Calls to action in incident response

Adam Berry describes how a call to action can be used in a meaningful way so that responders, local governments and contractors can mobilise and work cohesively during a crisis

A 'call to action' is a phrase that developed in the military during the English Civil War of the 1600s. It meant mobilising militia to deal with a local problem or joining others to create a volunteer army. Over the years, it became a general call to arms throughout the British Empire. Both the army and navy have a call to action bugle call, sometimes called 'action stations'. You will have heard this on Remembrance Day during the Last Post because it is part of that sequence of bugle calls. Almost every nation has its own version of a call to action (CTA).

A CTA in these modern times could be the mobilisation of a volunteer army. As the UK's House of Lords report from December 2021 suggests: "The Government will not succeed in anticipating every threat or hazard. For that reason, the country needs to be prepared to recover from shocks to which it is vulnerable. That capacity to recover must be based on a flexible, adaptable and diverse population that appreciates the need for its resilience."

Action stations

The new Local Resilience platform introduced by Initsys in the UK allows local government, from parish to nationwide, to use the concept of a CTA in a meaningful way – to enable volunteers, first and second-line responders, council employees and contractors to act in concert.

A CTA triggers a profile, an actionable, largely automated script that follows a path to resolution. It can handle even the most complicated plans with multiple entry points and questions – pathway changes and parallel processes – as well as associated responders and groups.

Let's look at some simple CTAs ready for deployment in the Local Resilience Network (LRN).

■ **Automated external defibrillators (AEDs):** Time is of the essence. Imagine you are at home with your partner and one of you suffers a heart attack. Do you leave the person to fetch the AED? Medical practitioners vary in their responses; some say you should go and retrieve the AED, while others say to stay with the patient. It's a quandary.

Some first responders are directed to an incident by the 999 system in the UK, but the network is overloaded and sometimes a first responder isn't available. We all know that it's almost always too late if we rely on an ambulance, despite the heroic work done by emergency medical workers. And the phrase, 'Stay on the line caller', is no longer practical.

But a CTA can provide a solution via the LRN; all it takes is a second telephone call after the call to emergency services; you do not even need to speak. The network will immediately link you to AED response volunteers who have been 'called to action', if you need a device. This is achieved by connecting your home telephone to the local resilience grid in advance. It is simple, effective, very efficient and can be expanded using interactive voice response if your community has a trauma kit or other expertise.

■ **Road closures:** Local authorities often face great demands to deal with fallen trees and other debris when a storm passes. But, what happens when a road remains open, despite being blocked? A fallen tree is just around the corner, yet the road is empty; this is an accident waiting to happen. It usually takes hours for the tree to be moved or for the erection of signs to indicate the road is closed.

> Cameras have reduced crime and stopped the community from being a haven for stolen vehicles

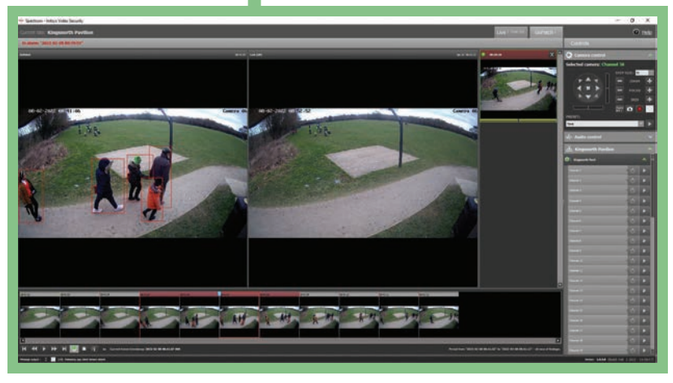
However, what if the signs could be delegated to the local community? This is another task that could be done safely and quickly by suitably trained volunteers.

Using the LRN tools, a blocked road after a storm, for example, triggers a CTA. A contractor that is designated to deal with the debris and tree is mobilised. Community volunteers, storing road closure signs locally, mark the road. Instruction and mobilisation are entirely automatic, based on the geolocation of the block.

This frees the police and road maintenance personnel to deal with potentially more hazardous incidents. And maybe, more importantly, it enables them to provide warnings earlier, as several people have been killed after hitting a fallen tree blocking a road in the UK. Many of these incidents, coming hours after reports of the tree, could have been avoided with the earlier deployment of road closures.

All CCTV systems are compatible with the Local Resilience Network, which uses high speed analytics and robotically controlled speech to monitor and deter potential criminals

Local Resilience/ Initsys



■ **Flooding:** Often, flooding alerts are confined to coastal regions, large rivers, estuaries and known flood regions. However, they can happen anywhere, not just on low ground. Local communities have often criticised authorities for not understanding or considering their fears.

The installation of upstream sensors on even the most minor streams and rivers can be achieved cheaply, often with assistance from insurers.

However, these sensors need management, and environment agencies can be reluctant to allocate resources to small risks. The LRN is compatible with all sensors and indirect feeds from heavy rainfall and groundwater prediction systems. A CTA can be automatic in these circumstances, giving vital local warnings in even the most minor situations. It can assist with advising local volunteers to assist the vulnerable with a caution given further up the chain of command to district and regional councils.

Indeed, even changing batteries in equipment and essential maintenance is a task for suitably trained volunteers. This timely advice of the potential for flooding allows the installation of household defence equipment, such as door barriers and the closing of vents. Or, using the CCTV element of the LRN, cameras can check that the automatic defences have operated.

■ **Anti-social behaviour:** An early deployment of the Local Resilience potential was to detect and deter speeding and theft in small villages in Leicestershire, UK. It achieved these targets by using CCTV cameras and unused upload bandwidth in volunteers' homes. Cameras have reduced crime and stopped the community from being a haven for stolen vehicles, where they were parked waiting to be collected after the thefts.

Recent changes have allowed the village to monitor cars that regularly speed through the town. Drivers are sent warning letters from the police and targeted if speed continues to be a problem.

■ **CCTV and IoT:** All CCTV systems are compatible with the LRN; this is one of the primary uses of Initsys products in the field of operational resilience (business resilience). Communities can use traditional and video surveillance as a service (VSaaS) systems to connect to the LRN and monitor buildings against vandalism and theft.

The LRN includes high-speed deep learning analytics to give a virtual false alarm-free detection method without human involvement. In many cases, the robotically controlled speech module is used to ward off vandals and those with more devious intent.

Local Resilience has a connection to many guarding companies and, of course, the police. However, with time constraints being a significant factor in incident response, the prompt and noisy arrival of several volunteers responding to a CTA would, in most cases, have the required effect. CRJ

Author

ADAM BERRY *is Managing Director of Initsys Ltd and has been with the company since 2008. Initsys is a* CRJ *Key Network Partner, see initsys.net*