

Humanitarian Disaster Response with OpenStreetMap Management Tool



Scottish GIS company, thinkWhere, is playing a role in enabling the delivery of emergency response and aid to areas hit by natural and humanitarian crises. Working with HOT – the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team, thinkWhere has developed an advanced cloud-based mapping management system. Coordinating the work of tens of thousands of people around the world, the OSM (OpenStreetMap) Tasking Manager will improve the efficiency of map production, giving first responders and aid agencies faster access to up to date and accurate maps.

One of the world's most technically effective humanitarian groups, US-based HOT specialises in collaborative mapping for disaster preparation, response and recovery. HOT acts as the interface between the OpenStreetMap community, a collective of

volunteers that use aerial photography, satellite imagery and low tech field devices, such as GPS, to map features and infrastructure as well as people and events, and relief organisations.

HOT works alongside organisations such as the Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières and the World Bank and, as well as post disaster support, HOT is working to improve risk models and grow the OpenStreetMap community in countries such as Tanzania, Uganda, Liberia, Indonesia and Turkey.

The OSM Tasking Manager enhances mapper engagement with better communications and feedback, and easier validation of contributed data.

The relationship with HOT arose as a result of thinkWhere's association with its charity partner MapAction, an organisation that gathers crucial data at the scene of emergencies and natural disasters and conveys it visually to first responders and relief organisations.