

Biomedical and Health Informatics Lecture Series

Course Website: [Link](#)

Tuesday, November 27, 2012
12:00 - 12:50 p.m., Room T-747

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“Crowdwork, Crisis and Convergence: How the Connected Crowd Helps to Organize Information during Mass Disruption Events”

Sociologists of disaster have long recognized that people will converge onto the scene of a disaster, often attempting to provide assistance to those affected or those responding. ICT and social media are now enabling a kind of digital convergence in the wake of crisis events. For example, hundreds of thousands of people around the world turned to Twitter in the wake of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. That event precipitated and marked a turn towards digital volunteerism and recognition of the potential of social media-enabled collective action during crisis events. In this presentation, I will describe how members of the remote crowd "work" during crises and other mass disruption events—as remote operators, emergent response organizations, and increasingly as volunteers in virtual volunteer organizations. Building on previous empirical work in this space, I will then highlight design possibilities for supporting and leveraging this work, and identify challenges of and opportunities for connecting this new crowd capacity with formal response efforts.

Kate Starbird is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Human Centered Design and Engineering (HCDE) at the University of Washington. Dr. Starbird’s research, which is situated within the fields of HCI and CSCW, examines interaction and collaboration as enabled, supported, and structured by social media and other online tools. She investigates both large-scale and small group online interaction within the context of crises and other mass disruption events, studying how digital volunteers and other members of the connected crowd work to filter and shape the information space. As part of this research, she co-created and developed the infrastructure to support the "Tweak the Tweet" project, an innovation for using Twitter more effectively as a channel for reporting actionable information during crisis. Dr. Starbird received her BS in Computer Science from Stanford University in 1997 and her PhD in Technology, Media and Society from the ATLAS Institute at the University of Colorado in 2012. She was awarded an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship for her PhD research.