



## The role of smartphone apps in disasters

Almost all participants, irrespective of their age, showed a strong interest in testing and using a mobile phone app specifically designed for disasters; only one participant explicitly rejected the idea to download and test such app. Generally, a “disaster app” was seen to be a convenient tool – “It’s easy to use” (G4-P2), “easy to access” (G7-P3), “it is always at hand” (G6-P8) – and it was also perceived to be safer than social media: “I trust apps more than social media. Social media can be abused” (G1-P7). Some younger participants though expressed their concern that “if we rely too much on apps or on technology, people aged seventy from Amatrice wouldn’t do anything” (G3-P1) but, more often, this stereotype was rejected by both younger and older participants: “I have a mobile which is new but I don’t use apps. But with this option I would start to use them, because I think it’s very useful” (G9-P9). An app was not only perceived to be an information source, but some participants also expressed their opinion that “it makes you keep things under control” (G6-P2) which may, in a disaster situation, have a positive psychological effect on victims. Additionally, a number of participants referred to such app as a “cultural tool”: “I feel quite confident, because Italians have always demonstrated altruism, we always help each other. This [app] could create more community. I would see it as something socially useful” (G1-P3). “It’s important [...] It puts you into connection with other people in the area, even if there isn’t that great a risk” (G8-P10). “This is part of the civic education that we don’t have, because with awareness, education and culture we can face or at least limit the damage from these events” (G10-P5). Here, the participants not only perceived the possible function of technology-based sociality, but they also imagined its contribution to the development of a “culture of preparedness” through common interest in the use of a new technology.

Note: See source document for full reference.

### Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Norms/values](#), [Worldviews](#), [Open-mindedness](#), [Communication](#), [Attitudes toward the media](#), [Social networks](#)

Disaster Phases: [Preparedness](#), [Response](#), [Recovery](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [National civil protection body](#), [Local authorities](#), [Non-active citizens](#), [Media](#), [Government](#), [Healthcare and emergency services](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)

### Recommendations:

- [Engage in activities and develop strategies aiming to improve trust between citizens and authorities](#)

## Source

[Deliverable D5.5 "Report on citizens' reactions and opinions: Citizen Summit 3 \(Italy\)" \(page 30\)](#)

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