



# HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

*Milestones of the Past*

- 100 YEARS -

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# Humanitarian Information Management of the Past 100 years

This document is part of a personal research project to investigate the evolution of Humanitarian Information Management starting from the time of the League of Nations, when the International Relief Union (IRU) was founded, until the OCHA we know today. The specific aim of this paper is to identify **significant milestones**, providing a framework for future study into the related stories and the innovation behind them.

Although the focus will be on the League of Nations (IRU) and the United Nations (UNDRO, DHA, and OCHA), the list includes innovations involving other organizations when they influenced the wider humanitarian IM discipline. This research does not cover PeaceKeeping, Human Rights, Mine Action, or agency-specific milestones except when they are a clear first in the humanitarian sector.

I hope this research helps current and future IM professionals retrace the origins of the tools and practices they use every day. By understanding our shared history, we can better appreciate the 100 years of progress that have built our professional community.

## Pre-1923

While my research focuses on the last century of progress, the roots of modern humanitarian information management (IM) can be traced back to several pivotal moments that fundamentally changed how humanity views and responds to crises.

### **The Birth of the Modern Disaster: Lisbon, 1755<sup>1</sup>**

The Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755 is often cited as the world's first "modern" disaster. Occurring during the Enlightenment, it sparked a move away from viewing catastrophes solely as divine punishment toward seeking natural, scientific explanations. Crucially for the IM discipline, this shift led to the systematic collection and study of data - records that remain available in archives today - marking one of the first times a disaster was treated as a data-driven event to be analyzed.

### **The Origins of Spatial Analysis: John Snow, 1854<sup>2 3</sup>**

A century later, John Snow's mapping of the Broad Street Cholera Outbreak in 1854 provided a masterclass in operational IM. By visualizing the relationship between location and infection, Snow pioneered the use of spatial analysis in humanitarian response. This "first use of GIS" demonstrated how structured data and visualization could identify the root cause of a crisis and direct life-saving interventions.

### **Tragedies of Scale and Evolution<sup>4 5</sup>**

Before the 20th century, the sheer scale of disasters was often defined by geography and infrastructure, such as the 1556 Shaanxi earthquake in China which is often considered the deadliest in human history, claiming an estimated 833,000 lives in a single day. As we entered the 20th century, the nature of these crises began to evolve. While the 1906–1907 Chinese famine was a result of natural flooding, the subsequent decades saw the rise of man-made famines, such as the Great Chinese Famine (1958–1962), where policy and politics replaced weather as the primary driver of catastrophe.

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<sup>1</sup> The Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755, Everything Everywhere Daily podcast, 3 August 2021; Accessed 22 April 2026 ([PDF](#))

<sup>2</sup> John Snow and the Broad Street Cholera Outbreak of 1854, Everything Everywhere Daily podcast, 16 October 2022; Accessed 22 April 2026 ([PDF](#))

<sup>3</sup> *On the mode of communication of cholera (page 45)* by John Snow, 1854 ([PDF](#))

<sup>4</sup> The Worst Day in Human History: January 23, 1556, Everything Everywhere Daily podcast, 21 January 2025; Accessed 22 April 2026 ([PDF](#))

<sup>5</sup> A History of Famines, Everything Everywhere Daily podcast, 14 January 2025; Accessed 22 April 2026 ([PDF](#))

## Professionalizing Humanitarian Information Management

While these historical events defined the early principles of data and mapping, the formalization of the discipline began in earnest during the League of Nations era. The list below tracks this professional journey, highlighting the markers that have shaped our community over the last 100 years.

Year	Milestones
1923	<p>Raoul Montandon proposes the creation of a single global (colored) map of natural disaster zones<sup>6</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Black and white maps were included in the proposal<sup>7</sup></li><li>• After a few years of discussions, the map was never produced or printed. Rational: <i>The execution of a single color map on which all calamities would be plotted would require very expensive reproduction processes, so it was necessary to forego it for economic reasons and give a series of separate black and white maps</i><sup>8</sup></li></ul>
1924	<p>First publication of the journal <i>Matériaux pour l'étude des calamités</i><sup>9</sup></p>
1927	<p>Adoption of the Convention establishing the International Relief Union (IRU)<sup>10</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aims: In major <i>disasters</i>, the exceptional gravity of which exceeds the powers and resources of the stricken people, furnish <i>first aid</i> and assemble funds, resources and <i>assistance</i> of all kinds; in any public disaster, coordinate efforts made by relief organizations; encourage study of <i>preventive</i> measures against disasters and induce all peoples to render mutual international assistance</li></ul> <p>Dr. Laura H. Martin creates a 32 square foot thematic map of the League of Nations<sup>11</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The most significant feature is her use of color and shading to differentiate different nations' relationship to the organization. She distinguishes five levels of status: member nations, areas under League mandate (former German colonies and certain Ottoman provinces), nations not in the League (including the United States), those not in the League but cooperating unofficially (again, including the United States), and those that have signed but not ratified the League Covenant (the United States again). The map is complemented by several tables,</li></ul>

<sup>6</sup> A propos du projet Ciralo. Une carte mondiale de distribution géographique des calamités, Raoul Montandon, Revue Internationale de la Croix Rouge, April 1923 ([PDF](#))

<sup>7</sup> Montandon's Black and White maps from 1923 by calamity type - from A propos du projet Ciralo. Une carte mondiale de distribution géographique des calamités ([PDF](#))

<sup>8</sup> A propos du projet Ciralo. Une carte mondiale de distribution géographique des calamités, Raoul Montandon, Revue Internationale de la Croix Rouge, April 1923 - note on p. 273 ([PDF](#))

<sup>9</sup> Bibliographie. Etudes de Calamités, made available by the International Review of the Red Cross ([PDF](#))

<sup>10</sup> Convention establishing an International Relief Union, 12 July 1927; Accessed on 18 September 2023 ([PDF](#)); Treaty Series - League of Nations 1923-1933; Accessed on 18 September 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>11</sup> The League of Nations 1927 map by Dr. Laura H. Martin ([JPG](#))

Year	Milestones
	including one listing member and non-member nations and comparing their relative populations <sup>12</sup>
1931	<p>Yangtze river floods (China): Perhaps one of the worst ever natural disasters<sup>13</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flooding of 180,000 square kilometers of land. This is the equivalent to most of the island of Great Britain or the states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut combined</li> <li>• Fatalities have been estimated to be as high as 4,000,000 people</li> </ul> <p>First aerial assessment: Charles and Anne Lindbergh conduct aerial reconnaissance and imagery in response to the Yangtze–Huai River floods (China)<sup>14</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led to the identification of millions of more affected</li> <li>• Delivered aid over the coming days<sup>15</sup></li> </ul>
1938	First publication of the <i>Revue pour l'étude des calamités</i> <sup>16</sup>
1971	<p>Creation of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO)<sup>17</sup></p> <p><i>Space Between the Words</i> documentary is put together by the BBC<sup>18</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ECOSOC negotiations that led to the creation of UNDRO highlight the issue that many countries and agencies were concerned with the extent to which UNDRO would have controlled their actions</li> <li>• The use of the term “<i>direct</i>”, eventually included in the resolution, is heavily discouraged by British diplomats as they found it too strong and intrusive; they suggest the use of “<i>mobilize</i>”, “<i>coordinate</i>” or “<i>instruct</i>”. The US is a strong supporter of the more encompassing “<i>direct</i>”</li> </ul>
1973	UNDRO establishes the Information Clearing Centre (section) <sup>19</sup>
1974	<p>UNDRO launches the development of a “<i>data bank</i>”<sup>20</sup> containing:<sup>21</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on all developing countries concerning disaster preparedness and all matters relating to eventual relief operations</li> <li>• An index of all potential donors and other sources of such relief supplies, equipment and services</li> <li>• An index of all other pertinent and miscellaneous information</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Mammoth League of Nations map from 1927 for sale by Boston Rare Maps, Accessed 18 September 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>13</sup> The Yangtze River, Everything Everywhere Daily podcast, 27 October 2023; Accessed 24 May 2024 ([PDF](#))

<sup>14</sup> Lindberghs Chart Flood Area in China, 22 September 1931, The New York Times; Accessed 18 September 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>15</sup> Famished Chinese Imperil Lindbergh; He Escapes in Plane, 27 September 1931, The New York Times ([PDF](#))

<sup>16</sup> Coup d'œil sur la Société de Géographie de Genève de 1908 à 1933, Egmond Goegg, Le Globe. Revue genevoise de géographie, 1933 ([PDF](#))

<sup>17</sup> UN Resolution 2816, 6th December 1971 ([PDF](#))

<sup>18</sup> *Space Between Words - Diplomacy* by BBC, 1971; Accessed 25 April 2026 ([YouTube](#))

<sup>19</sup> Function of the UNDRO Information Clearing Centre and duties of its officers, 2 April 1973 ([PDF](#))

<sup>20</sup> Evaluation of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, 1980, Mark E. Allen, Zakaria Sibahi, and Earl D. Sohm ([PDF](#))

<sup>21</sup> Function of the UNDRO Information Clearing Centre and duties of its officers, 2 April 1973 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
1975	<p>General Assembly agrees to strengthen UNDRO and calls on the SG to strengthen the office's capacity "including the collection and dissemination of information on disaster assessment, priority needs and donor assistance"<sup>22</sup></p> <p>UNDRO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starts UNDRO News<sup>23</sup></li> <li>• Purchases two portable, high-frequency radio sets for \$90,000<sup>24</sup></li> <li>• Continuously reviews the possible use of transportable earth station satellite equipment<sup>25</sup></li> </ul> <p>World Survey of Disaster Damage is launched by UNDRO to obtain quantitative data as part of a project to create an International Strategy for Disaster Prevention. The project is never completed<sup>26</sup></p>
1976	<p>UNDRO sets up a dedicated Registry Unit<sup>27</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNOG was not able to provide a rapid or responsive service to the type of work UNDRO was doing</li> </ul>
1977	<p>UNDRO sets up dedicated Telecoms room and team<sup>28</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SitReps were 20 metres of telex ribbon<sup>29</sup> and UNOG Telecom found it bothersome and annoying to send them. So, UNDRO had to setup their own team</li> </ul> <p>UNDRO sets out the Terms of Reference for their own Registry and Mail Unit<sup>30</sup></p> <p>UNDRO introduces a standard Subject Classification scheme<sup>31</sup></p> <p>ATLANTIS<sup>32</sup> - a computer-aided exercise/game for disaster relief management - is launched by Lt. Col. G. N. Ritchie (of the Royal Military College) after 3 years of development by IBM<sup>33</sup>. It seems the founder approached UNDRO several times over the years<sup>34</sup>, but it is unclear if UNDRO ever used the solution</p>
1978	<p>UNDRO starts to see the potential for computers to compose messages<sup>35</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The messages were composed and then printed on Telex ribbon for sending</li> </ul>

<sup>22</sup> Strengthening of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, UN. General Assembly (29th sess. : 1974-1975), 1975 - A\_RES\_3243(XXIX)-EN; Accessed 22 May; [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> Evaluation of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, 1980, Mark E. Allen, Zakaria Sibahi, and Earl D. Sohm [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>24</sup> Evaluation of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, 1980, Mark E. Allen, Zakaria Sibahi, and Earl D. Sohm [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> Evaluation of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, 1980, Mark E. Allen, Zakaria Sibahi, and Earl D. Sohm [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>26</sup> World Survey of Disaster Damage: Rapport d'activité, UNDRO, 03.12.1975 [\(PDF\)](#); Achievements of UNDRO, Geneva 29.08.1978 [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>27</sup> Interviewee 01, May 2023

<sup>28</sup> Interviewee 01, May 2023

<sup>29</sup> Interviewee 01, May 2023

<sup>30</sup> UNDRO Registry and Mail Unit - 30 March 1977 [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>31</sup> Introduction of the Subject Classification Manual - 25 August 1977 [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>32</sup> ATLANTIS - A Disaster Simulation Exercise for Training Purposes by Lieutenant Colonel G.N. Ritchie in the Emergency Planning Digest - January-March 1983 [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>33</sup> The use of computer simulations as a training aid within command courses at the police staff college in Bramshill England - by Chief Superintendent D. J. O'Dowd - June 1981 [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>34</sup> Mission Report by Giles Whitcomb 24-28 June 1985 to Oxford - Shrivenham and London [\(PDF\)](#)

<sup>35</sup> Interviewee 01, May 2023

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangement of computers was done with UNICC (who were in the basement of WHO at the time)</li> </ul> <p>UNDRO introduces <i>Rules for Correspondence</i> which included a note that all internal communication was to be in English<sup>36</sup></p> <p>First global navigation satellite system launched by the United States called the Global Positioning System (GPS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1982 - Russia: Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS)</li> <li>• 2000 - China: BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BeiDou)</li> <li>• 2011 - European Union: Galileo</li> <li>• Ability to leverage these constellations for GIS purposes has a large impact on the humanitarian sector and mapping<sup>37</sup></li> <li>• Smart phones now use these for 'exact' locations<sup>38</sup></li> </ul>
1979	<p><i>Natural Disasters and Vulnerability Analysis</i> outlines data needed by disaster type<sup>39</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This may have been a precursor to the first Global Assessment Report (GAR) by UNDRR (then ISDR) in 2009, which was itself the basis for the INFORM analytical framework<sup>40</sup></li> </ul>
1980	<p>UNDRO holds the first Inter-Organization Meeting for Information Interchange to share information about the use of computers in disaster preparedness, prevention, and relief<sup>41</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceived as the first step towards inter-organizational exchange of data<sup>42</sup></li> </ul> <p>UNDRO using an IBM mainframe, managed by UN International Computing Centre (ICC)</p> <p>UNDRO connects to the ICC by means of a remote video display terminal ('VDU') in the UNDRO Co-ordination Centre<sup>43</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICC has an IBM 3033 computer with 12 megabytes of main memory, 30 disc drives for auxiliary memory, and 12 magnetic tape drives</li> <li>• ICC also has an IBM 370/158 computer with 4 MB memory</li> </ul> <p>UNDRO uses these computers to run the 'SENDTLX' programme allowing a Telex, composed on the VDU screen using Wylbur Text Editing System, to be sent to as many as 150 addresses automatically<sup>44</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily used to send UNDRO Sit Reps</li> <li>• Connected to UN's computerized message switching system (UNMESS II)</li> </ul>

<sup>36</sup> Office Rules for Correspondence - Memorandum - 31 March 1978 ([PDF](#))

<sup>37</sup> Interviewee 02, August 2023

<sup>38</sup> Interviewee 02, August 2023

<sup>39</sup> Natural Disasters and Vulnerability Analysis - Report of Expert Group Meeting, 1979, Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) ([PDF](#))

<sup>40</sup> Written Respondent 01 received 17 March 2023

<sup>41</sup> UNDRO correspondence, 31 October 1980; other meetings are held in 1981 and 1982 ([PDF](#))

<sup>42</sup> Report on Inter-organization Meeting for Information Interchange, UNDRO, 11 November 1980 ([PDF](#))

<sup>43</sup> Report on Inter-organization Meeting for Information Interchange, UNDRO, 11 November 1980 ([PDF](#))

<sup>44</sup> Report on Inter-organization Meeting for Information Interchange, UNDRO, 11 November 1980 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
	<p>UNDRO computer systems:<sup>45</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDCON: a computer system that processes and print contributions (including summaries) made for a given disaster</li> <li>• UNDSORT: prints reports of contributions by type of aid item (e.g. food, shelter) and by type of organization (govt, NGO, etc)</li> <li>• UNDPRI: prints the input to UNDCON and UNDSORT</li> <li>• Directory: contains practical and administrative information useful in a disaster</li> <li>• Disaster Alert List: contains basic information on disasters as soon as they occur</li> <li>• Sitrep Data Sets: prints reports containing all situations reports produced by UNDRO</li> <li>• Meeting List: contains all UNDRO Coordination Centre meetings</li> <li>• Phone List: contains the phone numbers of all UNDRO staff</li> <li>• Monthly Conference List: contains all conferences that may be of interest to staff</li> </ul> <p>UNDRO Data Bank contains a map library</p>
1981	<p>Disaster History Database was built on index cards by UNDRO<sup>46</sup></p>
1982	<p>Mobile Disaster Units (MDU)<sup>47</sup> - first meeting held in Geneva</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How/who conducts primary assessments</li> <li>• Sharing of information for Sit Reps</li> </ul> <p>UNDRO establishes a Relief Co-ordination and Information Center in Chad in collaboration with their <i>Ministère de la lutte contre les calamités</i><sup>48</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swiss Government Disaster Relief Unit (SDRU) involved</li> </ul> <p>University of Wisconsin-Madison Disaster Management Center (UWDMC) begins offering a Disaster Management Diploma<sup>49</sup> in conjunction with UNDP and UNDRO<sup>50 51</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UWDMC was part of the Department of Engineering Professional Development, College of Engineering</li> <li>• First <i>Disaster management Training Programme</i> Trainers Workshop was held in March 1982</li> </ul>

<sup>45</sup> Report on Inter-Organization Meeting for Information Interchange, UNDRO, 11 March 1981 ([PDF](#))

<sup>46</sup> Interviewee 03, May 2023

<sup>47</sup> MDU was defined by UNDRO as "an organized group, whether governmental or non-governmental, which stands ready to engage itself in relief activities, at disaster sites outside its country of origin"

<sup>48</sup> The 'RICSU' Concept: Computers that ease human misery, UNDRO News, July/August 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>49</sup> UWDMC website accessed on 25 August 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Kaz (Kazuhide) Kuroda on 29 March 2023

<sup>51</sup> DMTP Trainers Workshop - University of Wisconsin-Madison - certificate for Kaz Kuroda - March 1992 ([PDF](#))

## Year

## Milestones

# 1984

UNDRO procures a special telephone system in France, for their emergency system, as the Swiss system can only connect 11 phones<sup>52</sup>

UNDRO experiments with Argos transmitter in disaster relief operations<sup>53 54</sup>

- The device weighs 8 kg, is powered by six 4.5 V batteries, has a keyboard with 10 numeric and six control keys and a 256 bit message length. It is carried in an aluminum suitcase. Messages, once entered, are broadcast once every 55 sec until one of two NOAA satellites passes overhead, receives the message, imprints it with a nearest equator-crossing time stamp, and relays it when passing over a NOAA ground station

UNDRO installs a system of pigeon holes to help streamline delivery of documents<sup>55</sup>

UNDRO begins a two year project, leveraging personal computers and Lotus 123, to try to track and match needs with contributions. After 2 years, a proof-of-concept was in place, but input (needs) and reporting (contribution) delays meant the project did not advance<sup>56</sup>

Second meeting on Mobile Disaster Units held in Geneva<sup>57</sup>

- UNDRO has a repository of data base profiles of MDUs, including their past activities, and acts as a point of reference for information sharing among MDUs
- Information was collected in the field by a small team and then transmitted by radio to Switzerland prior to the departure of the full mission (Swiss Disaster Relief Unit)
- The UNDRO Data Bank contains copies of disaster emergency plans for approximately forty countries. These are reflected in country profiles drawn up by UNDRO

Indonesia: UNDRO's *Strengthening Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Management in Indonesia* project formulation missions recommends:<sup>58</sup>

- Integrated Disaster Communications and Information Flow Management System
- Establishment of a National Disaster Management Institute
- Compilation of a Disaster Management Organization and Procedures Handbook, and
- Establishment of an integrated risk monitoring mechanism

<sup>52</sup> UNDRO secretarial meeting notes, Geneva 19 November 1984 - retrieved from UN archives on 15.03.2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>53</sup> UNDRO/CNES experiments in the use of an Argos transmitter in disaster relief operations, Harvard Astrophysics Data System - SciX Transition Resources, Accessed 25 April 2026 ([PDF](#))

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Kaz (Kazuhide) Kuroda on 29 March 2023

<sup>55</sup> UNDRO secretarial meeting notes, Geneva 05 November 1984 - retrieved from UN archives on 16.03.2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Kaz (Kazuhide) Kuroda on 29 March 2023

<sup>57</sup> Final Report on the International Meeting on Mobile Disaster Units, 22-24 May 1984, UNDRO ([PDF](#))

<sup>58</sup> Preparedness Mission of Giles Whitcomb - PHI-INS-ASEAN - January 1985 ([PDF](#))

## Year

## Milestones

# 1985

FEWS.NET (Famine Early System) is created by USAID<sup>59</sup>

- Now used for food insecurity warning
- A precursor of IPC - Integrated Phase Coordination<sup>60</sup>

Mexico City earthquake: deployment team from UNDRRO rarely leaves the hotel room. Watched TV news and read local newspapers to develop reports for Geneva<sup>61</sup>

- Greatly influenced the early concept of the future UNDAC team
- Situation reports were drafted and published by Geneva. Clear frustration of how little input was included from the field (submitted to HQ by telex)<sup>62</sup>
- Communication by Telex was challenging. Often garbled to the point they would joke with either other:
  - *"But unfortunately it's garbled again. Best hand type it old man"*<sup>63</sup>
- "UNDRRO had little in the way of co-ordination activities to offer to Mexico City. Its primary purpose during this disaster was the dissemination of information to the press, the public and the donors."<sup>64</sup>
- Suggestion from UNDRRO deployee that UNDRRO acquire the same radio as used by PAHO to improve future emergency communications. The radio weighed about 15 kilos, could be operated with a car battery and reached anywhere in the world via satellite. Approximate cost of US\$ 2,000<sup>65</sup>
- Given significant unnecessary aid and the belief that donors send aid spontaneously before consideration of needs assessment, it was suggested that a list could be distributed to donors describing relief needs according to country and potential disaster. And, that UNDRRO could work to educate donors on the importance of determining needs before making contributions<sup>66</sup>
- Mission summary mentioned that "...with the efforts UNDRRO has been making responding to long-term disasters in Africa, the Office may have lost some of its ability to react and respond to short-term disasters such as the Mexico earthquake" It was recommended that UNDRRO begin to make adjustments to better prepare itself for this type of disaster<sup>67</sup>

UNDRRO installs a computer terminal (WANG<sup>68</sup>) in New York so as to provide immediate two-way communication of data and documents between UNDRRO Headquarters in Geneva and the New York Liaison Office<sup>69</sup>

<sup>59</sup> FEWS Website - About Us, accessed on 25 April 2026 ([PDF](#)); Interviewee 04, March 2023

<sup>60</sup> Written Respondent 01 received 24 March 2023

<sup>61</sup> Interviewee 05, June 2023

<sup>62</sup> Report of Mission for Mexico earthquake by Julio C Grieco on 11 December 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>63</sup> Telexes sent from Mexico City during the mission - See Annex 1 of Report of Mission for Mexico earthquake by Julio C Grieco on 11 December 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>64</sup> Mexico Earthquake Debriefing in UNDRRO Coordination Room in Geneva on 12 November 1985; Notes by Timothy Lake; See Annex 2 of Report of Mission for Mexico earthquake by Julio C Grieco on 11 December 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>65</sup> Mexico Earthquake Debriefing in UNDRRO Coordination Room in Geneva on 12 November 1985; Notes by Timothy Lake; See Annex 2 of Report of Mission for Mexico earthquake by Julio C Grieco on 11 December 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>66</sup> Mexico Earthquake Debriefing in UNDRRO Coordination Room in Geneva on 12 November 1985; Notes by Timothy Lake; See Annex 2 of Report of Mission for Mexico earthquake by Julio C Grieco on 11 December 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>67</sup> Mexico Earthquake Debriefing in UNDRRO Coordination Room in Geneva on 12 November 1985; Notes by Timothy Lake; See Annex 2 of Report of Mission for Mexico earthquake by Julio C Grieco on 11 December 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>68</sup> Interviewee 06, April 2023

<sup>69</sup> UNDRRO at work, UNDRRO News, January/February 1985 ([PDF](#))

## Year

## Milestones

- Geneva had two WANG computers - one in the Office of the Director and one in the Officer of Administration<sup>70</sup>

Relief Information and Coordination Support Unit (RICSU) established by UNDRO in collaboration with the Sudanese government<sup>71 72</sup>

- Two micro-computers that were connected by modem to UNDRO's mainframe in Geneva
- Software adapted to (1) manage data on international relief contributions, (2) enable word processing to update and disseminate operational information, and (3) transmit computerized data to Geneva
- Located in Sudan's Department of Social Welfare; UK funded
- Setup by Giles Whitcomb, Consolidation: Nicolas Russell, Development: Tony Hughes

UNDRO has three people in Geneva managing multiple telex machines to handle incoming messages and news<sup>73</sup>

- Outgoing messages were put into a computer application and the telex then sent
- A special 'beep' would mean someone was online and a response could be sent immediately
- UNOG handled emergency messages at nights and weekends; UNOG would reach out to UNDRO Duty Officer
- Staff used "Le TUBE" (Pneumatic Tube) to send messages around the office. If something was labeled '6', it would automatically go to the Coordination Centre, land loudly in a big plastic bin and be treated urgently<sup>74</sup>

UNDRO managed a contacts database of major press agencies and newspapers. SitReps were sent to this list in order to inform press of actions taken by UNDRO and needs<sup>75</sup>

OEOA (Office for Emergency Operations in Africa) and UNDRO jointly create an Information Processing Unit<sup>76</sup>

- OEOA established a working Group for which UNDRO was providing the leading input of emergency data<sup>77</sup>

## 1986

UNDRO settles on the idea of (just) tracking financial transactions. This work eventually led to the modern day Financial Tracking Service<sup>78</sup>

UNDRO establishes a local data management system in Mozambique<sup>79</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Interviewee 06, April 2023

<sup>71</sup> The 'RICSU' Concept: Computers that ease human misery, UNDRO News, July/August 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>72</sup> UNDRO Mission Report - Sudan Drought Emergency - June, 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>73</sup> Interviewee 06, April 2023

<sup>74</sup> Interviewee 06, April 2023; Written Respondent 02 received 11 April 2023

<sup>75</sup> Interviewee 06, April 2023

<sup>76</sup> OEOA/UNDRO Note, 1 Feb 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>77</sup> OEOA correspondence, 29 January 1985 ([PDF](#))

<sup>78</sup> Interviewee 07, March 2023

<sup>79</sup> Interviewee 07, March 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p>Agencies are starting to use Lotus 123 to track, but not match, needs and contributions<sup>80</sup></p> <p>UNDRO's Bibliographical data base is considered complete. The Master Distribution and Country Profile data bases are still in progress<sup>81</sup></p>
1987	<p>Office for Research and Collection of Information (ORCI), part of UNDRO, establishes an early warning system<sup>82</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It ran for 5 years, but was not popular with the member states as they thought the UN was keeping secrets<sup>83</sup></li> <li>• Intentions: monitor global trends; geographical profiles; early-warning; maintain information in data systems and data banks; monitor factors affecting refugee flow, and ad hoc needs assessments<sup>84</sup></li> </ul> <p>Internet: In Ethiopia, the Resident Representative (RR), Deputy RR, and Chief of Emergency Prevention &amp; Preparedness note that it will have major impacts on their work and information sharing.<sup>85</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The field expected they would be directed by HQ: <i>"with this internet stuff, we are going to lose all control over our field offices"</i></li> </ul>
1988	<p>Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) launched by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED)<sup>86</sup></p> <p>UNDRO launches the International Disaster Management Information Network - UNDRONET<sup>87</sup></p> <p>UNDRO creates the United Nations International Emergency Network, UNIENET<sup>88</sup></p> <p>UNDRO's computerized system for worldwide distribution of disaster situation reports (SITREPS) improves from some 50,000 copies sent in 1984-1985 to approximately 65,000 in 1987-1988<sup>89</sup></p> <p>Armenia Earthquake response leads to the eventual creation of UNDAC and INSARAG<sup>90</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultants were hired to develop the concept &amp; first trainings</li> </ul>

<sup>80</sup> Interviewee 07, March 2023

<sup>81</sup> UNDRO at work, UNDRO News, January/February 1986 ([PDF](#))

<sup>82</sup> ST SGB 225 - Creation of the Office for Research and Collection of Information, 1 March 1987, Accessed 25 April 2026 ([PDF](#))

<sup>83</sup> Interviewee 08, March 2023

<sup>84</sup> ST SGB 225 - Creation of the Office for Research and Collection of Information, 1 March 1987, Accessed 25 April 2026 ([PDF](#))

<sup>85</sup> Interviewee 09, March 2023

<sup>86</sup> EM-DAT Website, accessed on 26 April 2026 ([PDF](#))

<sup>87</sup> ECOSOC Second regular session, 1 June 1988 ([PDF](#))

<sup>88</sup> The involvement of the United Nations System in Providing And Coordinating Humanitarian Assistance - Erica-Irene Does - Joint Inspection Unit - 1995 ([PDF](#))

<sup>89</sup> ECOSOC Second regular session, 1 June 1988 ([PDF](#))

<sup>90</sup> Interviewee 05, June 2023

Year	Milestones
1990	<p>General Assembly designates the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction<sup>91</sup></p> <p>Early 1990s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDR0/DHA field reports were submitted to HQ by satellite phones (C-band) or fax (if available)<sup>92</sup></li> <li>• Laptops are introduced in the field making IM work more portable<sup>93</sup></li> </ul>
1991	<p>UN General Assembly adopts resolution 46/182 creating the blueprint for today's international humanitarian system.<sup>94 95</sup> Results in the creation of things (directly and indirectly) such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Response Coordinator position</li> <li>• Inter-Agency Standing Committee</li> <li>• Central Emergency Response Fund</li> <li>• Consolidated Appeals Process</li> <li>• UNDAC</li> <li>• ReliefWeb</li> <li>• Financial Tracking Service, etc.</li> </ul> <p>Coded fax machines, in a secure basement room of the Palais, used to send information to UNDR0 in Iraq<sup>96</sup></p> <p>UNDR0 recognizes the increasing importance of managing information/data and its increasing speed in <i>UNDR0 in the 1990s - The role and the plan - An Overview</i>. They also correctly predict the scale of future disasters<sup>97</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key area of UNDR0's work: Information exchange, awareness raising and transfer of knowledge on disaster-related matters</li> <li>• UNDR0 recognizes that disasters are changing as a result of things like climate change. They expect to see more frequent mega-disasters (i.e. disasters with tens of thousands of victims and costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars). And that global awareness will be high and immediate given the speed and ubiquity of communication which will greatly strengthen the dissemination and impact of media reports</li> <li>• UNDR0 plans to establish a 24-hour Operations Center which will facilitate the inclusion of staff of other agencies. Aim is to give key international actors access to real or near-real time information for operational decision making</li> </ul> <p>UNDR0 launches SEISMED, an initiative involving all Mediterranean countries aimed at collecting local seismic vulnerability assessments and turning them into disaster management plans<sup>98</sup></p>

<sup>91</sup> International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) Correspondence, 11 January 1994 ([PDF](#))

<sup>92</sup> Interviewee 10, March 2023

<sup>93</sup> Interviewee 11 mentioned the Red Cross sending laptops in 1992/93, March 2023

<sup>94</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 46-184 - Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations - 1991 ([PDF](#))

<sup>95</sup> OCHA on Message: General Assembly resolution 46/182 [EN/AR], 1 March 2012 ([PDF](#))

<sup>96</sup> Interviewee 12, March 2023

<sup>97</sup> UNDR0 in the 1990s - The role, the plan: An Overview - October 1991 ([PDF](#))

<sup>98</sup> DHA/UNDR0 fax, 08 June 1992 ([PDF](#)); UNDR0 correspondence, 05 February 1992 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was born from a 1985 seminar on UNDR0’s approach on seismic reduction</li> <li>• It aimed at building an “information (data) base” from questionnaires on seismic vulnerability distributed to experts from Mediterranean countries</li> <li>• Results were used in 3 workshops conducted over the period 1990-1992</li> </ul> <p>UNDR0 becomes the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA)<sup>99</sup></p> <p>Geographical Information System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHA uses GIS in Mozambique, collaborating with other agencies and NGOs<sup>100</sup></li> <li>• Cambodia Mine Action (CMAC) leveraging GIS to map mine files<sup>101</sup></li> </ul> <p>Project IERRIS (International Emergency Readiness and Response Information System) initiated by UNDR0/DHA Geneva<sup>102</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abandoned by 1995 after a cost of at least \$0.5 million<sup>103</sup></li> <li>• Becomes basis for HCWEB (1995)</li> </ul> <p>Financial Tracking Service launched by DHA<sup>104</sup></p> <p>UNHCR Cambodia ordered SPOT (satellite) imagery to identify overgrown agricultural land in hopes to give it to returning refugees<sup>105</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagery captured, but not used as intended as the project had not thought through the factors of who owned the land previously and what would happen when sending refugees to mined land</li> </ul> <p>IFRC started typing up their refugee cards in the field which could be faxed to HQ resulting in fewer transcription errors.<sup>106</sup> Recognition of the importance of data and its structure</p>
1993	<p>UNDAC (United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination) is established by DHA<sup>107</sup></p> <p>DHA drafts a <i>Disaster Management Manual</i> with UNDP<sup>108</sup></p> <p>Distribution of NDVI GIS data by FEWS over FTP<sup>109</sup></p> <p>Creation of RwandaNet, the predecessor of what was going to be (unsuccessfully)</p>

<sup>99</sup>UN General Assembly Resolution 46-184 - Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations - 1991 ([PDF](#))

<sup>100</sup> Geographical Information Systems and the Management of Humanitarian Programmes, Alistair Hallam, 1 June 1996 ([PDF](#))

<sup>101</sup> Interviewee 13, March 2023

<sup>102</sup> Giles Whitcomb - brief professional CV - 1998 ([PDF](#))

<sup>103</sup> The involvement of the United Nations System in Providing And Coordinating Humanitarian Assistance - Erica-Irene Does - Joint Inspection Unit - 1995 ([PDF](#))

<sup>104</sup> Internet Archive - WayBackMachine, capture of FTS on ReliefWeb from 12 March 2000 ([PDF](#))

<sup>105</sup> Interviewee 13, March 2023

<sup>106</sup> Interviewee 11, March 2023

<sup>107</sup> This is UNDAC - Brochure, 2025 ([PDF](#))

<sup>108</sup> Giles Whitcomb - brief professional CV - 1998 ([PDF](#))

<sup>109</sup> Written Respondent 06 received 9 March 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p>ReliefNet, and eventually ReliefWeb<sup>110</sup></p> <p>Bosnia: DHA used a tool called Disaster Assistance Logistics Information System (DALIS) - built in FoxPro. The system was originally developed for Operation Provide Comfort in 1991 and came to DHA via OFDA<sup>111</sup></p>
<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">1994</p>	<p>Rwanda Genocide - United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office (UNREO) was created by DHA<sup>112</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Following consultations among the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) and the ICRC, it was agreed that DHA would take the lead role in organizing and overseeing the activities of UNREO and thus for supervising the work of the United Nations as well as Governments and NGOs</li> <li>● Working first from Nairobi and then from Kigali as of July 1994, UNREO served as the nexus for information collection and dissemination throughout the area of operation</li> <li>● UNREO and UNAMIR had the Humanitarian Assistance Cell (HAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Created a precursor of 3W called the <i>Matrix</i><sup>113 114 115</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Started in Microsoft Word, moved to Microsoft Excel and eventually to a database<sup>116</sup> (by a couple backpacking New Zealanders<sup>117</sup> or a couple Austrian military officers<sup>118</sup>)</li> <li>■ Print outs got responders attention; People would come like 'clock-work' to pick up the report each week<sup>119</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Seemed to have databases for different activities (sometimes in conjunction with IOC)<sup>120</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Pigeon-holes were set up for everyone in the UNDP compound next to the round-about driveway. On Matrix-day, people would drive in, run to their pigeon-hole, run back to their vehicle, and leave<sup>121</sup></li> <li>● UNMIR drawing on paper maps for operational purposes<sup>122</sup></li> <li>● UNREO-DHA planned locations across Rwanda with the use of maps provided by DeLorme (1993)<sup>123</sup></li> <li>● UNREO establishes the Integrated Operations Centre (IOC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Operated under the guidance of the IOC Task Force which included the UN Mission, most UN Agencies, the Red Cross and NGO representatives<sup>124</sup></li> <li>○ IOC database produced 3W-like reports → outputs simply say "List of organizations operating in <i>locationname</i>"<sup>125</sup></li> <li>○ Creates the first inter-agency humanitarian database that used</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>110</sup> Interviewee 14, March 2023; *ReliefWeb's Early Days* by Craig Duncan, 10 August 2021 ([PDF](#))

<sup>111</sup> Interviewee 15, May 2023

<sup>112</sup> United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office Humanitarian Situation Reports, 1994 (PDF)

<sup>113</sup> Interviewee 16, July 2023; Written Respondent 03 received 21 July 2023

<sup>114</sup> Inter Office Memorandum from HAC Ops to UNREO on 24 Nov 94 notes "Matrix indicates that no agencies are present in this commune" [Nyamyumba Commune] ([PDF](#))

<sup>115</sup> The International Response to Conflict and Genocide - Lessons from the Rwanda Experience - Study 3 - Humanitarian Aid and Effects ([PDF](#))

<sup>116</sup> Letter from HAC to 'All Sec Hum Offrs' titled 'HAC Database' on 15 June 1995 ([PDF](#))

<sup>117</sup> Interviewee 16, July 2023

<sup>118</sup> Written Respondent 04 received on 25 August 2023

<sup>119</sup> Interviewee 16, July 2023

<sup>120</sup> Rwanda HAC Database - Request for Sucker Truck - September 1995 ([PDF](#))

<sup>121</sup> Interviewee 16, July 2023

<sup>122</sup> Humanitarian assistance (Item S-1062-0163-0005-00002) as part of *United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) (1993-1996)* ([PDF](#))

<sup>123</sup> Map of Rwanda planned locations, DHA, DeLorme Mapping 1993 ([PDF](#))

<sup>124</sup> IOC Taskforce and draft TORs for all positions, 24 May 1995 ([PDF](#))

<sup>125</sup> List of organizations operating in Gisenyi - IOC Database Production - 14 Oct 1995 ([PDF](#))

## Year

## Milestones

digital mapping in Rwanda<sup>126</sup>

- An American NGO, ResponseNet, assists with the creation of an integrated humanitarian database. This uses digital mapping to display humanitarian data, enabling government and participating organisations to identify gaps in assistance and any areas of overlap
- Leveraged DeLorme Mapping technology
- Funded by and staffed by the Swedish government<sup>127</sup>
- Officially closed in October 1995

WHO Rwanda develops the Système d'Information Épidémiologique au Rwanda (MS Access and ArcView). It combined a database with an automatic map maker to enable spatial epidemiological analyses<sup>128</sup>

US State Department's Office of the Geographer and Global Issues proposed a crisis information sharing network called ReliefNet.<sup>129</sup> The idea suggested a menu-driven database on the Internet with the below categories (per crisis-prone country). This idea led to the establishment of ReliefWeb

- Maps and General Background
- Groups at risk (IDPs and refugees)
- Public health
- Food/Water
- Disasters
- Political/Civil unrest
- Economy
- Logistics
- Disputes
- Experts and Key relief agencies
- Bulletin board
- Help

Gopher distribution of WFP information<sup>130</sup>

WFP establishes the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit in Rome. The founder later becomes the founder of OCHA's Field Information Services Section (FIS)<sup>131</sup>

- Responders in the early IM space became aware of each other and recognized that they could work together and share information without creating real competition for financial resources. This approach and knowledge led to FIS and the Humanitarian Information Centers (HICs)
- IM-related teams, from various entities, co-located, collaborated and supported each other
- The creation of Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) was accidental rather than the outcome of a well planned, systematic, researched and thoughtful procedure<sup>132</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Humanitarian Assistance Cell (HAC) - Integrated Operations Centre (IOC) - Operation Retour reports, 15 February 1995 ([PDF](#))

<sup>127</sup> Interviewee 16, July 2023

<sup>128</sup> Guide D'Utilisation - Système d'Information Épidémiologique au Rwanda ([PDF](#)); Written Respondent 05 received 29 July 2023

<sup>129</sup> Proposal for a Crisis Information Sharing Network - ReliefNet - Fax from William Wood and Don Krumm from the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues in the US State Department - 26 September 1994 ([PDF](#))

<sup>130</sup> Written Respondent 06 received on 09 March 2023

<sup>131</sup> Interviewee 17, March 2023

<sup>132</sup> *The Birth and Growth of Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping* by Pablo Recalde, 2018

Year	Milestones
	<p>UNHCR publishes <i>Setting up and development of an environmental database for refugee programmes : Phase 1, Africa : 1st results, February-July 1994</i><sup>133</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First comprehensive GIS-GPS review of possible use of these technologies in the humanitarian sector<sup>134</sup></li> </ul>
1995	<p>ReliefWeb: concept for ReliefWeb is drawn on the back of a New York restaurant place mat, by the founder of RwandaNet, over breakfast with DHA staff<sup>135</sup></p> <p>DHA launches HCWEB (Humanitarian Crisis Web), leveraging UNIENET, as a gopher site on the Internet while waiting on the ReliefWeb project.<sup>136</sup> Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General country information, such as maps and reports which cover donor countries, search and rescue teams, emergency response offices, emergency stockpiles, human rights reports, early-warning issues, natural disaster involvement reports, summaries of requirements to contributors, and other political, military, economic and disaster related information</li> <li>• URL: <a href="http://www.unicc.org/relief">http://www.unicc.org/relief</a><sup>137</sup></li> </ul> <p>DHA defines the <i>Principles of Data Collection</i> that will be used by Reliefweb: Timely, Trustly, and Verifiable information<sup>138</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verifiability required 3 different sources</li> <li>• Focus was on distribution of reports and graphic products. No inhouse data synthesis, analysis or products<sup>139</sup></li> </ul> <p>DHA Angola (aka UN UCHA - Unidade de Coordenacao de Assuntos Humanitarios) has a Database Unit which includes Programmers and Registration Officers.<sup>140</sup> They work closely with UNAVEM (United Nations Verification Mission)<sup>141</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many are contracted by DPKO, but working for DHA</li> <li>• Demobilizing soldiers<sup>142</sup>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Deployed more than 100 computers with data collection systems in 25 quartering areas to record data about demobilized soldiers</li> <li>◦ Data transmission via HF radios replaced data transmitted via floppy disk over aircrafts</li> <li>◦ First time the UN uses digital photos → captured and merged into Cobol application running in PC 386 (100MB HD capacity and 8MB RAM)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>133</sup> Setting up and development of an environmental database for refugee programmes : Phase 1, Africa : 1st results, February-July 1994 ([PDF](#))

<sup>134</sup> Written Respondent 06 received 9 March 2023

<sup>135</sup> Interviewee 08, March 2023. Daniel Zalek (RwandaNet) drew the diagram over breakfast with Sharon Rusu and Dennis King

<sup>136</sup> The involvement of the United Nations System in Providing And Coordinating Humanitarian Assistance - Erica-Irene Does - Joint Inspection Unit - 1995 ([PDF](#))

<sup>137</sup> Getting On-Line in Emergencies: A Guide and Directory to the Internet for Agencies involved - Relief and Rehabilitation Network - RRRN - Network Paper 13 ([PDF](#))

<sup>138</sup> Interviewee 08, March 2023;

<sup>139</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on 11 May 2023

<sup>140</sup> Interviewee 19, April 2023

<sup>141</sup> Written Respondent 08 received 11 April 2023

<sup>142</sup> Written Respondent 08 received 11 April 2023

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Issued government recognized ID → merged digital photos and personal data collected in remote areas, printed in magnetic plastic ID cards with security 3D holograms stickers</li> <li>● Tech included: PhotoCard, DeskJet, Dbase, Lotus123, Quattro Pro, MS Access. Simple queries were used for basic analysis</li> <li>● GHOST (Geographic Humanitarian Operational System Tracker) also built by DHA Angola as a precursor to the 3W<sup>143</sup></li> <li>● Captured what may be the first humanitarian selfie while testing the PhotoCard system<sup>144</sup></li> </ul> <p>The Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) opens its first office in Nairobi, Kenya, as an effort by the DHA to allow for cross-border inter-agency flows of information<sup>145</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus is journalism and narrative reporting and analysis.<sup>146</sup> It provides a regional focal point to receive and synthesize information, analyze and disseminate it to the community and, where necessary, fill information gaps</li> <li>● Sets up its first email list<sup>147</sup></li> <li>● IRIN provides updates twice a day (1996)</li> </ul> <p>UN-HACO (Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office) is established by DHA in Liberia<sup>148</sup></p> <p>UNHCR publishes <i>UNHCR environment: development of a GIS system in UNHCR for environmental, emergency, logistic and planning purposes</i><sup>149</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First comprehensive review of possible use of Remote Sensing (and GIS/GPS) in the humanitarian sector<sup>150</sup></li> </ul> <p>First use of the internet and email in the Geneva HQ<sup>151</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Red Cross starts putting together Appeals via email;</li> </ul>
1996	<p>DHA launches ReliefWeb, a humanitarian information portal<sup>152</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interesting notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Built with shareware/freeware downloaded from the Internet<sup>153</sup></li> <li>○ Built in 6 months<sup>154</sup></li> <li>○ Initial URL was <a href="http://www.unicc.org/relief">http://www.unicc.org/relief</a></li> <li>○ Before the ReliefWeb.int domain was launched, the team only had an IP address</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>143</sup> Written Respondent 08 received 11 April 2023

<sup>144</sup> Personal photo of Rogerio Mobilla Silva from September 1995 ([picture](#))

<sup>145</sup> The United Nations and Rwanda 1993-1996 - The Blue Book Series - Volume X ([PDF](#))

<sup>146</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on 11 May 2023

<sup>147</sup> Written Respondent 06 received 9 March 2023

<sup>148</sup> 1998 United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Liberia accessed on 23 August 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>149</sup> UNHCR environment: development of a GIS system in UNHCR for environmental, emergency, logistic and planning purposes ([PDF](#))

<sup>150</sup> Written Respondent 06 received 9 March 2023;

<sup>151</sup> Interviewee 11, March 2023

<sup>152</sup> *ReliefWeb's Early Days* by Craig Duncan, 10 August 2021 ([PDF](#))

<sup>153</sup> Interviewee 08, March 2023

<sup>154</sup> Interviewee 20, May 2023

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ReliefNet was never a DHA domain as it was owned by a rock band called Relief</li> <li>○ With the help of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), OCHA was able to secure the ReliefWeb.int domain</li> <li>○ On the day before launch, Daniel Zalik decides to use cookies (at the time “hot cookies”) to flip the website from English to French</li> <li>○ ReliefWeb was called to the Pentagon as they wanted to know what ReliefWeb was doing; Afterwards, a couple Pentagon staff sit with the ReliefWeb team for 3 weeks<sup>155</sup></li> </ul> <p>The ReliefWeb Map Centre launches as a place where users can find “humanitarian community information maps” produced by ReliefWeb or collected from other organizations<sup>156</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First maps are static reference maps created with DeLorme Mapping technology (DVD) and tracing things into PowerPoint<sup>157</sup></li> </ul> <p>Response.Net launches a system where information is provided and then made available through the Internet, or through a locally-created E-mail system<sup>158</sup></p> <p>Remote Sensing (Landsat and SPOT) used to detect and assess the environmental impacts of refugee camps in eastern Zaire (Goma)<sup>159</sup></p> <p>Mobile phones (versus satellite or landlines) becoming more and more common in the sector<sup>160</sup></p> <p>WGET (Working Group for Emergency Telecommunications) is established<sup>161</sup></p> <p>IRIN distribution of alerts by pager and fax gateway<sup>162</sup></p> <p>GISMO (Geographic Information System for the Myanmar Operation) is developed by UNHCR Myanmar<sup>163</sup></p>
1997	<p>Creation of the Sphere Project as well as the The Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards<sup>164 165</sup></p> <p>UN-HACO Liberia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Starts a Humanitarian Database Project which collects a lot of data</li> </ul>

<sup>155</sup> Interviewee 08, March 2023

<sup>156</sup> Internet Archive - WayBackMachine, capture of ReliefWeb’s *About the Map Centre* page from 02 February 1997 ([PDF](#))

<sup>157</sup> Interviewee 21, March 2023

<sup>158</sup> Relief and Rehabilitation Network - Number 5 - Number 5, June 1996 ([PDF](#))

<sup>159</sup> Written Respondent 06 received 9 March 2023;

<sup>160</sup> Interviewee 11, March 2023

<sup>161</sup> About - WGET ICT Humanitarian Innovation Forum 2015 ([PDF](#))

<sup>162</sup> Written Respondent 06 received 9 March 2023

<sup>163</sup> Application of Technology in UNHCR Myanmar, Craig Williams, April 1996 ([PDF](#))

<sup>164</sup> The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response - 2018 edition, 20 November 2018 ([PDF](#))

<sup>165</sup> Interviewee 18, May 2023

## Year

## Milestones

- Part of it holds 3W-like data and serves the same coordination purpose<sup>166 167</sup>
- Includes first documented Assessment database<sup>168</sup>
- Develops simple thematic mapping to capture cross organizational knowledge of field conditions (Joint Risk Mapping Project). Uses MS Access and MapInfo<sup>169</sup>
- Information played a significant role in the functions from humanitarian coordination to DDR<sup>170</sup>

MADGIC (Multi Agency Distributed Geographic Information Collection) - an early donor led effort to track who-is-doing-what-where type information and to collect field data - is piloted in Liberia. Laminated cards are given out with GPS training - one side has details to collect structural information and the other is for programmatic data. Not one set of coordinates come back<sup>171</sup>

Sierra Leone information system, funded by the World Bank and run by Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITO), is established as an Intranet to share information between the Government and the Humanitarian Sector<sup>172</sup>

FEWER (Forum on Early Warning and Early Response) - an early warning solution - is created in response of the Rwandan genocide and put in place through a consortium of UN Agencies and NGOs<sup>173</sup>

HEWS (Humanitarian Early Warning System) is established by DHA<sup>174</sup>

Participatory mapping: FAO uses aerial photos to conduct participatory mapping with communities<sup>175</sup>

- Watershed-related with the aim to help manage shocks (e.g. floods, droughts, etc.)
- Aerial photos are hung up and left with markers for locals to 'mark-up' the maps

FAO Afghanistan takes over Development Alternatives Inc. which was founded in 1994 for projects on mapping and data collection<sup>176</sup>

- Renamed as Project Management Information System (ProMIS). Continues to update gazetteer, mapping and program data<sup>177</sup>
- The Afghan staff and project become the foundation for the UN Afghanistan Information Management System (AIMS) in 2002

<sup>166</sup> Interviewee 15, May 2023

<sup>167</sup> Liberia Humanitarian Situation Report No.75, 16 June 1997 ([PDF](#))

<sup>168</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on on 11 May 2023

<sup>169</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on on 11 May 2023

<sup>170</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on on 03 August 2023; UNHACO Liberia final reports - 1998 ([PDF](#))

<sup>171</sup> Interviewee 04, March 2023; [MADGIC card PDF](#)

<sup>172</sup> Interviewee 21, March 2023

<sup>173</sup> Interviewee 08, March 2023

<sup>174</sup> Written Respondent 02 received 24 March 2023; The Yearbook of the United Nations, 1997 ([PDF](#))

<sup>175</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023

<sup>176</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on on 11 May 2023

<sup>177</sup> ProMIS Indicator Consultant Report - Afghanistan, 20 October 2000 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIMS is longest running information center, transitioning to national project and then an independent NGO before ending in 2017</li> </ul> <p>DHA becomes OCHA<sup>178</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 co-functions: coordination for the humanitarian emergency response, policy development, advocacy on humanitarian issues</li> <li>• Regular budget staff positions are reduced from 360 to 137 (62%).<sup>179</sup> Other positions are moved to “<i>projects</i>” which are funded through extra-budgetary financing.<sup>180</sup> Organization actually grows</li> </ul> <p>OCHA starts collaborating with the Global Disaster Information Network (GDIN)<sup>181</sup></p> <p>Creation of the Geographic Information Support Team (GIST)<sup>182 183184</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First inter-agency IM mechanism (focused on GIS)</li> <li>• Includes entities such as DPKO, FAO, World Bank, UNDP, WFP, WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA, VVAF, OFDA, ECHO/JRC, and ITOS<sup>185</sup></li> <li>• First note taker uses a Palm Pilot with an external keyboard<sup>186</sup></li> <li>• Initially established as an informal collaboration by people with interest in GIS and new technology<sup>187</sup></li> </ul> <p>GIST Repository setup by ITOS<sup>188</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share whatever data responders have when a new emergency hit</li> <li>• FTP-based</li> <li>• Concept inspired future COD-Repository and Humanitarian Data Exchange</li> <li>• USAID /OFDA funded and based at the University of Georgia<sup>189</sup></li> </ul> <p>Aerial imagery, from hang gliders, is provided by the French Overseas Research Institute (ORSTOM) to enable UNHCR to map the Dadaab refugee camp and attach socio economic data for each households<sup>190 191</sup></p> <p>Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations (entered into force in 2005)<sup>192</sup></p> <p>Humanitarian Response Planning map - like a dashboard - is created with landsat data. Cutting edge &amp; expensive at the time<sup>193</sup></p>

<sup>178</sup> History of OCHA, unocha.org ([PDF](#))

<sup>179</sup> DHA renamed Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN DPI Bulletin, 26 January 1998 ([PDF](#))

<sup>180</sup> Interviewee 10, March 2023

<sup>181</sup> Conclusions of Meeting of International Disaster Experts in Washington DC 16-17 July 1998 ([PDF](#))

<sup>182</sup> OCHA in 2001 Activities And Extra Budgetary Funding Requirements, OCHA, 2001 ([PDF](#))

<sup>183</sup> Interviewee 23, April 2023

<sup>184</sup> GIST Terms of Reference - TOR - 2000 ([PDF](#))

<sup>185</sup> GIST Presentation - About - 2003 ([PDF](#))

<sup>186</sup> Interviewee 24, June 2023

<sup>187</sup> Interviewee 20, May 2023

<sup>188</sup> Interviewee 23, April 2023

<sup>189</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on 11 May 2023

<sup>190</sup> Interviewee 18, 02 May 2023

<sup>191</sup> Environment, cartography, demography and geographical information system in the refugee camps - Dadaab, Kakuma - Kenya - Final Report - October 1999 ([PDF](#))

<sup>192</sup> Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, Tampere, 18 June 1998 ([PDF](#))

<sup>193</sup> Interviewee 04, March 2023; Humanitarian Response Planning Map - Kosovo 1998 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It provides a common reference map for all parties and digital data is shared with all interested and capable humanitarian organizations. This model is repeated for Kosovo in 1999, giving the HCIC the ability to focus on humanitarian content rather than basemap creation<sup>194</sup></li> </ul>
1999	<p>Humanitarian Community Information Center (HCIC) is established in Kosovo based on experience from Rwanda<sup>195</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The establishment of a HCIC to assist UN-led repatriation support efforts was a major break through in an evolving information-sharing regime”<sup>196</sup></li> <li>• 3 months in Macedonia before everyone returned provides a unique opportunity to coordinate, collaborate and then introduce innovation practices into the HCIC</li> <li>• Operates with an ‘open data’ principle; Any data they have is freely shared - quite counter to culture at the time and even some UN Agencies tried to refuse to share (as they wanted to hold their own data)</li> <li>• First time that the 3W is called <i>the 3W</i><sup>197</sup></li> <li>• First Humanitarian Information Centre website is hosted on ReliefWeb at <a href="http://www.reliefweb.int/hcic">http://www.reliefweb.int/hcic</a><sup>198</sup></li> <li>• Creation of P-codes<sup>199</sup> - unique identifier that is apolitical and unambiguous (started from data for a map of Kosovo) → later becomes the basis for national electoral districts. Many colorful, p-code powered maps are created<sup>200</sup></li> <li>• HCIC Kosovo Atlas<sup>201</sup></li> <li>• HCIC Kosovo Encyclopedia<sup>202</sup></li> <li>• HCIC Map Catalogue is a MS Word file with hyperlinks to map files<sup>203</sup></li> <li>• GIS Working group is established</li> <li>• The US Govt flies a U2 spy plane to collect imagery for the humanitarian community. Classified materials so there is a dedicated container with US staff controlling access</li> <li>• German government provides drone imagery<sup>204</sup></li> <li>• Rapid Village Assessment (RVA) collects consistent data and is integrated into an Excel/GIS system used for monitoring and decision making<sup>205</sup></li> <li>• Provides an Internet Cafe to the humanitarian community<sup>206</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>194</sup> Written Respondent 10 received 28 August 2023

<sup>195</sup> Interviewee 21, March 2023

<sup>196</sup> Kosovo Brief: Information Management Offers a New Opportunity for Cooperation Between Civilian and Military by Michael Dziedzic and William Wood, 2000 ([PDF](#))

<sup>197</sup> 3W Database discussion paper prepared for HCIC in Kosovo by OCHA ([PDF](#)); Annex A from ProMIS Indicator Consultant Report - Afghanistan, 20 October 2000 ([PDF](#))

<sup>198</sup> HCIC Website on the Way Back Machine - Feb 2000 capture ([PDF](#))

<sup>199</sup> P-codes page on HCIC Website on Way Back Machine - Feb 2000 capture ([PDF](#))

<sup>200</sup> Written Respondent 06 received 9 March 2023; Example PCode maps from HCIC ([ZIP](#))

<sup>201</sup> Written Respondent 11 received 30 March 2023

<sup>202</sup> Written Respondent 11 received 30 March 2023

<sup>203</sup> Written Respondent 11 received 30 March 2023 | HCIC Map Catalogue ([PDF](#))

<sup>204</sup> Interviewee 25, April 2023

<sup>205</sup> Rapid Village Assessment - Kosovo ([PDF](#))

<sup>206</sup> Interviewee 24, June 2023

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USAID/OFDA funds technical assistance that lays out concepts and roadmap for future HIC development<sup>207</sup></li> </ul> <p>Virtual OSOCC (On-Site Operations Coordination Centre) is launched as a prototype. Officially launched in 2001<sup>208</sup></p> <p>Launch of <i>ReliefWeb via Email</i> for people that do not have web access<sup>209</sup></p> <p>All material from UNDRO (e.g. SitReps) on UNIENET is digitized and uploaded on ReliefWeb for preservation<sup>210</sup></p> <p>UN mounts digital cameras under the wings of UN aircrafts (without electricity in the cables so as not to create fires). A methodology of in-flight image acquisition, automatic correction of lens distortions, brightness correction, population data extrapolation is developed and used<sup>211</sup></p> <p>USAID-OFD receives IKONOS imagery of the Venezuela floods - first operational use of commercial, high resolution imagery for humanitarian purposes.<sup>212</sup> (1m resolution vs SPOT's 10 m resolution)</p> <p>Y2K bug: focus of many technical people shifted to adjust software in anticipation of Y2K bug and possible systems' failure<sup>213</sup></p>
2000	<p>Launch of International Charter "<i>Space and Major Disasters</i>"<sup>214</sup> (aka Disaster Charter)</p> <p>UN-Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia (UN-EUE) is now managed by OCHA. Previously known as UNDP's Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia (EUE)<sup>215</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific instructions from OCHA HQ to not call it an HIC<sup>216</sup></li> </ul> <p>Information Coordination Centre setup in Eritrea<sup>217</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resourced by OCHA/UNDAC, UNICEF, ERREC, NCA &amp; EDF<sup>218</sup></li> <li>Co-led by the Eritrean government who had veto power over publication of maps. They do not approve a single map in 2 years as they do not agree with the border. Result: Maps are marked as '<i>Draft</i>' and shared with every agency in the country '<i>For Comment</i>'<sup>219</sup></li> </ul> <p>SLIS (Sierra Leone Information System) setup<sup>220</sup></p>

<sup>207</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on on 11 May 2023

<sup>208</sup> Technology and information sharing in disasters, Benedikte Bjerge, Nathan Clark, Peter Fisker, Emmanuel Raju, 1 September 2016 ([PDF](#))

<sup>209</sup> Interviewee 14, March 2023

<sup>210</sup> Interviewee 14, 10 March 2023

<sup>211</sup> Tesi in GIS e Remote Sensing In Paesi in Via Di Sviluppo (Dottorato Di Ricerca In Tecnologie Energetiche E Ambientali Per Lo Sviluppo), Giorgio Sartori, 25 May 2000 ([PDF](#))

<sup>212</sup> Written Respondent 10 received 28 August 2023

<sup>213</sup> Interviewee 19, May 2023

<sup>214</sup> International Charter Space and Major Disasters, Office for Outer Space Affairs UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal ([PDF](#))

<sup>215</sup> *About UN-EUE on the WayBackMachine* ([PDF](#))

<sup>216</sup> Interviewee 26, April 2023

<sup>217</sup> Written Respondent 12 received 3 June 2023

<sup>218</sup> Eritrea: ICC Weekly Update for 10 Jun 2000 ([PDF](#)) | Ongoing Humanitarian Information Activities and Issues - Global - August 2001 ([PDF](#))

<sup>219</sup> Written Respondent 01 received 28 August 2023

<sup>220</sup> OCHA in 2002 Activities and Extrabudgetary Funding Requirements ([PDF](#)) | Ongoing Humanitarian Information Activities and Issues - Global - August 2001 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
	<p>First Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC) setup in Sierra Leone<sup>221</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept requires the inclusion of a humanitarian presence</li> <li>• JMAC concept later becomes the SIOC (Security Information Operational Cell)<sup>222</sup></li> </ul> <p>UNGIWG (United Nations Geographic Information Working Group) is established<sup>223</sup></p> <p>Strong Angel consortium holds its first international civ-mil disaster response event. Goals include working on improved information flow and transboundary cooperation<sup>224</sup></p>
2001	<p>DEPHA (Data Exchange Platform for the Horn of Africa) is created as an effort to set up regional GIS capacity<sup>225</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is first referred to as the HAIC (Humanitarian Assistance Information Centre) later becoming the "Data Warehouse"<sup>226</sup> and then DEPHA<sup>227</sup></li> <li>• Initially hosted with the UNOPS project for Somalia under UNDP. It later moves to UNEP Nairobi and then UNDP Kenya<sup>228</sup></li> <li>• Data is made available publicly on FTP<sup>229</sup></li> <li>• HAIC website starts on unsomalia.org<sup>230</sup>; DEPHA eventually sets up on hornofafricadata.org<sup>231</sup></li> <li>• Sudan: DEPHA team digitizes British Survey maps in partnership with the government<sup>232</sup></li> <li>• Some GIS data "fell off the back of a truck"</li> </ul> <p>CHIN (Common Humanitarian Information Network for the Horn of Africa) is set up by OCHA in Ethiopia<sup>233</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective: To improve the quality and timeliness of humanitarian information and to promote information sharing practices in the HOA</li> </ul> <p>Launch of UNOSAT<sup>234</sup></p> <p>Creation of SAHIMS (Southern Africa Humanitarian Information Management Network)<sup>235</sup></p> <p>IRIN Radio is introduced to provide individuals and communities with unbiased information on issues and events<sup>236</sup></p>

<sup>221</sup> Interviewee 27, April 2023

<sup>222</sup> Interviewee 28, May 2023

<sup>223</sup> United Nations Geographic Information Working Group - about UNGIWG-9, Way Back Machine 3 July 2023 capture ([PDF](#))

<sup>224</sup> Written Respondent 14 received 23 March 2023

<sup>225</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023

<sup>226</sup> Note for the File - Continuation of the Data and Information Teams Activities by Ben Watkins - 15-May-2001 ([PDF](#))

<sup>227</sup> Ongoing Humanitarian Information Activities and Issues - Global - August 2001 ([PDF](#))

<sup>228</sup> Interviewee 29, April 2023

<sup>229</sup> Interviewee 29, April 2023

<sup>230</sup> WayBackMachine capture ([PDF](#))

<sup>231</sup> HAIC - Meeting summary of 15 May 2001 ([PDF](#)); WayBackMachine capture ([PDF](#))

<sup>232</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023

<sup>233</sup> Humanitarian Information, resource Centers in Africa and Related Activities ([PDF](#))

<sup>234</sup> UNOSAT: 20 Years Of Operations Leading To The United Nations Satellite Centre ([PDF](#))

<sup>235</sup> Southern Africa: Humanitarian data management system launched, 21 October 2002 ([PDF](#))

<sup>236</sup> IRIN Booklet - Giving Voice to the Voiceless ([PDF](#)); IRIN outreach radio project ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
	<p>OCHA hires a couple people to walk the perimeter of the Goma Volcano lava flow, with GPS units, so that it could then be mapped<sup>237</sup></p> <p>The Field Information Services (FIS) unit is created in OCHA New York as its first dedicated unit for leading and supporting field-focused information management<sup>238</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiring source of future HIC staff includes several people from the UN's Department of PeaceKeeping (DPKO) as they have GIS skills<sup>239</sup></li> </ul> <p>OCHA proposes to setup an Information Management Section in Geneva that would include internal activities (e.g. FTS management) and external services (e.g. Virtual OSOCC and Operational Coordination Centre)<sup>240</sup></p> <p>OCHA and UNICEF propose SHARE (Structured Humanitarian Assistance Reporting Approach)<sup>241</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple, common standards in collecting and reporting humanitarian-related information based on things like data of information, source of information, and location (p-code)</li> </ul> <p>ITOS begins a pilot project that will become the UN GIS data clearinghouse<sup>242</sup></p> <p>SALB (Second Administrative Level Boundaries) project started<sup>243 244</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is envisioned as WHO's contribution to UNGIWG</li> <li>• Saw so many different admin boundaries being used across the UN</li> <li>• Estimates that it will take ~6 months to complete<sup>245</sup></li> <li>• Moves to the UN Cartographic Section in 2011<sup>246</sup> where it was parked until 2018 before restarting<sup>247</sup></li> </ul> <p>iMMAP is created as a unit of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAf)<sup>248</sup></p>
2002	<p>Symposium on Best Practices in Humanitarian Information Management and Exchange<sup>249</sup></p> <p>ReliefWeb introduces Humanitarian Vacancies (aka Jobs)<sup>250</sup></p> <p>DFID hosts design, planning and development session for HIC training in London, UK<sup>251</sup></p>

<sup>237</sup> Interviewee 21, March 2023; Product: DR Congo: Goma Town Centre Lava Map, 27 Jan 2002 ([PDF](#))

<sup>238</sup> OCHA in 2001 Activities And Extra Budgetary Funding Requirements, OCHA, 2001 ([PDF](#))

<sup>239</sup> Interviewee 23, April 2023

<sup>240</sup> Memo from OCHA Geneva to OCHA New titled *Information Management Section* on 11 April 2001 ([PDF](#)); Written Respondent 13 received 17 March 2023

<sup>241</sup> Structured Humanitarian Assistance Reporting - SHARE - GIST-Joint-Presentation - 8 Feb 2001 ([PDF](#))

<sup>242</sup> Written Respondent 15 received 20 April 2023

<sup>243</sup> Written Respondent 15 received 23 August 2023

<sup>244</sup> SALB Methodology ([PDF](#))

<sup>245</sup> Interviewee 02, August 2023

<sup>246</sup> SALB Methodology ([PDF](#))

<sup>247</sup> Interview with Steeve Ebener on 30 August 2023

<sup>248</sup> Our History - iMMAP ([PDF](#))

<sup>249</sup> Symposium on Best Practices in Humanitarian Information Exchange, 1 February 2002 ([PDF](#))

<sup>250</sup> Reliefweb capture on Way Back Machine from 28 May 2002 - First Jobs ([PDF](#))

<sup>251</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on 11 May 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p>Closure Mapping starts in oPt / Israel<sup>252</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial maps are hand drawn and/or created in Photoshop</li> <li>• Maps showing Israeli checkpoints and blockades that stop Palestinians from accessing services, jobs, etc.<sup>253</sup></li> <li>• Although initially quite annoyed, the Israeli authorities begin using OCHA products and data as <i>their</i> source-of-truth</li> </ul> <p>AIMS (Afghanistan Information Management Service) - a HIC-like centre - was setup<sup>254</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIS specialists, and their data, sourced from the UNDP/FAO project called PROMIS (which had launched in 1997)<sup>255</sup></li> <li>• Develop a p-code system, run Maps on Demand, source and support imagery maps, leverage 1979 series Soviet 1:50,000 map series<sup>256</sup></li> <li>• Develop text editing to produce first cartographic products with Dar and Pashtun characters<sup>257</sup></li> </ul> <p>MapAction is created, but initially named Aid for Aid<sup>258</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is setup as a result of a mapping project in the Kosovo in December 1999<sup>259</sup></li> <li>• Renamed to MapAction in 2004<sup>260</sup></li> <li>• Vodafone comes in early to support - including financial means to hire the first manager. Really helped kickoff MapAction<sup>261</sup></li> </ul> <p>UNHCR maps the Kakuma camp by taping a GPS device to the front of a motorbike and driving around<sup>262</sup></p> <p>First biometrics capture in the sector by UNHCR<sup>263</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used to manage the issuance of repatriation grants in Pakistan for refugee returnees about to travel from Pakistan back to Afghanistan</li> </ul> <p>OCHA staff member scuba dives in Lake Goma every morning during the 2002 EQ response to look for '<i>disoriented fish</i>' that might indicate escaping methane<sup>264</sup></p> <p>The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) launches their first Geo-cell in the Ethiopia/Eritrea operation. Concept expands to another 5 operations within a year signaling that the UN family needed to take GIS seriously<sup>265</sup></p>
2003	HIC Iraq

<sup>252</sup> Interviewee 30, March 2023

<sup>253</sup> Interviewee 31, March 2023

<sup>254</sup> Afghanistan: Information management to play key role in aid work ([PDF](#))

<sup>255</sup> Written Respondent 17 received 10 May 2023

<sup>256</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on 11 May 2023

<sup>257</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on 11 May 2023

<sup>258</sup> MapAction - About us - History ([PDF](#))

<sup>259</sup> Rupert Douglas-Bate: Chairman and Founder ([PDF](#)); Interviewee 32, May 2023

<sup>260</sup> Written Respondent 18 received 17 May 2023; Note: Aid for Aid was incorporated in 1999, but had no activity until 2002

<sup>261</sup> Interviewee 32, May 2023

<sup>262</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023

<sup>263</sup> Afghan "recyclers" under scrutiny of new technology 03 October 2002 ([PDF](#)); and UNHCR's 20 Years of Biometrics slide ([PDF](#))

<sup>264</sup> Written Respondent 01 received 27 August 2023

<sup>265</sup> Interviewee 33, March 2023

## Year

## Milestones

- First public HIC website URL is: *agoodplacetostart.org*.<sup>266</sup> The staff even have T-shirts with the phrase on them<sup>267</sup>.
  - A private discussion group on Mayetic Village exists beforehand<sup>268</sup>
- HIC is equipped with the first deployment of the DFID rapid deployment package → part of the *HIC-in-a-box* concept<sup>269</sup>;
- OCHA deploys HIC teams to multiple locations including Basra, Baghdad, Mosul, Larnaca and Amman<sup>270</sup>
- The HIC in Bagdad is destroyed as part of the Canal Hotel bombing counting several victims among the UN staff<sup>271</sup>
- Humanitarian Operation Center (US Govt) uses Groove to share information and data with external partners including the HIC<sup>272</sup>
- First documented online Assessment database (i.e. Survey of Survey)<sup>273</sup>
- Basra: Hard drives are stored in the fridge to extend their life<sup>274</sup>

*Music/Movies-for-Data* was initiated by HIC Basra<sup>275</sup>

- Visitors could take a copy of the music/movies from a hard drive if they provided a copy of the data to the HIC Basra

HIC Liberia is established<sup>276</sup>

- Leads the national remapping effort, meeting with tribal leaders in each state, to rewrite the country's placenames city/town/settlement, health centers, road status, and generally mapping places<sup>277</sup>. =
  - Maps they had beforehand were old American/British maps which had been saved by an individual Liberian who took them from the government office (during the war) to hide them at home for safe keeping<sup>278</sup>.
  - Political will is the driver to get the work done as an election is upcoming - results in donor funding being available<sup>279</sup>.

HDRC (Humanitarian Development Resource Centre) is established in DPR Korea (aka North Korea)<sup>280</sup>

Due to copyright and file size limitations on sharing imagery, OFDA traces a detailed road network from Geneina Darfur, Sudan, posts the data on the GIST repository where an OCHA cartographer promptly discovers it and converts it to a useful map<sup>281</sup>

<sup>266</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023; HIC Iraq website on Wayback Machine ([PDF](#))

<sup>267</sup> Pictures of A Good Place to Start T-shirts ([PDF](#))

<sup>268</sup> Humanitarian Information Capacity - Middle East (aka HIC Iraq) proposal 2002; Service no longer online;

<sup>269</sup> Humanitarian Information Capacity - Middle East (aka HIC Iraq) proposal 2002; Service no longer online;

<sup>270</sup> Written Respondent 19 received 18 August 2023

<sup>271</sup> United Nations In Memoriam: Baghdad, 19 August 2003 ([PDF](#))

<sup>272</sup> Interviewee 34, March 2023

<sup>273</sup> HIC Website - Assessments; WayBackMachine ([PDF](#))

<sup>274</sup> Interviewee 15, May 2023

<sup>275</sup> Interviewee 35, May 2023

<sup>276</sup> Janet O'Callaghan presentation at ESRI conference, 2 May 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>277</sup> Written Respondent 19 received 18 August 2023

<sup>278</sup> Interviewee 36, August 2023

<sup>279</sup> Interviewee 36, August 2023

<sup>280</sup> Capture of HDRC website capture on Way Back Machine ([PDF](#)); Personal experience of author

<sup>281</sup> Written Respondent 10 received 28 August 2023

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates the utility of passive collaboration made possible through portals and standards</li> </ul> <p>ReliefWeb starts making its own maps for emergencies<sup>282</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With every new GLIDE number, ReliefWeb makes a map</li> </ul> <p>GOS (Geographic Operational System) is launched by OCHA Angola<sup>283</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes mapping built on top of Microsoft Access without any GIS tools. Produces such things as the Surface Routes for Humanitarian Operations - January 2003<sup>284</sup></li> </ul> <p>Bam Earthquake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video-conference first used by the field - the UNDAC Team Leader briefs the HQ-based donors about the situation<sup>285</sup></li> <li>• Without a map, the UNDAC team borrow a tourist map &amp; draw a large scale version to hang on the wall<sup>286</sup></li> </ul> <p>WHO proposes the creation of the IASC Task Force on Information Management<sup>287</sup></p> <p>UNGIWG recommends SALB coding scheme as a standard across agencies<sup>288</sup> (but no consistent adoption across agencies ever happens as there was no entity to enforce it<sup>289</sup>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNGIWG encourages the submission of the SALB scheme to ISO/TC211 for adoption as an international standard<sup>290</sup></li> </ul> <p>GISCorps is founded<sup>291</sup></p> <p>World Summit on the Information Society<sup>292</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heads of States and Governments approve the Geneva Declaration of Principles<sup>293</sup> and the Geneva Plan of Action<sup>294</sup> for the Information Society</li> <li>• First ever global platform to bring together the international community, including Heads of State and Government, Executive Heads of United Nations agencies, national delegates and leaders from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry leaders, media representatives and civil society</li> </ul>

<sup>282</sup> Interviewee 23, April 2023

<sup>283</sup> Interviewee 37, May 2023; Interviewee 19, April 2023

<sup>284</sup> Pre-GIS, hand-drawn map of Surface Routes for Humanitarian Operations - January 2003 ([PDF](#))

<sup>285</sup> Interviewee 10, March 2023

<sup>286</sup> Interviewee 38, May 2023; [PDF picture of map](#)

<sup>287</sup> Interviewee 13, March 2023

<sup>288</sup> Report on the fourth plenary meeting of the UNGIWG - 22-24 October 2003 accessed 30 August ([PDF](#))

<sup>289</sup> Interviewee 02, August 2023

<sup>290</sup> Report on the fourth plenary meeting of the UNGIWG - 22-24 October 2003 accessed 30 August ([PDF](#))

<sup>291</sup> Our History - GISCorps ([PDF](#))

<sup>292</sup> ICT4Peace email on 20 December 2023 titled "20th Anniversary of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva" ([PDF](#)); World Summit on the Information Society - First Phase - Geneva ([PDF](#))

<sup>293</sup> Declaration of Principles - World summit on the Information Society - Geneva - December 2003 ([PDF](#))

<sup>294</sup> Plan of Action - World summit on the Information Society - Geneva - December 2003 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
	<p>OCHA USG / ERC gets a BlackBerry. Realization by management that information has just become more "real time"<sup>295</sup></p>
<p>2004</p>	<p>HIC Darfur is established<sup>296</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collecting data from so many sources, to create maps, results in an affectionate name of "spaghetti data" as it comes in randomly and takes significant time to clean &amp; process. Sources range from digitizing Russian (Cyrillic) military topographic maps to individual handheld GPS data collected on site visits.<sup>297</sup></li> <li>GPS devices have such low memory that data is downloaded and then the memory is cleared.<sup>298</sup></li> </ul> <p>Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) launches initially for Somalia<sup>299</sup></p> <p>Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) is setup as a cooperation framework between the United Nations and the European Commission<sup>300</sup></p> <p>Displacement Tracking Matrix is created by Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management group<sup>301</sup></p> <p>Creation of Sahana after the Tsunami in Sri Lanka<sup>302</sup></p> <p>GLIDE (GLobal IDentifier Number) is launched by the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), UNOCHA, and other partners<sup>303</sup></p> <p>First Humanitarian Information Management training held in UK near Redding<sup>304</sup></p> <p>HIC Toolbox created<sup>305</sup></p> <p>ISCRAM (Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management) is founded<sup>306</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brings different sciences together to work on crisis &amp; information</li> <li>Aims to bring academia and practitioners together<sup>307</sup></li> </ul> <p>TRIPLEX exercise (September in Norway)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNDAC invites MapAction to be their mapping arm of UNDAC</li> </ul>

<sup>295</sup> Interviewee 10, March 2023

<sup>296</sup> Janet O'Callaghan presentation at ESRI conference, 2 May 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>297</sup> Written Respondent 11 received 30 March 2023

<sup>298</sup> Written Respondent 11 received 30 March 2023

<sup>299</sup> Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) launched initially for Somalia, IPC, December 2012 ([PDF](#))

<sup>300</sup> Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System - GDACS ([PDF](#))

<sup>301</sup> Displacement Tracking Matrix - About ([PDF](#))

<sup>302</sup> Sahana foundation - History ([PDF](#)); "Sahana" means "relief" in Sinhalese

<sup>303</sup> GLobal IDentifier Number (GLIDE) - About GLIDE ([PDF](#))

<sup>304</sup> Interviewee 12, March 2023

<sup>305</sup> HIC Toolbox V1 from 2004

<sup>306</sup> About ISCRAM ([PDF](#))

<sup>307</sup> Interviewee 39, May 2023

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the end of the exercise, MapAction is specifically thanked noting that UNDAC “could now see the value of mapping in emergency response”<sup>308</sup></li> </ul> <p>MapAction attends their first UNDAC induction course and provides GIS/GPS training in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia<sup>309</sup></p> <p>ReliefWeb receives the UN 21 award (now Secretary General awards)<sup>310</sup></p> <p>OSM (Open Street Map) is founded<sup>311</sup></p> <p>First in depth study on the <i>Value of Information</i> focused on Rapid Humanitarian Assessments and Rationality in Iraq<sup>312</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioned by VVAF</li> </ul>
2005	<p>The Humanitarian Reform Agenda launches after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. It introduces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the cluster approach including clear leadership and accountability</li> <li>a strengthened Humanitarian Coordinators’ role</li> <li>strengthened Humanitarian Financing including an expanded CERF</li> </ul> <p>Four HICs setup:<sup>313</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sri Lanka</li> <li>Sumatra</li> <li>Niger</li> <li>Pakistan</li> </ul> <p>2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Cluster Approach is introduced as part of the Humanitarian Reform Agenda (after the Indian Ocean tsunami and Sudan response)<sup>314</sup></li> <li>ReliefWeb starts to cover natural disasters as per the directive of the USG (Jan Egeland). Previously they only covered man-made disasters<sup>315</sup></li> <li>Kofi Annan requests maps every day for UN noon briefings; Maps became real “tools”<sup>316</sup>. When visiting the disaster zone, Kofi visited the MapAction office and requested all the maps available<sup>317</sup></li> <li>Colin Powell, after looking at his MapAction packet of briefing maps, stated that he had “never been so well briefed on a disaster”<sup>318</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>308</sup> Interviewee 40, April 2023

<sup>309</sup> Interviewee 41, May 2023

<sup>310</sup> *ReliefWeb’s Early Days* by Craig Duncan, 10 August 2021 ([PDF](#))

<sup>311</sup> History of OpenStreetMap ([PDF](#))

<sup>312</sup> Rapid humanitarian assessments and rationality: a value-of-information study from Iraq, 2003-04 by Aldo Benini and Charles Conley ([PDF](#))

<sup>313</sup> Janet O’Callaghan presentation at ESRI conference, 2 May 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>314</sup> Cluster Coordination topic on ReliefWeb ([PDF](#))

<sup>315</sup> Interviewee 11, March 2023

<sup>316</sup> Interviewee 11, March 2023

<sup>317</sup> A Short History of MapAction: 1994 to 2010 with a focus on the early years by Rupert Douglas-Bate 2011; ([PDF](#))

<sup>318</sup> A Short History of MapAction: 1994 to 2010 with a focus on the early years by Rupert Douglas-Bate 2011; ([PDF](#))

## Year

## Milestones

- Recognition that the HIC model is not scalable to service the entire humanitarian community. Need to build up IM capacity outside the HICs<sup>319</sup>
- Recognition in the sector that communication had shifted from HF Radio to cellular<sup>320</sup>
- Early recognition that cell phones had enough penetration to switch from HF radio. During a 40 minute call, one responder received more than 50 SMS prompting the discussion.<sup>321</sup>

HIC Sumatra produces maps of the consolidation of mass graves in and around Banda Aceh (at the request of a Norwegian NGO)<sup>322</sup>

Kashmir (Pakistan) earthquake

- First in-country/local IM Working Group meeting with cluster IM focal points<sup>323</sup>
- HIC folder structure and file naming convention, including GIS data, are introduced into the HIC by MapAction<sup>324</sup> and ReliefWeb<sup>325</sup>. This structure was adopted by the UNJLC in-country<sup>326</sup>. The structure is later adopted across OCHA
- Road maps created by UNJLC are used by Pakistani military who marked them as "Top Secret"<sup>327</sup>
  - First time for GPS-based road assessments (cars and mountain bikes took GPS devices and recorded way points of changes in the road situation or type)<sup>328</sup>
- HIC scans a massive (military) wall map with an A4 printer over one night (in 54 pieces). Digitized and sent to Islamabad on a USB key for printing. Used for planning work<sup>329</sup>
- "Subway" map of relief zones was created by iMMAP in support to UNJLC<sup>330</sup>

HIC Sri Lanka

- First OCHA Map templates are developed by the HIC and and HQ deployee<sup>331</sup>

HIC-Lite is deployed to Niger<sup>332</sup>

- Attempted to run a HIC with a small team and only hand-carried equipment

<sup>319</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023

<sup>320</sup> Interviewee 34, March 2023

<sup>321</sup> Written Respondent 14 received 30 March 2023; Phone call by Nigel Snoad

<sup>322</sup> Written Respondent 20 received 7 June 2023

<sup>323</sup> Cluster Coordination topic on ReliefWeb ([PDE](#))

<sup>324</sup> Interviewee 42, May 2023

<sup>325</sup> Interviewee 43, May 2023; ReliefWeb had just developed their own standard

<sup>326</sup> Written Respondent 21 received 14 March 2023

<sup>327</sup> Interviewee 44, March 2023; Written Respondent 07 received 11 May 2023

<sup>328</sup> Interviewee 44, September 2023

<sup>329</sup> Interviewee 45, June 2023; Interviewee 46, July 2023

<sup>330</sup> Written Respondent 07 received on 11 May 2023 | [Subway Map PDF](#)

<sup>331</sup> Interviewee 46, July 2023

<sup>332</sup> Interviewee 47, April 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p>The first Cluster Monitoring System is created by OCHA Uganda as an inter-agency initiative in collaboration with UNICEF, UNDP and IOM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A data entry application incorporating GIS as output, monitoring the assistance and services delivered in more than 160 IDP camps</li> </ul> <p>OCHA holds its first global training for Information Management Officers</p> <p>Adobe Illustrator is first used in OCHA by ReliefWeb's Map Centre<sup>333</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins the shift inside OCHA from solely GIS-mapping to infographics. First international humanitarian organization to make this shift<sup>334</sup></li> </ul> <p>OCHA's Field Guidelines Version 1.0 are released on CD<sup>335</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various templates to help OCHA office setup (IM, Admin, Reporting, etc)</li> </ul> <p>Hot Spot Matrix design is first launched in OCHA DRC<sup>336</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combines data and human analysis to assign scores by location</li> </ul> <p>OCHA releases the Needs Analysis Framework (NAF) tool to try and improve the identification of multi-sector humanitarian needs<sup>337</sup></p> <p>FiDMS (Field Document Management System)<sup>338</sup> and ODMS (OCHA Document Management System) are launched in Lotus Notes after about 3 months of development<sup>339</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each OCHA office had their own FiDMS instance which replicated with HQ (both NY and Geneva)</li> <li>• HQ used ODMS</li> </ul> <p>HIC Sri Lanka receives the UN 21 award (now Secretary General awards) in the category "Field-based Projects"<sup>340 341</sup></p> <p>Tampere Convention comes into force<sup>342</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to reduce/waive regulatory barriers that impede the use of telecommunication resources for disasters</li> </ul> <p>Tunis Agreement: <i>Information and Communication Technology for Peace - The Role of ICT in Preventing, Responding to and Recovering from Conflict</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heads of state recognize the importance of IT including in humanitarian action<sup>343</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>333</sup> Poster - ReliefWeb's Mapping History as of 2007 ([PDF](#))

<sup>334</sup> Interviewee 43, May 2023

<sup>335</sup> Interviewee 26, April 2023; Written Respondent 22 received 18 April 2023

<sup>336</sup> Interviewee 37, May 2023; Interviewee 19, April 2023

<sup>337</sup> A Review of Needs Assessment Tools, Response Analysis Frameworks, and Targeting Guidance for Urban Humanitarian Response by Lili Mohiddin and Gabrielle Smith in 2016 ([PDF](#))

<sup>338</sup> OCHA Annual Report 2005 ([PDF](#))

<sup>339</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>340</sup> UN21 Awards 2005 ([PDF](#))

<sup>341</sup> Certificate of UN21 Award for the HIC Sri Lanka - picture ([PDF](#))

<sup>342</sup> Tampere Convention ([PDF](#))

<sup>343</sup> Paragraph 36 in Information and Communication Technology for Peace - The Role of ICT in Preventing, Responding to and Recovering from Conflict by Daniel Stauffacher, William Drake, Paul Currión and Julia Steinberger ([PDF](#)); Interviewee 48, May 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p>Google Earth is released putting geo into the hands of non-GIS specialists for the first time (in a major way)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases the demand for GIS solutions as people better understand the value and power of geo tools/solutions<sup>344</sup></li> </ul> <p>People Finder Interchange Format (PFIF) is released and became the standard used by several humanitarian people finder/matching initiatives<sup>345</sup></p> <p>KoboToolbox is established. It is initially used by survey researchers working in challenging environments. In 2010 UNDP becomes the first international organization to adopt KoboToolbox. OCHA adopts it in 2013<sup>346</sup></p>
2006	<p>OCHA, during an HQ mission to Kampala, drafts the first version of the scope for its future Information Management Units<sup>347</sup></p> <p>HIC Sri Lanka merges with the OCHA Sri Lanka office to become one of OCHA's first IMUs (Information Management Unit)<sup>348</sup></p> <p>OCHA launches a new web-based 3W which is used by all OCHA offices<sup>349</sup></p> <p>HIC Lebanon is setup<sup>350</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Virtual HIC,<sup>351</sup> called vHIC, with support from multiple time zones providing 24/7 support.<sup>352</sup> Happens partly by accident as outbreak of violence keeps all but one HIC member outside of the country<sup>353</sup></li> <li>P-codes really worked well in the response; People can not get into the country, but have time and data beforehand. Shared P-codes in XLS &amp; responders use it in their organization<sup>354</sup></li> <li>Screenshots of Google Earth are put into PPT so people could annotate freely<sup>355</sup></li> </ul> <p>ReliefWeb tests a daily Podcast of headline news<sup>356</sup></p> <p>HIC Toolbox is updated<sup>357</sup></p> <p>George Clooney uses HIC Darfur map while briefing the UN Security Council about the situation in Darfur<sup>358</sup></p>

<sup>344</sup> Interviewee 40, April 2023; Note: Google purchased KeyHole in 2004.

<sup>345</sup> A personal history of the effort to find the survivors of Hurricane Katrina, Kieran Lal, September 2005, Way Back Machine ([PDF](#))

<sup>346</sup> KoboToolbox - About Us ([PDF](#))

<sup>347</sup> Interviewee 19, April 2023

<sup>348</sup> Interviewee 49, May 2023

<sup>349</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>350</sup> Janet O'Callaghan presentation at ESRI conference, 2 May 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>351</sup> Interviewee 26, April 2023

<sup>352</sup> Interviewee 36, August 2023; Written Respondent received on 18 August 2023

<sup>353</sup> Interviewee 47, April 2023

<sup>354</sup> Interviewee 50, May 2023

<sup>355</sup> Interviewee 15, May 2023

<sup>356</sup> Poster: ReliefWeb 10 Years of Services to the Humanitarian Community ([PDF](#))

<sup>357</sup> Interviewee 35, May 2023

<sup>358</sup> Interviewee 47, April 2023; Photos: George Clooney At The U.N. ([PDF](#)) and Examining map with USG ([JPG](#))

Year	Milestones
	<p>OCHA oPt, and other offices in the coming years, develop map symbology<sup>359</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informed future OCHA Mapping Guidance and Humanitarian Icons</li> </ul> <p>One of the first known cases of remote humanitarian IM support in emergencies: UN's Joint Logistics Centre, in Kashmir, provides GIS data to the GIST who clean it up overnight<sup>360</sup></p> <p>Second HIC training in UK<sup>361</sup></p> <p>OCHA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) creates the first version of a Focus Model<sup>362</sup> (precursor to the Global Focus Model and INFORM)</p> <p>OCHA ROAP outlines the benefit of data preparedness by comparing 150 days after the 2005 Pakistan EQ and 15 days after the 2006 Yogyakarta EQ<sup>363</sup></p> <p>ISCRAM holds their first summer school<sup>364</sup></p> <p>Wikimapia launches and is often used by HIC/OCHA GIS officers as a way to look up place names including alternative place names (but can not find on traditional sources)<sup>365</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usage stops when Google started charging to use its maps/data in background</li> </ul>
<p><b>2007</b></p>	<p>Global Symposium +5 on Information for Humanitarian Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expands beyond technical IM to include topics such as reporting and communication<sup>366</sup></li> </ul> <p>OCHA's Information Management Review<sup>367</sup></p> <p>REDHUM is launched by OCHA in the Latin American and Caribbean region<sup>368</sup></p> <p>Initial Humanitarian Profile Maps created by OCHA<sup>369</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shifts from general situational maps to more analytical</li> <li>• Combines situation report info, trends, different thematic data, etc.</li> </ul> <p>First Global Information Management Working Group</p> <p>Maps-On-Demand, powered by a GeoNetwork instance, is launched by OCHA<sup>370</sup></p>

<sup>359</sup>Interviewee 30, March 2023

<sup>360</sup>Written Respondent 21 received 14 March 2023

<sup>361</sup>Interviewee 12, March 2023

<sup>362</sup>Interviewee 13, March 2023; Asia and the Pacific: 2016 Regional Focus Model ([PDF](#))

<sup>363</sup>Data Preparedness Initiative - OCHA ROAP ([PDF](#))

<sup>364</sup>Interviewee 39, May 2023

<sup>365</sup>Interviewee 50, May 2023

<sup>366</sup>Global Symposium +5 on Information for Humanitarian Action - Final Report, 2007 ([PDF](#))

<sup>367</sup>Information Management Review of OCHA, 2007([PDF](#))

<sup>368</sup>Regional organizations launch Redhum, the new humanitarian website for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2007 ([PDF](#))

<sup>369</sup>Interviewee 43, May 2023

<sup>370</sup>Capture of OCHA's GeoNetwork home page on Way Back Machine, 08 January 2007 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCHA contributes to launch of GeoNetwork v2.1 in 2007<sup>371</sup></li> <li>• The Maps-On-Demand project is offline by the end of 2008</li> </ul> <p><i>Beer-for-Data</i> starts in the Taj Guest House in Jalalabad, Afghanistan<sup>372</sup></p> <p>MIMU (Myanmar Information Management Unit) is established<sup>373</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With absence of OCHA, MIMU is setup within the HC's office to support the IASC and the UN country team.<sup>374</sup> The concept is considered for the Philippines, but not executed</li> </ul> <p>GBVIMS - the interagency standard for gender based violence monitoring - is launched<sup>375</sup></p> <p>UN Crisis Information Management Strategy established (led by UN CITO).<sup>376</sup> Includes 4 pillars: Data architecture, Technology, Stakeholder management, and Capacity building</p> <p>UNGIWG-8 conference is hosted by OCHA's Regional Office for the Asia Pacific (ROAP) in Bangkok<sup>377</sup></p>
2008	<p>Last Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) deployment<sup>378</sup> happens in response to Cyclone Nargis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last full deployment of HIC equipment to support<sup>379</sup></li> <li>• Official request was to support the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU)<sup>380</sup></li> <li>• Microsoft offers to build a new information exchange interface for emergencies (i.e. future OneResponse)<sup>381 382</sup></li> </ul> <p>First big coordinated assessments:<sup>383</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PONJA (Post Nargis Joint Assessment) in Myanmar</li> <li>• McRAM (Multi-cluster Rapid Assessment Mechanism) in Pakistan</li> </ul> <p><i>IASC Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads and OCHA in Information Management</i> is released<sup>384</sup></p> <p>Information Analysis Unit is launched in the Iraq operation<sup>385</sup></p> <p>Online Project System (OPS) is launched by OCHA to support the CAP</p>

<sup>371</sup> GeoNetwork OpenSource: Geographic data sharing for everyone, presentation by Allison Fleming ([PDF](#))

<sup>372</sup> The Merry Pranksters Who Hacked the Afghan War, Brian Calvert, 1 July 2013 ([PDF](#))

<sup>373</sup> About the MIMU ([PDF](#)); Revised TOR MIMU Consultant from Shawn Boeser ([PDF](#))

<sup>374</sup> Written Respondent 19 received 18 August 2023

<sup>375</sup> Written Respondent 23 received 13 March 2023

<sup>376</sup> Strengthening Crisis Information Management, Daniel Stauffacher, 17 October 2011 ([PDF](#)); Interviewee 48, May 2023

<sup>377</sup> Written Respondent 19 received 18 August 2023

<sup>378</sup> HC OiC made a formal request for the HIC to come and support the MIMU: Interviewee 36, August 2023

<sup>379</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023

<sup>380</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023 Interviewee 36, August 2023

<sup>381</sup> Interviewee 47, April 2023

<sup>382</sup> OneResponse mockup from 2008 ([JPG](#))

<sup>383</sup> Interviewee 51, April 2023

<sup>384</sup> IASC Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads and OCHA in Information Management; Accessed ([PDF](#))

<sup>385</sup> Interviewee 45, June 2023

## Year

## Milestones

(Consolidated Appeals Process)<sup>386</sup>

Mini-D (Mini Directory) is released by OCHA Sri Lanka

- Small laminated cards on a key ring that include key information for responders. Variety of information including 3W of people, hotels, roads, embassies, etc.<sup>387</sup>

Launch of Ushahidi project using live collaborative mapping for Kenya post-election violence → first use of crowdsourcing<sup>388</sup>

Subsequently:

- Haiti earthquake (2010) crowdsourcing and “real-time” data through use of “uncommon platforms” such as social media
- Russia fires (2010) creation of a “help map”
- Pakistan floods (2010)
- Libya crisis (2011)

IASC adopts the *Common Operation Datasets (CODs) and P-Codes*<sup>389</sup>

The first set of humanitarian icons are released<sup>390</sup>

ROAP signs a formal agreement with MapleCroft to build a Global Focus Model (GFM) based on their indexes. The GFM is only ever published internally due to data restrictions from MapleCroft<sup>391</sup>

ROAP notes that IM Contingency Plans made in the past couple years were of not a good return on investment. Best value comes from investing in p-codes of high-risk countries, encouraging HCs to invest in their own IM capacity, and creating relationships with HCTs & clusters pre-disaster<sup>392</sup>

OCHA holds its first Reporting workshops<sup>393</sup>

ICT Humanitarian Emergency Platform is created and funded by the UN Foundation, Vodafone Group Foundation and WFP<sup>394</sup>

- Aims to optimize and standardize ICT solutions in emergencies; expand the pool of trained ICT experts; establish a network of stand-by partners ready for deployment; and enable immediate dispatch of ICT emergency responders

Smartphones start becoming widely available to staff<sup>395</sup>

ODK (Open Data Kit) launches. Forms part of the makeup of Kobo Toolbox (2013)<sup>396</sup>

<sup>386</sup> Interviewee 52, May 2023

<sup>387</sup> Interviewee 49, May 2023; MiniD (Mini Directory) pictures ([PDF](#))

<sup>388</sup> Crisis Mapping in Action: How Open Source Software and Global Volunteer Networks Are Changing the World, One Map at a Time, Patrick Meier, May 2012, Journal of Map & Geography Libraries, 8(2), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15420353.2012.663739>

<sup>389</sup> Common Operational Datasets by OCHA Field Information Services, 28 September 2021 ([PDF](#))

<sup>390</sup> Humanitarian and Country Icons 2012 ([PDF](#))

<sup>391</sup> Interviewee 13, March 2023

<sup>392</sup> Written Respondent 01 received 5 April 2023

<sup>393</sup> Written Respondent 24 received 20 April 2023

<sup>394</sup> Global Partners for Emergency Communications - Vodafone Group Foundation and UN Foundation - February 2008 ([PDF](#))

<sup>395</sup> Interviewee 10, March 2023

<sup>396</sup> Written Respondent 25 received on 3 April 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p>ActivityInfo concept is drafted and work on Version 1 begins in UNICEF DRC<sup>397</sup></p> <p>First ever cash transfer through mobile phones in disaster response by Concern Worldwide in partnership with M-PESA in Kenya<sup>398</sup></p>
<h1 data-bbox="193 958 376 1025">2009</h1>	<p>OneResponse Philippines launches in response to Manila flooding<sup>399</sup></p> <ul data-bbox="539 501 1406 595" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• URL: <a href="http://www.un.org.ph/response">www.un.org.ph/response</a><sup>400</sup></li> <li>• Content is managed via FTP</li> <li>• Content is dynamically displayed based on the file system metadata<sup>401</sup></li> </ul> <p>OCHA's corporate 3W is shutdown (lack of funding)<sup>402</sup></p> <p>OCHA Guidance on <i>Field Map Production and Dissemination</i> is released<sup>403</sup></p> <p>Advocacy and Visual Media Unit (AVMU) is created in OCHA<sup>404</sup></p> <ul data-bbox="539 786 1123 815" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ReliefWeb Maps merges with this unit in 2010</li> </ul> <p>IASC Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) is created<sup>405</sup></p> <ul data-bbox="539 882 959 911" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-limited and ended in 2014</li> </ul> <p>The first International Conference for Crisis Mapping (ICCM) is held in Cleveland, Ohio, USA<sup>406</sup></p> <ul data-bbox="539 1010 1043 1039" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CrisisMappers Google Group is created</li> </ul> <p>ACAPS is established to conduct independent humanitarian analysis to help enable better-informed decisions<sup>407 408</sup></p> <p>Creation of the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)<sup>409</sup></p> <ul data-bbox="539 1200 1445 1294" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervised by a Steering Committee including DRC, IDMC, IOM, the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, UNHCR, OCHA and UNFPA</li> </ul> <p>OCHA, WFP, World Bank and Google collaborate to collect aerial image in remote areas of the Philippines<sup>410</sup></p> <ul data-bbox="539 1393 1430 1518" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCHA prioritizes area on Google Maps</li> <li>• Google flies the planes</li> <li>• World Bank arranges the shipment of the DVD from the planes to Manila</li> <li>• WFP processes the imagery</li> </ul>
<h1 data-bbox="193 1563 376 1630">2010</h1>	<p>Haiti earthquake</p> <ul data-bbox="539 1585 1370 1644" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of modern digital tools/approaches as well as many previously "uncommon platforms"<sup>411</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>397</sup> Interviewee 53, April 2023

<sup>398</sup> Cash Transfers through Mobile Phones: An Innovative Emergency Response in Kenya ([Webpage PDE](#); [Report PDE](#))

<sup>399</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>400</sup> un.org.ph from Way Back Machine ([PDF](#)) and un.org.ph/response from Way Back Machine ([PDF](#))

<sup>401</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>402</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>403</sup> OCHA Annual Report 2009 notes OCHA Policy on Map Production updated and rolled out to all field offices and shared with the United Nations Geographic Working Group and IASC Task Force on Information Management ([PDF](#))

<sup>404</sup> Interviewee 43, May 2023; AVMU - Custom Product Request in 2010 ([PDF](#))

<sup>405</sup> IASC Needs Assessment Task Force ([PDF](#))

<sup>406</sup> JCU Hosts First International Conference on Crisis Mapping, Way Back Machine ([PDF](#))

<sup>407</sup> ACAPS - About Us ([PDF](#))

<sup>408</sup> Interviewee 54, May 2023

<sup>409</sup> JIPS - About ([PDF](#))

<sup>410</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>411</sup> Interviewee 55, March 2023

## Year

## Milestones

- Technology has become democratized<sup>412</sup> and it has become clear that technology can help in a response<sup>413</sup>
- OneResponse.info launches in Haiti<sup>414</sup>
- Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) is created in response to the Haiti earthquake<sup>415 416</sup>
- The Standby Volunteer Task Force is created in response to the Haiti earthquake<sup>417</sup>
- Attempts made to leverage Call Detail Records (CDRs)<sup>418</sup>
- US CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) deploys 4 statisticians to support the assessment efforts. Arrived with Palm Pilots<sup>419</sup>
- Diaspora heavily engaged in digital efforts, perhaps for the first time, to support the international community<sup>420</sup>
- Short-code (4636), used by Mission 4636 to aid relief effort, is quickly available for use because the Haitian politician using it had died in the EQ<sup>421 422</sup>
- Mapping in PowerPoint: OCHA enables sub-offices to map 3W data using basemaps in PowerPoint where non-IMers can easily 'draw' their own maps<sup>423</sup>
- OCHA appoints, for the first time, someone responsible for coordinating communication with the local population (gather & share)<sup>424</sup>
- ICT4Peace Crisis Wiki launches.<sup>425</sup> Perhaps the first wiki used in this way during a major disaster<sup>426</sup>
- Computer viruses are rampant as people rely on USB keys to move information and data (vs more physical in the past) from machine to machine without protection. Creates a sort of "digital pandemic"<sup>427</sup>
- UNDAC realizes that a lot of work could be done remotely with good connectivity and would avoid laptops from "melting" in tents<sup>428</sup>

### Pakistan floods

- OCHA's first use of crowdsourcing to help with digital activities
  - Dynamic Mapping of River Levels<sup>429</sup>
  - Conversion of Font to GIFs<sup>430</sup>
  - Translating FTS data into dynamically created charts for embedding<sup>431</sup>

<sup>412</sup> Interviewee 39, May 2023

<sup>413</sup> Interviewee 48, May 2023

<sup>414</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>415</sup> Humanitarian OSM Team Wiki ([PDF](#))

<sup>416</sup> Haiti 10 Years Later: Growth of a Humanitarian Mapping Community ([PDF](#)); [Project Haiti Video](#)

<sup>417</sup> SBTf to dissolve - from Way Back Machine ([PDF](#))

<sup>418</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023

<sup>419</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023

<sup>420</sup> Interviewee 34, March 2023

<sup>421</sup> Interviewee 34, March 2023

<sup>422</sup> Photo: Haiti earthquake-Nico diTada on the airfield developing the shortcode ([JPEG](#))

<sup>423</sup> Mapping in PowerPoint - Haiti ([PPT](#))

<sup>424</sup> Interviewee 56, April 2023

<sup>425</sup> Haiti Earthquake 2010: Critical information updates to ICT4Peace Foundation wiki – 17 January 2010, ICT4Peace, ([PDF copy of Wiki content](#))

<sup>426</sup> Interviewee 48, May 2023

<sup>427</sup> Interviewee 38, May 2023

<sup>428</sup> Interviewee 38, May 2023

<sup>429</sup> Email to CrisisMappers Group entitled "Requesting Assistance - from OCHA Pakistan" on 18 August 2010 ([PDF](#)) and Google Doc detailing the request entitled "Translating a Google Spreadsheet to a Google Map" ([PDF](#))

<sup>430</sup> Email to CrisisMappers Group entitled "Requesting Assistance - from OCHA Pakistan" on 18 August 2010 ([PDF](#)) and Google Doc detailing the request entitled "Translating a Google Spreadsheet to a Google Map" ([PDF](#))

<sup>431</sup> Email to CrisisMappers Group entitled "Anyone want to help OCHA Pakistan with dynamic, online charting of FTS data?" on 21 August 2010 ([PDF](#)) and Google Doc detailing the request entitled "Translating FTS data into dynamically created charts (and beyond)" ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
	<p>IASC Guidelines on <i>Common Operational Datasets (CODs) in Disaster Preparedness and Response</i> is endorsed<sup>432</sup></p> <p>OCHA's first Geospatial Data Manual released<sup>433</sup></p> <p>Humanitarian ID (HID) proof-of-concept built within 2 weeks and functions on a feature phone<sup>434</sup></p> <p>REACH Initiative launches<sup>435</sup></p> <p><i>GIS Tutorial for Humanitarian Assistance</i> (GIS Tutorials) is published by ESRI<sup>436</sup></p> <p>President Obama requests OCHA's dashboard for his daily briefing on the Haiti earthquake<sup>437</sup></p> <p>Arabhum, a network of information officers uploading information for the countries in the Gulf, created by OCHA. Inspired by RedHum<sup>438</sup></p>
2011	<p><i>Disaster Relief 2.0: The Future of Information Sharing in Humanitarian Emergencies</i> report is launched reflecting on the Haiti EQ and future possibilities<sup>439</sup></p> <p>Digital Humanitarian Network (DHN) is established<sup>440</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Digital Humanitarian" term/title coined at the OCHA Communities-of-Interest meeting just before the November 2011 ICCM meeting in Geneva, Switzerland<sup>441</sup></li> </ul> <p>ReliefWeb launches on Drupal 7 (beta) becoming one of the very first websites to be powered by Drupal 7 at that time<sup>442</sup></p> <p>OCHA Information Management Skype group is created<sup>443</sup></p> <p>OCHA IM remote support: first, formalized remote IM support provided to Cambodia response to produce a 3W in under 12 hours<sup>444</sup></p> <p>OCHA's first official collaboration/engagement with the Volunteer &amp; Technical Community<sup>445</sup></p> <p>Libya crisis response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer-powered, OCHA 3W is produced for the first time<sup>446</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ In response to the Libya crisis, volunteers collect 3W data from online sources (social media, news outlets, blogs, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>432</sup> IASC Guidelines - Common Operational Datasets (CODs) in Disaster Preparedness and Response, November 2010 ([PDF](#))

<sup>433</sup> Geospatial Data Manual - First Edition - December 2010 ([PDF](#))

<sup>434</sup> Herison Andriamihaja interning with Andrej Verity in 2010 ([Screen capture](#))

<sup>435</sup> Who We Are - REACH ([PDF](#))

<sup>436</sup> Written Respondent 26 received 21 April 2023 ([PDF](#)); Amazon Books ([PDF](#))

<sup>437</sup> Interviewee 57 March 2023

<sup>438</sup> Written Respondent 08 received 11 April 2023

<sup>439</sup> Disaster Relief 2.0: The Future of Information Sharing in Humanitarian Emergencies, 20 March 2011 ([PDF](#))

<sup>440</sup> Digital Humanitarian Network - History and Today ([PDF](#)); Community of Interest Coordinators meeting notes from 13 November 2011 ([PDF](#))

<sup>441</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>442</sup> Written Respondent 27 received 14 September 2023

<sup>443</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>444</sup> Request made by Craig Williams. Coordinated by Andrej Verity. Email thread from 2011; [Visual](#)

<sup>445</sup> Libya Crisis Map - Summary, by Andrej Verity, 17 May 2021 ([PDF](#))

<sup>446</sup> Doing More With More - OCHA's Cooperation with the Volunteer Technical Community by Brendan McDonald and Andrej Verity, 2011 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Libya Crisis Map (LCM)<sup>447</sup> launches as part of the above effort               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LCM wins first place in the Technology and Innovation category in the 2011 International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) awards<sup>448</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Data Scramble: <i>Coordinated Data Scramble</i> is formally named and begins happening with the help of modern technology (e.g. Skype, Google Docs, Slack)<sup>449</sup></p> <p>OCHA releases its first <i>Graphic Style Book</i><sup>450</sup></p> <p>Inter-agency IM Skype group is created. Quickly reached the 600 participate maximum requesting special intervention from Microsoft to have it expanded<sup>451</sup></p> <p>Common Operational Dataset (COD) / Fundamental Operational Dataset (FOD) Registry launches on HumanitarianResponse.info<sup>452</sup></p> <p><i>IASC Guidelines on the Humanitarian Profile Common Operational Dataset</i> is endorsed and released<sup>453</sup></p> <p>IASC IM Task Force dissolves as an official IASC group. Members continue on as the informal Global IM Working Group<sup>454</sup>.</p> <p>Lonely Planet signs an agreement with OCHA to grant access to their Guide and Language books to “a variety of UN agencies and government and non-governmental organizations” providing humanitarian aid in response to disasters<sup>455</sup></p> <p>Tableau is introduced into OCHA<sup>456</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Begins the shift from static products to online interactives</li> <li>● Eventually replaced in OCHA with Microsoft’s PowerBI</li> </ul> <p>OCHA discusses using the Cloud for hosting.<sup>457</sup> It will become a reality in 2020</p> <p>The Transformative Agenda attempts to address:<sup>458</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strategic Capacity: focuses on improving the leadership and coordination of the system</li> <li>● Accountability to Affected Populations: introduces a stronger focus on ensuring that aid is accountable to the people receiving it</li> <li>● Simplified Coordination: Refines the cluster system to ensure it is more strategic and less bureaucratic in its implementation</li> </ul>

<sup>447</sup> Libya Crisis Map website, 22 July 2011, WayBackMachine ([PDF](#))

<sup>448</sup> NetHope & Partners Win Technology and Innovation Award ([PDF](#))

<sup>449</sup> *I scramble. You scramble. We all scramble for data!*, Andrej Verity, veritythink.com, 15 June 2016 ([PDF](#)); Coordinated Data Scramble History graphic, June 2016 ([PDF](#))

<sup>450</sup> Written Respondent 29 received 20 April 2023; OCHA Graphics Style Book, 2011 ([PDF](#))

<sup>451</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 28 March 2023

<sup>452</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 28 March 2023

<sup>453</sup> Interviewee 51, April 2023

<sup>454</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 29 March 2023

<sup>455</sup> United Nations and Lonely Planet launch partnership, 26 September 2011 ([PDF](#))

<sup>456</sup> *Now You See It* course participation in Austria by author, October 2011

<sup>457</sup> *What is the Cloud?* - Andrej Verity - OCHA - January 2011 ([PDF](#))

<sup>458</sup> IASC Transformative Agenda ([PDF](#)); Transformative Agenda Chapeau and Compendium ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
2012	HumanitarianResponse.info (HR.info) is launched as the successor to OneResponse) <sup>459</sup>
	<i>IASC Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments</i> is released <sup>460</sup>
	<i>Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance (MIRA)</i> is released <sup>461</sup>
	Humanitarian Kiosk - mobile app - launches. Powered by Dropbox as a backend <sup>462</sup>
	OCHA IPOR (Information Product Overview Report) established <sup>463</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Internal review that graded OCHA core products with an objective score to help ensure a certain level of standard in OCHA products</li> <li>● Covered: Humanitarian Profile Maps, Humanitarian Dashboards, Situation Reports, Flash Updates, Humanitarian Bulletins, and OCHA Websites</li> <li>● Stopped after a few years due to significant workload required<sup>464</sup></li> </ul>
	Common Request Format (CRF) prototype is released in 2012 on HR.info <sup>465</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aims to provide a common form that collects information from partners thus making OCHA more predictable and the information structured and re-usable</li> <li>● Pilots in South Sudan &amp; Colombia</li> <li>● Discontinued (2013) given high degree of flexibility demanded in the field which the CRF could not provide</li> </ul>
	Humanitarian Dashboard created as part of the NATF <sup>466</sup>
	First ever official UN crisis map based entirely on social media data <sup>467</sup>
	Flowminder is set up to analyze Call Detail Records (CDR) for humanitarian response purposes. <sup>468</sup> Only ad hoc initiatives had existed before.
	OCHA begins the transition away from using MapleCroft proprietary and expensive data for the Global Focus Model. Partnering with the European Union's Joint Research Center they compile open and free data indexes creating the eventual basis for INFORM (2014) <sup>469</sup>
Field Papers launches to help bring a paper-version of OSM into the field <sup>470</sup>	
OCHA Mali provides an open work space for local OSM volunteers to come into so that they can upload their Field Papers to the servers and have it digitized <sup>471</sup>	
UN Security Council begins expecting heavy reporting requirements from OCHA in response to Syria <sup>472</sup>	

<sup>459</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>460</sup> IASC Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises, 2012 ([PDF](#))

<sup>461</sup> Interviewee 51, April 2023

<sup>462</sup> Humanitarian Kiosk, Dale Zak, December 2012 ([PDF](#))

<sup>463</sup> IPOR explanatory graphic ([PDF](#))

<sup>464</sup> IPOR 9 (2016) - drafted by not completed([PDF](#)); Interviewee 43, May 2023

<sup>465</sup> Common Request Format and Development Sprint Presentation, 27 April 2012 ([PDF](#))

<sup>466</sup> Interviewee 51, April 2023

<sup>467</sup> How the UN Used Social Media in Response to Typhoon Pablo; 9 December 2012 ([PDF](#) | [Map & report](#))

<sup>468</sup> Flowminder - About us ([PDF](#))

<sup>469</sup> Interviewee 13, March 2023

<sup>470</sup> About Field Papers ([PDF](#))

<sup>471</sup> Interviewee 28, May 2023

<sup>472</sup> Interviewee 22, March 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p><i>Guidance for Collaborating with Volunteers &amp; Technical Communities</i> is released<sup>473</sup></p> <p>ArcGISOnline launches<sup>474</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starts to shift GIS role from service provider to an enabler</li> <li>• More configuration of online tools so humanitarians can interact with GIS data</li> <li>• Shift from custom applications to <i>configuration</i> and system thinking</li> </ul> <p>GSMA Disaster Response Programme is launched<sup>475</sup></p> <p>Ground Truth Solutions is founded<sup>476</sup></p> <p>Power ballad and music video about former USG Jan Egeland released</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes a photo of Jan and George Clooney looking at maps<sup>477</sup></li> </ul>
2013	<p>OCHA adopts KoBo Toolbox<sup>478 479</sup></p> <p>The response to Typhoon Haiyan in Philippines introduces many firsts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first large-scale applications of remote IM support (with the OCHA skype group, DHN, etc.) and a model for capital-and-regional IMWGs<sup>480</sup></li> <li>• First L3-designated emergency for the UN/IASC system<sup>481</sup></li> <li>• First use of a prioritization matrix<sup>482</sup></li> <li>• Severity Estimation Estimate index is created from multiple data sources and mapped (by MSF working with OCHA and then later MapAction)<sup>483</sup></li> <li>• UAViator is created out of lack of drone activity coordination.<sup>484</sup> Eventually leads to the creation of WeRobotics</li> <li>• First use of the MIRA<sup>485</sup></li> <li>• <i>OCHA Sudden On-Set IM Guidance</i>, drafted after the response, forms the basis for the OCHA IM Toolbox<sup>486</sup></li> <li>• First use of Artificial Intelligence by OCHA, in partnership with SBTF and QCRI, to scan social media<sup>487</sup></li> <li>• Helps catalyze the creation of the Philippines national Information Management Technical Working Group (IM-TWG) which includes 100+ members, has many signed MOUs, etc. The project was eventually cut due to presidential change<sup>488</sup></li> </ul> <p>West African Ebola Virus Pandemic breaks out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local bikers carry GPS units to help geo-locate missing/misrecorded locations in Sierra Leone (2015)<sup>489</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>473</sup> *Guidance for Collaborating with Volunteers & Technical Communities*, Digital Humanitarian Network; (PDF)

<sup>474</sup> Interviewee 40, April 2023

<sup>475</sup> *Dealing with Disasters: Technical Challenges for Mobile Operators* - June 2012 (PDF)

<sup>476</sup> Ground Truth Solutions' About page on LinkedIn (PDF)

<sup>477</sup> *Ylvis - Jan Egeland* - released 30 September 2012, Accessed on 29 September 2023 (YouTube)

<sup>478</sup> KoboToolbox - About Us (PDF)

<sup>479</sup> Interviewee 52, May 2023

<sup>480</sup> Written Respondent 09 received 13 March 2023

<sup>481</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 28 March 2023

<sup>482</sup> Interviewee 55, March 2023

<sup>483</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>484</sup> Interviewee 59, March 2023

<sup>485</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 28 March 2023

<sup>486</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 29 March 2023

<sup>487</sup> *Typhoon Yolanda: UN Needs Your Help Tagging Crisis Tweets for Disaster Response*, iRevolutions, 8 November 2013 (PDF)

<sup>488</sup> Interviewee 02, August 2023; Information Management Technical Working Group website (PDF)

<sup>489</sup> *Nurses with tablets and bikers with smartphones join Ebola fight*, Joseph D'Urso; 15 May 2015 (PDF)

Year	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open data is the undisputed primary source for geographical information (where as past emergencies it was alongside other, proprietary datasets)<sup>490</sup></li> <li>• Good PII practices, but results in IM teams not being able to do great analysis or trend work<sup>491</sup></li> </ul> <p>ReliefWeb launches a dedicated mobile site<sup>492</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becomes the first consumer of ReliefWeb’s API</li> <li>• Version 2 is released in 2018</li> <li>• Decommissioned in 2024</li> </ul> <p><i>Field-Based Decision Makers’ Information Needs in Sudden Onset Disasters</i> report is released<sup>493</sup></p> <p><i>Humanitarianism in the Network Age</i> is released by OCHA<sup>494</sup></p> <p><i>Humanitarian Decision Makers taxonomy</i> (visual) is published<sup>495</sup></p> <p><i>Guidance for Collaborating with Formal Humanitarian Organizations</i> is released<sup>496</sup></p> <p>OCHA works with the Economist’s Intelligence Unit around defining analytical priorities. These meetings and findings directly influence the creation of HDX in 2014<sup>497</sup></p> <p>HIC 2.0 concept is explored by OCHA<sup>498</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept is module</li> <li>• Includes several social aspects such as a “Coffee Module”</li> </ul> <p>what3words launches<sup>499</sup></p> <p>Opera - as part of the Multinational Coordination Centers (MCCs) for coordinating militaries’ humanitarian efforts - launches and becomes the first one to produce a common operational picture<sup>500</sup></p>
2014	<p>Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) is established by OCHA<sup>501</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDX is a direct result of frustration that very little of what OCHA reported data-wise was verifiable.</li> <li>• COD/FOD Registry transitions to HDX<sup>502</sup></li> </ul> <p>HPC.tools genesis is from the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) kickoff workshop<sup>503</sup></p> <p>OCHA and QCRI (Qatar Computing Research Institute) sign an MOU to work on</p>

<sup>490</sup> Written Respondent 25 received 3 April 2023

<sup>491</sup> Interviewee 60, May 2023

<sup>492</sup> ReliefWeb Labs (PDF)

<sup>493</sup> *Demystifying decisions makers’ needs in sudden onset disasters*, Andrej Verity, veritythink, 08 October 2013 ([Blog PDF](#) | [Report](#))

<sup>494</sup> *Humanitarianism in the Network Age* (including World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2012) (PDF)

<sup>495</sup> *These are the Humanitarian Decision Makers*, Andrej Verity, veritythink, 3 September 2023; (PDF | [Taxonomy](#))

<sup>496</sup> *Guidance for Collaborating with Formal Humanitarian Organizations*, Digital Humanitarian Network, July 2013 (PDF)

<sup>497</sup> Interviewee 57 March 2023; Written Respondent 30 received 16 March 2023; *Defining OCHA’s analytical priorities: Research findings and initial recommendations*, 15 June 2013

<sup>498</sup> *Humanitarian Information Centre 2.0 Blueprint* by OCHA’s Information Services Section, 04 February 2013 (PDF)

<sup>499</sup> *‘What3Words’ Wants To Replace Postcodes With Words - For The Entire Globe*, Michael Rundle, Huffington Post UK; 07 February 2013 (PDF)

<sup>500</sup> Interviewee 27, April 2023

<sup>501</sup> ReliefWeb Labs (PDF)

<sup>502</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 28 March 2023

<sup>503</sup> Interviewee 52, May 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p>technology initiatives including Artificial Intelligence for Disaster Response (AIDR)<sup>504</sup></p> <p>OCHA's IM Toolbox is launched on HumanitarianResponse.info<sup>505</sup></p> <p>ActivityInfo is widely deployed, for the Syrian crisis, as a partner reporting / 3W tool throughout the region<sup>506</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It may have been the first use of an online 3W database at such a scale and so many partners.</li> </ul> <p>INFORM Risk Index launches. It is jointly funded across multiple donors, supported and used by many agencies<sup>507</sup></p> <p>Humanitarian Data Scientist role is defined<sup>508</sup></p>
2015	<p>Nepal Earthquake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First Assessment &amp; Analytics Cell, under UNDAC, is deployed<sup>509</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Used as best practice in developing UNDAC A&amp;A Cell concept</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Humanitarian ID (HID) - for both contact management and authentication - is launched</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First major disaster usage was Nepal Earthquake<sup>510</sup></li> <li>● Promotional material included stop-motion Lego videos and Lego mini figures<sup>511</sup></li> </ul> <p>HNO/HRP InDesign templates are created for the 2016 HNO/HRP<sup>512</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● OCHA transitions away from Word files (CAPs) into more standardized and well designed files for the new HNO/HRP</li> </ul> <p>ReliefWeb introduces Humanitarian Video → a curated collection of links to humanitarian videos posted online<sup>513</sup></p> <p>Application Programming Interfaces (API) launch on HumanitarianResponse.info<sup>514</sup> and HID<sup>515</sup></p> <p>Humanitarian Profile technical support package developed<sup>516</sup></p> <p>Response Planning &amp; Monitoring (RPM) launches as the first HPC.tools<sup>517</sup></p> <p>The interagency Protection Information Management initiative is launched, generating standards for protection data across the humanitarian, development and peacekeeping nexus<sup>518</sup></p>

<sup>504</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations and the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, signed 17 September 2014 ([PDF](#))

<sup>505</sup> Written Respondent 22 received 20 April 2023

<sup>506</sup> Interviewee 53, April 2023

<sup>507</sup> Written Respondent 31 received 8 March 2023; Written Respondent 01 received 17 March 2023

<sup>508</sup> *Humanitarian Data Scientist - who and how?*, Andrej Verity, veritythink, 20 December 2014 ([PDF](#) | [Graphic](#))

<sup>509</sup> Interviewee 51, April 2023

<sup>510</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>511</sup> Humanitarian ID - The Arrival Scenario ([YouTube](#)) and Humanitarian ID - Fast and Easy! ([YouTube](#))

<sup>512</sup> Interviewee 43, May 2023

<sup>513</sup> OCHA Annual Report 2015 ([PDF](#))

<sup>514</sup> Machines love to talk too: Introducing the HR.info API, WayBackMachine ([PDF](#))

<sup>515</sup> HID was built API-first and thus launched with the application - personal experience of author

<sup>516</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 28 March 2023

<sup>517</sup> Interviewee 52, May 2023

<sup>518</sup> Protection Information Management Training Resource Pack, 2018 ([PDF](#))

Year	Milestones
	<p>ACAPS launches the first Humanitarian Analysis course<sup>519</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials are later used to build Analysis courses for OCHA &amp; Red Cross</li> </ul> <p>Missing Maps consortium setup<sup>520</sup></p> <p>UN-GGIM (Working Group on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters) is created<sup>521</sup></p>
<h1>2016</h1>	<p>Humanitarian Exchange Language (HXL) is launched by OCHA<sup>522</sup></p> <p>HDX Lite is launched by OCHA<sup>523</sup></p> <p>ReliefWeb launches dedicated mobile apps<sup>524</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decommissioned in 2018</li> </ul> <p>COD Guidance is revised<sup>525</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COD scope narrowed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core COD concept developed with focus on administrative boundaries and population</li> <li>Change of term FOD (Fundamental Operation Data) Set to COD</li> </ul> </li> <li>COD Technical support package developed</li> <li>FODs are dropped</li> </ul> <p>First <i>Guidance for OCHA IMOs Integrating Cash and Vouchers in Information Management</i> released<sup>526</sup></p> <p>DEEP (Data Entry and Exploration Platform - thedeep.io) is established, after the Nepal earthquake, by several agencies to strengthen collective sense-making and analysis<sup>527</sup></p> <p>The Grand Bargain, launched at the World Humanitarian Summit, is an agreement between donors and humanitarian organizations aimed to bridge the funding gap and improve aid effectiveness<sup>528</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficiency and Transparency: Commands greater transparency in how funding is used and shared across the sector.</li> <li>Localization: Includes a specific commitment to put more funding and decision-making power into the hands of local and national responders.</li> <li>Multi-year Planning: Encourages a move away from short-term, reactive funding toward more predictable, multi-year humanitarian planning.</li> </ul>
<h1>2017</h1>	<p>Centre for Humanitarian Data is opened, by OCHA, in Den Haag, Netherlands<sup>529</sup></p> <p>OCHA and UNFPA sign a joint letter of <i>Cooperation on the Core COD – Population Statistics</i><sup>530</sup></p>

<sup>519</sup> Interviewee 51, April 2023

<sup>520</sup> Interviewee 61, March 2023

<sup>521</sup> Working Group on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters ([PDF](#))

<sup>522</sup> *HXL Version 1.0 goes live - #awesome*, Andrej Verity, veritythink, 21 March 2016 ([PDF](#) | [Postcard](#))

<sup>523</sup> Written Respondent 32 received 6 October 2023

<sup>524</sup> ReliefWeb Labs ([PDF](#))

<sup>525</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 28 March 2023 and 20 April 2023

<sup>526</sup> Interviewee 47, April 2023

<sup>527</sup> Thedeep.io Website, Way Back Machine 29 March 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>528</sup> The Grand Bargain (Official website) ([PDF](#))

<sup>529</sup> Centre for humanitarian data: connecting people and data to improve lives, 05 January 2017 ([PDF](#))

<sup>530</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 29 March 2023 and 20 April 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p>Global Common Operational Dataset dashboard is launched - <a href="https://cod.unocha.org">https://cod.unocha.org</a><sup>531</sup></p> <p>ReliefWeb launches ReliefWeb Lite<sup>532</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prototype to test ideas and deliver them through a new technical framework; works as a Progressive Web App</li> <li>• Decommissioned in 2018</li> </ul> <p>OCHA releases the song <i>Common Operational Datasets (CODs)</i><sup>533</sup></p> <p>HICTF (Humanitarian ICT Forum) is organized by OCHA, and hosted by Google,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aimed to bring together humanitarian organizations and the technology industry to find innovative solutions that will make the humanitarian response for people affected by conflict and natural disaster more efficient and effective<sup>534 535</sup></li> <li>• Is a sort of successor to the WGET (1996)<sup>536</sup></li> </ul> <p>Facebook announces their Disaster Maps project in conjunction with UNICEF, the ICRC and WFP<sup>537</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First significant data to come is for Hurricane Harvey in August-Sept 2017<sup>538</sup></li> </ul> <p>UN Geospatial Network is established by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)<sup>539</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New iteration of the UNGIWG<sup>540</sup></li> </ul> <p>Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters is released by UN-GGIM<sup>541</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council in July 2018 under resolution 2018/14<sup>542</sup></li> </ul> <p>OCHA and Lonely Planet extend their agreement to grant access to the LP Guide and Language books in countries where OCHA operates and/or deploys<sup>543</sup></p>
2018	<p>Global IMWG GIS sub-group starts<sup>544</sup></p> <p>ReliefWeb tests using Artificial Intelligence to help with tagging documents, to increase consistency and reduce human burden, as they are uploaded to the platform. Further attempts were made in 2020 and 2021<sup>545</sup></p>

<sup>531</sup> Interviewee 58, April 2023; Written Respondent 22 received 20 April 2023

<sup>532</sup> ReliefWeb Labs ([PDF](#))

<sup>533</sup> Common Operational Datasets (CODs) animation ([YouTube](#))

<sup>534</sup> Interviewee 62, September 2023

<sup>535</sup> HICTF website capture, WayBack Machine ([PDF](#))

<sup>536</sup> Interviewee 62, September 2023

<sup>537</sup> Using Data to Help Communities Recover and Rebuild ([PDF](#) | [YouTube](#))

<sup>538</sup> Andrew Schroeder received 30 August 2023

<sup>539</sup> Geospatial Network on un.org ([PDF](#))

<sup>540</sup> Interview with Steve Ebener on 30 August 2023

<sup>541</sup> Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters, August 2017 ([PDF](#))

<sup>542</sup> Economic and Social Council July 2018 - Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 2 July 2018 ([PDF](#))

<sup>543</sup> Broadcast message to OCHA personnel of 31 October 2017 ([PDF](#))

<sup>544</sup> Written Respondent 28 received 28 March 2023

<sup>545</sup> ReliefWeb Machine Learning Project document, August 2021 ([PDF](#)); Written Respondent 33 received 23 August 2023

Year	Milestones
	<p>JADE (Joint Analysis of Disaster Exposure) is conceptualized and used by OCHA, PDC and WFP<sup>546</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims is to address the data gap for questions in the early hours of an emergency using state-of-the-art modeling, secondary data, and close cooperation with responding agencies<sup>547</sup></li> <li>• First used in the Sulawesi, Indonesia Earthquake response<sup>548</sup></li> <li>• Was almost called JEDI<sup>549</sup></li> </ul> <p>The IFRC launches the GO Platform to make all disaster information universally accessible and useful to IFRC responders for better decision making.<sup>550</sup></p> <p>OCHA releases the song <i>OCHA Information Management: The Big 5</i><sup>551</sup></p>
2019	<p>Digital Situation Report beta launched by OCHA<sup>552</sup></p> <p>IRIN becomes an independent (non-UN) newsroom and is rebranded as The New Humanitarian<sup>553</sup></p> <p>HDX Data Grid is introduced<sup>554</sup></p> <p>Humanitarian Kiosk - mobile app - decommissioned<sup>555</sup></p> <p>Cyclone Idai is perhaps the first time when (drone) aerial survey is used in a large way<sup>556 557</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodology: Kobo &amp; grid system to aim at severity scoring that covered an area the size of Wales (done in 3 days). Put the form in the hands of anyone in an aerial vehicle.</li> <li>• Before: lots of air capacity, but independent assessment or reconnaissance which tended to focus on a specific point. Information and data was not structured such that it could be put together for a full picture</li> </ul> <p>IFRC's <i>Data PlayBook and Disaster Readiness Toolkit</i> are released<sup>558</sup></p>
2020	<p>OCHA migrates a majority of its online platforms to the cloud, including ReliefWeb, HDX and HumanitarianResponse.info<sup>559</sup></p> <p>INFORM Severity Index is launched<sup>560</sup></p> <p>Global Humanitarian Operational Presence (3W) is launched - <a href="https://3w.unocha.org">https://3w.unocha.org</a><sup>561</sup></p>

<sup>546</sup> Written Respondent 17 May 2023 ([JADE Flier](#), [JADE Infographic](#))

<sup>547</sup> JADE Flier 2018 ([PDF](#))

<sup>548</sup> M7.5 Sulawesi, Indonesia Earthquake Impact Analysis and Potential Needs (30/09/2018) ([PDF](#))

<sup>549</sup> Written Respondent 09 received 17 May 2023

<sup>550</sup> Interviewee 55, March 2023

<sup>551</sup> OCHA Information Management: The Big 5 ([YouTube](#))

<sup>552</sup> ReliefWeb Labs ([PDF](#))

<sup>553</sup> The New Humanitarian - Our History ([PDF](#))

<sup>554</sup> Introducing the HDX Data Grid: A way to find and fill data gaps ([PDF](#))

<sup>555</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>556</sup> Interviewee 55, March 2023

<sup>557</sup> Aerial Assessment Report - Mozambique - IDAI - 31-March-2019 ([PDF](#))

<sup>558</sup> Interviewee 61, March 2023

<sup>559</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>560</sup> Written Respondent 31 received 8 March 2023;

<sup>561</sup> Interviewee 58, April 2023;

Year	Milestones
	<p>GIMAC (Global Information Management, Assessment and Analysis Cell) is launched through the Global IMWG<sup>562</sup></p> <p>JIAF (Joint and Intersectoral Analysis Framework) is launched to help operations inform their Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)<sup>563</sup></p> <p>Digital Humanitarian Network scales back its digital coordination activities as more traditional actors had added and skilled-up in the space<sup>564</sup></p> <p>Standby Volunteer Task Force formally dissolves<sup>565</sup></p>
2021	<p>OCHA releases their <i>Data Responsibility Guidelines</i><sup>566</sup></p> <p>IASC releases <i>Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action</i><sup>567</sup></p>
2022	<p>Creation of ReliefWeb Response (successor to HumanitarianResponse)<sup>568</sup></p> <p><i>A Decade Later: Reflecting on Disaster Relief 2.0</i> report reflects on how well the 2011 Disaster Relief 2.0 report's predictions stood up and how things have (or have not) progressed.<sup>569</sup></p> <p>INFORM Climate Change Index is launched<sup>570</sup></p> <p>Humanitarian ID contact management functionality decommissioned<sup>571</sup></p> <p>REDHUM is decommissioned<sup>572</sup></p> <p>Major cybersecurity incident at ICRC<sup>573</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness by ICRC prompts the community to realize that it can now be the target of such attacks</li> </ul>
2023	<p>ReliefWeb posts its 1 millionth report<sup>574</sup></p> <p>OCHA signs enterprise agreement with ESRI<sup>575</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple attempts had been made over the past 10+ years<sup>576</sup></li> </ul> <p>OCHA's Technology Governance Board is established</p>

<sup>562</sup> Interviewee 63, April 2023

<sup>563</sup> Joint and Intersectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF) 2.0: 3 questions for Herbert Tatham, OCHA APMB, 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>564</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>565</sup> SBTF to dissolve ([PDF](#))

<sup>566</sup> Data Responsibility, Centre for Humanitarian Data ([PDF](#))

<sup>567</sup> IASC Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action ([PDF](#))

<sup>568</sup> HR.info takes on a new form, ReliefWeb, 01 July 2022 ([PDF](#))

<sup>569</sup> A Decade Later: Reflecting on Disaster Relief 2.0, Digital Humanitarian Network, 23 Aug 2022 ([PDF](#))

<sup>570</sup> Written Respondent 31 received 8 March 2023

<sup>571</sup> Personal experience of author

<sup>572</sup> RedHum.org on Way Back Machine, 02 March 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>573</sup> Cyber attack on ICRC: What we know 16 February 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>574</sup> One million posts and counting ([PDF](#))

<sup>575</sup> Written Respondent 35 on 18 September 2023

<sup>576</sup> Personal experience of author

Year	Milestones
2024	<p>HumanitarianResponse.info is taken offline, after 11 years, having been replaced by ReliefWeb Response<sup>577</sup></p> <p>ReliefWeb releases <i>Ask ReliefWeb</i> - an artificial intelligence-powered beta Question &amp; Answer Chatbot for (individual) reports<sup>578</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removed in 2026</li> </ul> <p>ReliefWeb Crisis Figures project is closed down<sup>579</sup></p> <p>ReliefWeb launches a dedicated <i>Artificial Intelligence in Humanitarian Action</i> page<sup>580</sup></p> <p>OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data organizes the first Humanitarian Data Forum in The Hague<sup>581</sup></p> <p>HDX Signals is launched<sup>582</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A service that monitors key datasets (on HDX) and generates automated emails when significant, negative changes are detected</li> </ul> <p>HDX Humanitarian API (HAPI) is launched<sup>583</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a way to access standardized indicators from multiple sources to automate workflows and visualizations</li> </ul> <p><i>Provision of Information Management and Analysis Organizational Review</i> about OCHA completed in December 2024<sup>584</sup></p>
2025	<p>IASC launches the <i>IASC Standards for Collective Feedback Mechanisms</i><sup>585</sup></p> <p>OCHA, together with the IASC and ITU, launch the <i>AI and Humanitarian Action</i> discovery series at part of ITU's AI-for-Good programme<sup>586</sup></p> <p>OCHA's Information Management Branch (IMB) is dissolved as part of OCHA's restructuring<sup>587</sup></p>
2026	<p>Humanitarian Exchange Language (HXL) is retired by OCHA after 10 years.<sup>588</sup> From the announcement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HXL standard was created over ten years ago as a way to combine messy data across spreadsheets. As technology and our humanitarian data ecosystem has advanced, we are exploring new ways to standardize data, improve interoperability and speed up data processing across data sources</li> <li>• HXL is an open standard and will remain available for organizations that wish to continue using it within their internal workflows</li> </ul>

<sup>577</sup> *HR.info - Farewell after 11 years of service* - email newsletter sent on 4 January 2023 ([PDF](#))

<sup>578</sup> Announcing 'Ask ReliefWeb', 31 July 2024 (PDF | Avatar image); Presentation at AWS UN Cloud Alliance Day by UNOCHA ([PDF](#))

<sup>579</sup> ReliefWeb Crisis Figures Data on the Humanitarian Data Exchange site is "Archived" ([PDF](#))

<sup>580</sup> Artificial Intelligence in Humanitarian Action on ReliefWeb ([PDF](#))

<sup>581</sup> Humanitarian Data Forum ([PDF](#) | [Agenda](#))

<sup>582</sup> Introducing HDX Signals, Centre for Humanitarian Data ([PDF](#))

<sup>583</sup> Announcing the HDX Humanitarian API, Centre for Humanitarian Data ([PDF](#)); HDX HAPI site ([PDF](#))

<sup>584</sup> OCHA Provision of Information Management and Analysis Organizational Review - Final Report - December 2024; ([PDF](#))

<sup>585</sup> IASC launches the IASC Standards for Collective Feedback Mechanisms ([PDF](#))

<sup>586</sup> AI and humanitarian action: Unlocking the power of partnerships, AI for Good ([YouTube](#))

<sup>587</sup> Extracts from USG Fletcher's message to staff on the OCHA reset on unocha.org ([PDF](#))

<sup>588</sup> *Changes to support for the Humanitarian Exchange Language* newsletter email from HDX on 14 January 2026 ([PDF](#))