How disaster recovery in North America can benefit from VAN organizing software

-Problem, opportunity, challenges, steps forward

**The Problem:**

**The opportunity:**

NGP VAN has created a best in class field organizing product to allow loosely affiliated political campaigns and other social organizing programs to cooperatively target, contact, and build individual histories over a period of months in a large universe of potential voters.

In particular, the miniVAN mobile app and Turf Cutter system have brought huge gains in efficiency for door to door canvassing. The VAN’s multi-tenancy model has also allowed campaigns throughout the Democratic sphere to maintain key private data while working together to accumulate modelling data and knowledge about individual voters - a huge advantage up and down the ballot in 2012 elections.

*Disaster Recovery* involves goals and challenges very similar to political and non-profit field organizing. After a major disaster such as Hurricane Sandy, millions of potential residents and buildings need to be targeted and contacted, initially to assess their most urgent needs and continuously to step through the recovery process.

Recovery efforts should be optimized to make the best use of personell and resources on the ground, and aligned organizations should be able to benefit from each others’ efforts. Despite these similarities, there is no established technology or clear candidate to solve these problems in the disaster recovery world.

**Challenges**

Moving toward this solution is not without it’s challenges.