

Tulane University Launches Interactive Map to Track River Flooding

May 20, 2011 11:45 AM Keith Brannon
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Tulane University's Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy has launched an interactive website to help residents in flood-affected areas post real-time information about how the disaster has affected their communities.

The DRLA Louisiana Flood Map, which uses the open source Ushahidi crisis mapping software, is available at <http://lafloodmap.drlatulane.org>

"The purpose of the map is to empower citizens of flood-affected Louisiana to speak out about how the flood is affecting their lives and livelihoods, their communities and the environment," said Ky Luu, executive director of the Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy.

The site collects and displays news, text messages, cell-phone photos, short videos and voice messages about the effects of the flooding submitted by Louisiana residents via their phones, email, twitter and the Internet. Residents can send photos, videos and text reports on water levels, flooded property, health effects, public safety issues, community resources, volunteer information and resources for flood protection and recovery. All reports are screened, categorized, geolocated and rendered on the online map in a timeline and in categorized lists.

Residents can report information in one of four ways: send a text message to 702-582-5378; e-mail lafloodmap@drlatulane.org; send a tweet with the hashtag: #lafloodmap or online at <http://lafloodmap.drlatulane.org/reports/submit/>

The site is similar to the Oil Spill Crisis Map (<http://oilspill.labucketbrigade.org/>) the DRLA created with environmental advocacy group Louisiana Bucket Brigade to track the effects of last year's Gulf oil spill. That map generated more than 3,400 reports ranging from spotting oiled wildlife to opportunities for community organizing.

“With crisis mapping we have the possibility of getting reports from anyone who notices a problem whether it's on the ground, from the air or via a satellite,” says DRLA co-director Nancy Mock. “We can get better insights in to the effects of disasters because the information comes from those affected by crises in near real time.”