Professional cultures and technology use

Early warning and other IT-based systems used for disaster management often depend on the sharing of knowledge across agencies and institutions and the success of this communication is dependent on the "professional culture" of disaster management organisations. Marincioni (for literature reference see original source document) has identified four cultural approaches to the application of IT to disaster communications, based on a survey of 96 US and Italian emergency management agencies, which may be useful theoretical lenses for other organisations to define and understand their own approaches, with regard to cultural factors. The study found that, depending on their perceptions of nature and technology, the DMAs' perceptions could be put into one of four cultural framings. These ranged from viewing IT as a panacea for communications and emergency management (the techno-centric perspective), to those who view it as merely gadgets (the eco-centric perspective). In between were the "geographic" and "anthropocentric" perspectives. Techno-centrics aim to control nature through infrastructure improvements and technical responses to impacts, with technology playing a central role. Eco-centrics rely less heavily on IT, prioritising interpersonal human resources instead, with the aim of helping communities adapt to natural cycles that result in disasters.

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: Norms/values, Customs/traditions/rituals, Local knowledge, Communication, Attitudes toward environmental issues

Disaster Phases: Response

Types of Actors Concerned: National civil protection body, Government, National research bodies, Red Cross, NGOs, Military, Law enforcement agencies, Healthcare and emergency services, European Civil Protection Mechanism, UN and other international organisations

Hazards: Natural hazards, Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations, Man-made intentional hazards

Recommendations:
- The use of new technologies (e.g. Bluetooth) can improve communication strategies in disaster management situations
- Use cultural factors to improve the effectiveness of disaster communication

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Source

Deliverable D7.3 "Report on cultural factors and citizen empowerment" (page 41)