Outreach

Ushahidi Maps are a collaborate experience.

How to attract and share with a Crowd

Successful Ushahidi implementations engage hundreds of participants and attract a wide audience through outreach and publicity. When thinking about how to promote your map project, consider a strategy that meets and invites your audience.

Some ways to do that: build an online presence, participation in live events (Google Hangouts), community meetings and word-of-mouth. Of course, you can also consider: articles in print/blogs, newspaper ads, radio and television appearances,

We offer some ideas below, but your actual tactics will depend on your budget, location and the nature of your campaign. Be creative!

Build your Community

Use online networking tools, including Twitter, Facebook, Google + and/or a blog that tells the story behind your organization and your campaign as it evolves. Use photos and video if you have the tools and skills. Seek out common friends to your cause who can amplify or follow your updates. You may also use internet and mobile advertising and, for developing countries in Sub Saharan Africa, considering paying for ad time on 'please call me' messages by mobile phone companies.

See some of the Community building examples from: Uchaguzi - Kenyan Elections 2013 (community meetings, Uchaguzi Community Working Groups and Uchaguzi Digital Teams

Partners

Seek out partnerships and build relationships in your community and beyond. Word of mouth is free and delivers a dedicated core group of supporters and fans who share a commitment to your cause. Explore overlapping spheres of community and find out how your project is relevant to others, perhaps local artists or musicians.

Creative

Design an eye-catching flyer that complements the graphics and theme of your Ushahidi instance. Hand out at live events and local gathering spots.

Media

Create a captivating press release that clearly describes what your campaign is about and what impact it will have. Include quotes and/or contacts for interviews. Do your homework to find contacts for local print, radio and television media including personalities who are known to support your cause. Budget permitting, you may also purchase strategically placed newspaper and radio advertisements.

Mobile First

You may also want to use a mobile shortcode that is easy to remember and/or to allow people to send SMS free of charge (Note that costs may be involved)

Call to action

Get more people to participate rather than only observe!

1. Give clear instructions on what information to submit and how.
2. Make sure to give confirmations when reports are received (via email or SMS).
3. Establish an immediate application for your data at the conclusion of your campaign.
4. Followup with your Community

If they see that there is a measurable result, they are more likely to contribute their time and effort.

Consider:

- Why should someone submit information?

- What is in it for them?
- Are people able to subscribe to alerts?
- Is this clearly communicated?
- Can you create a tangible incentive?
- An example might be a reward of mobile minutes or SMS credit for one lucky participant each day of your campaign.

Example Outreach plan:

The following content has been provided by Chris Augeri, curator of the MightyMoRiver map.

Most of my work involves curating social network and media information for industry and government clients. Our MightyMoRiver project was as much an experiment on using open-source tools as to showcase how geo-spatially and temporally referenced information could be shared with end users during emergency event. Outline follows below...

Some key issues

- 2-stage review of all reports, especially for new contributors
- Orthogonal labeling scheme – ideally, we could have "canned" deployments for certain disasters
- Links to open government data – this likely would require citizen-level expertise
- Tweak the tweet
- Training and deployment with the American Red Cross / American Red Crescent
- Since non-profit, we could leverage Yahoo! Pipes, RSS feeds of news media -- an equivalent for paid services – biz opportunity – i.e., a canned OPML file
- Some artifacts we're happy with:
    - Video – since that beats any blog post, any day
    - Ability to engage others – e.g., Ajay in India, & Bill Morris in Vermont
    - About – Google CSE – this could be canned / exportable?
    - Standard deployment pack – email, Twitter, RSS, FB, Twitter
    - Given we were a team of volunteers, we couldn't possibly hope to keep up with the flood of data – we accommodated these gaps in several ways
    - Inclusion of search terms to automatically bring up related reports
    - Map overlays that would bring up social media and search feeds for severely damaged areas
    - Leveraging of Twitter by day &paper.li by night to supplement the curated information on the site

Research

- how do youth get engaged