HURRICANE/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
BY UTILIZING FLORIDA PUBLIC LIBRARIES:
NOVEMBER 1, 2008 QUARTERLY REPORT

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For

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In August 2008, the Information Use Management and Policy Institute (Information Institute) of Florida State University began work on the grant entitled *Improving Florida Public Libraries Hurricane/Disaster Preparedness and Response*. The grant is funded by the Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center (http://www.stormrisk.org) and began August 8, 2008. The grant runs for one year and ends July 31, 2009. This quarterly report provides an overview of activities completed and in progress from August 8, 2008 – November 1, 2008 and includes planned activities for the next quarter of the project (i.e. through February 1, 2009).

Overall, the goal of this project is to work with public librarians to better assist the residents of the state of Florida in preparing for and responding to hurricanes. Objectives to meet this goal conducted and/or initiated during the first quarter of the project 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; and
- Assess how libraries can best provide hurricane preparedness and response services in light of the available skills and capacities at the library as well as local conditions.

Data collection efforts related to the objectives above continues through December 15, 2008. Data analysis and web development efforts continue through the third quarter of the project (March 31, 2008).

Project Progress Overview

Organization Phase 8/1/8 to 9/30/8	
1.	Organize and staff (hire 2 graduate assistants)
2.	Review and refine project tasking
3.	Begin identification of relevant hurricane preparedness/response related information and services for web site and data collection
4.	Initiate project web site options (including initial web design, project description, and population)
5.	Identify in-state (and perhaps beyond) collaborators (state library staff, public librarians, government officials, and community groups) and successful public library hurricane preparers and responders as data collection sites.
6.	Plan and arrange site visits with public libraries, selected communities, local and state officials, and other experts (interviews & focus groups)
7.	Begin development of data collection instruments, interview and focus group scripts, and others as appropriate

Table 1: Organization phase tasks

Table one (above) identifies tasks associated with the organization phase of the project. The study team completed tasks one and two, organize and hire staff and review and refine project tasking. In addition, the study team initiated tasks 4 - 6. The project team created an initial design and is in the process of developing a test bed web site; identified and contacted project collaborators; and planned site visits. In addition, the study team developed data collection instruments (task 7).

	Data Collection Phase 10/1/08 to 12/15/08
1.	Annual FL Public Library Directors meeting Palm Beach – announce project and ask for assistance – initial data gathering event, October 15-17, 2008
2.	Pretest data collection instruments
3.	Continue website design and development
4.	Conduct interviews and focus groups at site visits with librarians, government and community officials, and others to gain enough data to develop draft descriptions, model plans, library roles, best practices, services, etc.
5.	Conduct paper and web-based surveys with librarians, government and community officials, and others to gain enough data to develop draft descriptions, model plans, library roles, best practices, services, etc.
6.	Conduct follow-up phone and e-mail interviews as needed
7.	Establish External Review Board (knowledgeable librarians, agency officials, and others to review proposed products)

Table 2: Data collection phase tasks

The Information Institute Director completed task one (table two above). The director presented an overview of the project at the annual Florida Public Library Director's meeting in Palm Beach Florida. In addition, the director promoted the project, identified potential interview and focus group participants, and identified potential sites for interviews and focus groups. The study team also completed task 2, pretests of data collection instruments; and task 3, website design and development, which is an ongoing task that will continue through the third quarter of the study.

For task 4, the study team initiated data collection efforts (i.e. conducting interviews and focus groups). The study team conducted interviews and focus groups in coastal states traditionally impacted by hurricanes. To date, data collection efforts occurred in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and across the Florida panhandle. The next phase of data collection efforts occurs in November 2008 at selected sites throughout the Florida peninsula (i.e. west coast, central Florida, east coast, and south Florida). In addition, the study team is currently analyzing data collected from the first round of interviews and focus groups.

Overview of Activities: First Quarter

During the first quarter, the study team conducted a number of activities to address the project tasks. This section presents a more detailed account of the task-related activities.

References and Resources

Activities related to references and resources include the location, identification, assessment, categorization, and annotation of relevant references and resources. Initial efforts to organize references and resources include:

1. Organization of references and resources by national, state, and local levels;
2. Organization of references and resources by projected audience, i.e. public library directors and staff; Florida citizens; and public officials, emergency response agencies and organizations, etc.; and
3. By time sequence for the lifecycle of hurricane preparedness that includes:
   a. Mitigation – assessments of a library's location, service capabilities, and structural design to assure it will continue to serve the community as an emergency command post; provide services to Florida citizens, emergency personnel, and others during emergency events; and to serve as rescue operation centers during disaster situations;
   b. Planning - level of readiness to address crises conditions that surround an emergency event, such as a hurricane;
   c. Response – preparation and implementation of procedures to respond to an emergency;
   d. Recovery – implement activities and/or procedures to recover from an emergency;
   e. Salvage and rebuilding – actions to repair the facility after an emergency event; and
   f. Feedback – capture lessons learned during a hurricane or emergency event for incorporation back into the hurricane preparedness lifecycle.

In addition, the study team is exploring various software applications for use in organizing collected references and resources and for use in searchable database applications.

Web Site Design and Implementation

The study team has designed and developed an initial project web site (i.e. test bed and not "live"). At this point, the site has placeholders for potential information areas such as:

1. About the Project that includes:
   a. Project documents, goals, objectives, and capabilities;
   b. About the project team;
   c. Directions to the Institute; and
   d. Talk to Us – an area for communication with the project team.
2. For Librarians that includes:
   a. Public Librarian Hurricane Desktop;
   b. Model Hurricane Plan;
   c. Potential Public Library Roles in hurricane preparedness and response;
   d. Talk to Us - an area for communication with the project team.
3. For Florida Citizens that includes:
   a. Library User Hurricane Desktop;
   b. Model Hurricane Plan; and
   c. Talk to Us - an area for communication with the project team.

4. For Public Officials that includes:
   a. Public Library Hurricane Roles; and
   b. Talk to Us - an area for communication with the project team.
5. Resources
6. Talk to Us - direct link to the general communication area for contact with the project team.
7. En Español
8. Download Plug-ins such as:
   a. Adobe Acrobat Reader; and
   b. Basic Real Player.

Some of the areas above, such as the "For Florida Citizens" have been populated with general information resources that include Web 2.0 applications such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for the presentation of spatial data (i.e. storm track applications, evacuation zones, etc.); sample of a hurricane preparedness toolkit, etc. These areas are still under development and will be modified as the study progresses. The study team will continue to develop and modify all web site areas as data collection activities of the project continue.

Additional Activities

Some additional ongoing activities include:

1. Project promotional efforts to increase awareness of the project, identify additional participants for focus groups and interviews, and to identify additional data collection opportunities that include:
   a. Ongoing project related blog posts to national and international librarian listservs such as:
      1) Solinet blog (http://www.solinet.net/News/Blogs.aspx) – listserv developed primarily for southern and northeastern coastal libraries;
      2) PubLib electronic discussion list (http://lists.webjunction.org/publib) – this is a national public library listserv; and
      3) Jesse listserv (http://web.utk.edu/~gwhitney/jesse.html) – international library listserv.
   b. Additional posts to librarian listservs, blogs, and newsletters through agencies/libraries such as:
      1) State library agencies;
      2) Library consortium/cooperatives; and
      3) Local level public libraries.
2. Research of existing hurricane preparedness infrastructure to gain a better understanding of interrelationships between national agencies and organizations, state agencies and organizations, county and local agencies and organizations, public libraries, and others.
3. GIS related activities, such as:
   a. Identify and assess potential GIS applications for inclusion in the web site from federal, state, independent organizations, and other online mapping sources;
   b. Collect available and relevant hurricane spatial data such as:
      1) Public library demographics;

    2) Hurricane tracks;
    3) Evacuation zones;
    4) Emergency operation centers;
    5) Public shelters, etc.
  c. Explore the potential future need for a public library hurricane spatial data geodatabase.

Detailed Next Steps

Ongoing next steps for the project include:

1. Continue with the organization of references and resources into categories for inclusion into the web site;
2. Design, implementation, and content development for the web site;
3. Data collection efforts;
4. Data analysis of data collection efforts;
5. Ongoing identification of collaborators (state library staff, public librarians and government officials, community groups) and successful public library hurricane preparers and responders to locate additional data collection sites and participants; and
6. Ongoing promotion of the project at conferences, meetings, and through the use of blogs, listservs, and newsletters;
7. Weekly meetings to discuss next steps, modifications/additions to web site, etc.; and
8. Once the web site is operational, ongoing usability, functionality, and accessibility testing of the web site.

In addition, the study team will establish an External Review Board to include knowledgeable librarians, agency officials, and others. During the third quarter of the project, responsibilities of the External Review Board include reviewing proposed draft project products, such as the web site, model plans, guidelines, recommendations, etc.

SUMMARY

For the past three months (August 8, 2008 – November 1, 2008), the study team organized the project and began data collection efforts that include:

1. Identified relevant hurricane preparedness/response related information and services for web site development and data collection efforts;
2. Initiated the development of the project web site;
3. Identified collaborators for data collection locations and participants;
4. Planned and arranged site visits;
5. Conducted data collection activities at State Library conferences and in public libraries across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the Florida panhandle;

In addition, the study team initiated data analysis efforts (transcribing) of data collected from focus groups and interviews.

For the next quarter, the study team will continue data collection and analysis activities. The study team will also continue designing, developing, and implementing the project web site. In addition, once the web site is operational, the study team will begin systematic assessments of the web site to assure the site is usable, useful, functional, and meets accessibility requirements so that all Florida citizens, public library staff, public officials, and others have full use of the site.

The study team has made substantial progress and remains on schedule to complete the project in the time allotted. There are no outstanding issues or problems identified at this time.