TRACK: Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues (ELSI)

14th International Conference on INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR CRISIS RESPONSE AND MANAGEMENT

“AGILITY IS COMING”

Workshops and Doctoral Symposium May 21st, 2017
Conference May 22nd-24th, 2017

ALBI (FRANCE)
Ecole des Mines d’Albi-Carmaux

Organized by Ecole des Mines Albi-Carmaux on behalf of ISCRAM association.
INTRODUCTION TO THE TRACK

This track invites contributions that enhance understanding of Ethical, Legal and Social Issues (ELSI) around information and communication technology in crisis response and management. The aim is to inform careful innovation and practices. To do so, we seek papers that explore ELSI at the juncture of policy, technology, and communities or where social and organizational practices meet. This year specific focus is on “Agility in crisis management and response”. Agility is a challenge – crisis managers are facing difficulties due to an increasing amount of data in real time through emergent and existing technologies. Agility is an opportunity when engaging a response: it relies on socio-technical artefacts where practices and coordination between several types of actors constitutes a key aspect.

Ethical, Legal and Social Considerations of the Pursuit of Agility in Crisis Management

Enhanced agility through information and communication technologies promises many positive advancements (Harrald 2006, 2009; Mendonça et al. 2007). These include enhanced situation awareness, capacity for collaboration and emergent interoperability. It seems clear that ‘technology that provides the right information, at the right time, and in the right place has the potential to reduce disaster impacts’, not least by enhancing situation awareness (Koua et al 2010:255). More agility promises greater capacity for new partnerships (Scolobig et al. 2015; Chen et al. 2013) and more support for the articulation of work and the production and inhabiting of common information spaces (Bannon & Bodker 1997; Schmidt and Bannon 2015). It has the potential to mobilise measurement and help voice and align multiple perspectives (Kuchinskaya 2012; Plantin, 2011). Nevertheless, it remains important to question the concept of agility from an ELS perspective. Indeed, agility in itself can be part of a neoliberal hollowing out of disaster response traditions and philosophies, it can indicate an over-reliance and belief in technological fixes. Technology itself can be effective in supporting agility, but it cannot fix problems. More needs still to be done with regard to using technology ethically and while agility is taken as a given, it needs to be understood as a practice, an effect of practices.

From an ELS perspective, this raises numerous questions, including (but not limited to): The ambiguity behind the concept ‘agility’, What are the trade-offs in terms of agile information systems in relation to reliability and robustness, and stakeholders’ practices? What social implications does agility have? How might ethical, legal and social considerations “better” shape agility? How might we closely include ELS considerations when designing technology supporting agility? What experiences have practitioners and other actors directly involved in crisis management had in their pursuit for agility?
Following the crisis management cycle (prevention, preparation, response and recovery), contributions to this track are expected to focus, for instance, on: the ELS considerations raised by big data analytics increasingly used to foster agility (e.g., privacy issues, data protection), as well as the challenges raised by agility in terms of practices and collaboration between stakeholders or the emergence of new actors (e.g., citizens, volunteers, cross-border workflow, inter-organisation dynamics), lastly on designing technology for agility taking into account its ELS implications. Contributions seek to engender debate and to foster a ‘disclosive’ approach to ethical, legal and social issues (ELSI) and to enable an ELS reflexive approach to innovation (Büscher et al 2015, Liegl et al 2016, Rizza, Büscher & Watson, 2016).

Since 2013, we have been involved in the organization of the track Ethical, Legal and Social Issues. This track has been an important means to meet with colleagues from different backgrounds (academics, researchers, practitioners, etc.) and scientific fields, and to discuss ethical, legal and social implications of information technologies in crisis management as “tools” but also “in practices”. The quality of the presentations of this track have been recognized through their publication in two special issues in the IJISCRAM (Büscher, Lieg, Rizza and Watson, 2015) and the Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management (Rizza, Büscher, and Watson, forthcoming 2016). We hope this year will be the occasion for us to chair this track, to propose new formats (for instance, one or two “round tables” with practitioners to introduce the ELSI session(s) and support constructive discussions with the attendants.

**TRACK TOPICS**

Track topics include, but are not limited to investigations into theories and practices of:

- The social, ethical and/or legal trade-off for agility in information systems for crisis management
- Critiques of the concept of agility from an ethical, legal and/or social perspective
- Data protection, transformations of privacy, privacy preserving technologies
- Cultural and social aspects of information practices and information sharing
- Testimonials of the trade-off for agility from those directly involved in crisis management activities

**REFERENCES**


Organized by [Ecole des Mines Albi-Carmaux](http://www.minesalbi-carmaux.fr) on behalf of ISCRAM association.
AUTHORS AND REVIEWERS RECRUITEMENT

As the ELSI track has been running since 2013, we have access to reviewers interested in the work and eager to participate in reviewing and authoring papers in this field. Furthermore, as time has progressed, so too has the reputation of the ELSI track and we are witnessing the growth in the interest of ELSI considerations across the ISCRAM community. In order to recruit additional reviewers and authors, the track chairs will advertise the track across their networks using: JISC mailing lists, EU project involvement, social media and mailing lists.

TRACK CHAIR AND CO-CHAIR

As stated above, since 2013, we have been involved in the organization of the Ethical, Legal and Social Issues track. Both track chairs have been involved in the track since 2013. In previous years, the track has had 3-4 track chairs. In 2015 it was decided to split this effort into two teams, each taking a turn to run the ELSI track – thereby splitting the cost and effort, whilst maintaining standards. In 2015/2016, the track was managed by Prof. Monika Büscher and Dr. Katrina Paterson. This year it is the turn of Dr. Caroline Rizza and Dr. Hayley Watson. Dr. Rizza and Dr. Watson have been involved in chairing the ELSI track on two occasions in 2012/2013, and 2014/2015. They both plan to attend ISCRAM 2017. Track chairs from previous years have been involved in reviewing the application and will look forward to assisting efforts as reviewers and authors.

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