efforts

During the 4th quarter, the project team developed a marketing plan[7] to initiate a campaign to promote the research project and to build awareness of the web portal. This plan identifies the awareness-building objectives and the related activities that the project team has or will undertake. Major efforts to build awareness of the project included direct mailings, media publicity, and listservs. Descriptions of each category of effort follow:

- *Direct mailings*: Each Florida public library branch received a postal mailing that included information on accessing the web portal, a link to a video introduction to the web portal, included promotional flyers to be used as public displays promoting the web portal;
- *Media publicity*: Media efforts to promote the project included a television interview that was featured on a local news program (WCTV late local news, May 29, 2009), and covered an overview of the role of libraries during hurricane disasters; and
- *Listservs*: Professional library blogs provided an effective means for getting information to a broad spectrum of the library community. The project team used these venues throughout the quarter to contact librarians within Florida, the Gulf Coast region, nationally, and internationally.

Feedback has been positive for the mass mailing of flyers, with one library promoting the flyer in their newsletter. By using this combination of methods, the outreach effort has been more

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[6] Project Manager was presenting at this conference on another Institute project and was invited to do a 90 minute presentation on the public library – hurricane project due to great interest.
[7] See the *Interim Marketing Report* for more detailed discussion, available upon request from the Institute.

effective in reaching the broader library community. The Information Institute has received requests for additional copies of the promotional flyer. In response, the flyer was made available from the home page of the hurricane web portal.[8]

Next Steps

During the next reporting period (August 1 – October 31, 2009), key project activities will relate to planning a statewide conference, evaluating the web portal, and pursuing opportunities to further develop the project. These project activities will include the following:

1. *Statewide conference*: Planning and coordination activities will continue towards hosting a statewide conference. This conference will further promote the project to key leaders in the library, emergency management, and government areas. Planning is now in the early stages, but the anticipated conference date is October 8, 2009, with activities coinciding with the Florida Libraries Director's meeting in Tallahassee, Fl;
2. *Continuous evaluation*: The project team will complete additional research on the needs and activities of Florida public libraries related to hurricane response. In addition, the project team will conduct usability testing of the project website. and implement the hurricane portal evaluation plan;
3. *Establishing a library emergency communication infrastructure module*: The project team will add a module to the project website (cross listed in the Safe Haven and Information Hub roles sections) that outlines requirements and resources available to ensure a public library's ability to communicate throughout a hurricane emergency and to offer communication facilities to residents;
4. *Training assessment*: The project team will evaluate the feedback obtained from the spring training sessions with the goal of further improving the project web portal. This evaluation effort will be finalize during the 5th quarter; and
5. *Seeking additional funding opportunities.* Ongoing efforts will continue to find opportunities to extend the work started by this project.

Table 3 (below) outlines the expected tasks for the next quarter (August 1 – October 31, 2009) and Table 4 (below) projects tasks for the entire grant extension period (August 1 – December 31, 2009). Efforts for the next reporting period will focus on providing additional marketing efforts; planning statewide conference; evaluating and improving the web portal; and pursing additional project related grant opportunities.

Table 3. 5th Quarter Tasks (Aug 1, 2009 – October, 2009)
1. Develop and implement a website evaluation program for the project web portal.
2. Implement marketing and promotional efforts
3. Develop a plan and initiate activities for a statewide conference to promote the project and build awareness of the web portal.
4. Develop a library emergency communication infrastructure module
5. Conduct formal assessment of training efforts.

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[8] http://www.ii.fsu.edu/hurricanes/newsFlyer.html

Table 4. Planned and Projected Project Extension Activities (August 1 – December 31, 2009)	
Publications for Marketing and Promotional Efforts	• Publication and dissemination of *Public Library Hurricane Response Service Roles;* • Publication and dissemination of external support roles in aid of local public library disaster response; and • Publication and dissemination of *Integrating Public Libraries into Local Emergency Response.*
Networking	Bring together key library and emergency personnel leadership to improve the utilization of Florida public libraries in disaster response and preparedness.
Project Web Site	This timeframe will see the further development of the web portal as a principal way to disseminate project products.
Service Roles, Activities & Aids	The study team, using the web portal, will introduce public library emergency service roles, activities associated with those roles, and aids that will make adoption of those roles easier. Aids will include the development of brochures, booklets, etc.
SEFLIN Planning	The study team will continue to advise the SEFLIN planning team in their development of their *Regional Disaster Recovery Plan.*
Project and Website Evaluation	Should a hurricane warning, or a hurricane, hit Florida in the 2009 season, the study team will obtain assessments of the usefulness of the web site and how the web site might be improved.
Sustainability	The study team will be actively pursuing external funding sources to continue updating and improving the web site beyond December 2009.

Each of these next step activities is underway with significant progress already made. These activities will make a major contribution to the objectives of promoting the hurricane project and adding value to the web portal.

Summary

For the past three months (May 1 – July 31, 2009), the study team launched an extensive effort to build awareness of the project using several media and print venues. Efforts to improve use of the web portal included the development of a training video that is accessible online through the portal and from YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbqTZXem2Lk.

The study team continues to make steady and substantial progress in meeting the project's goals. The study team also remains on schedule to complete the project in the time allotted. There are no outstanding issues or problems identified at this time.