



Introduction to Development Seed

Strategies for International Development

August 2008

prepared by Development Seed

About Development Seed

We are a team of communication experts and software developers who devise innovative ways to use technology to help organizations better communicate and further their impact. We come into organizations, develop new communications strategies, and help execute them. Our focus on results, combined with our expertise in online communications strategy and knowledge management, has us solving some of the toughest communications challenges for some of the world's most influential organizations.

We specialize in building simple and elegant tools that get to the root of our clients' communications problems and achieve powerful results. Our projects have raised awareness about poverty for the United Nation's Millennium Campaign, mapped agencies' abilities to respond to a bird flu outbreak for InterAction and USAID, and connected the World Bank's geographically dispersed programs. All these projects are made possible by our unique team and our approach to development.

Every strategist on our team is also an engineer, and vice versa. This means that every strategic plan we craft for our clients can be executed by the same team who dreamed it up. Our two-pronged approach combining communications strategy and engineering expertise allows us to quickly and efficiently build solutions that achieve organizations' specific communications goals and workflow needs. After all, great communications wins are never accomplished by a tool itself, but by what a team does with that tool.

Below are descriptions of some recent projects we've worked on. We hope this paper gives you a good understanding of how we work and the kind of tools that we build. The examples described in the following pages are built almost entirely on the open source platform Drupal.



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- a. InterAction: Visualizing Data to Prepare for Pandemics
- b. American Institute of Architects: Making Disaster Response Tools More Accessible
- c. World Bank: Improving Internal Communication at the World Bank
- d. UN Millennium Campaign: Creating Multilingual Solutions for Your Audiences
- e. Human Rights Watch: Multimedia Solutions for Global Audiences
- f. World Resources Institute: Building Multilingual Tools That Benefit Smaller NGO's
- g. Managing News: Tracking the News in All Online Mediums
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- j. Mapping Tools: Plotting Data for Clarity and Efficiency

a. InterAction: Visualizing Data to Prepare for Pandemics

Situation: InterAction, in conjunction with USAID, came to us with a need to better visualize the capacity of local development agencies to prevent the spread of a catastrophic diseases like bird flu. InterAction had two goals with this project: to better collect data and program information from public health agencies working on the ground abroad, and to display this data in a way that makes it easy for policy makers to quickly understand the current capacity to respond to a disaster and identify gaps in capacity.

Solution: The Pandemic Preparedness Mapping site, which can be seen at preparedness.interaction.org, makes it simple to collect and display timely data with clarity. With this tool, public health workers abroad can go online and enter data about their programs through a simple online submission form. Their data is then immediately sent to InterAction staff in Washington, DC, who can then edit and approve it. Once the data is approved, it's published automatically on a dynamic map. From there, anyone can see which areas have the capacity to respond to an outbreak of avian flu and which do not. Users can also export the data to KML format for display on Google Earth, opening up possibilities to integrate the data with other applications.

The end result is that InterAction now has an up-to-date “yellow pages” of public health organizations that can respond to an outbreak of avian flu and a timely view of their capacity to handle such a crisis.

Here is a look at the tool:



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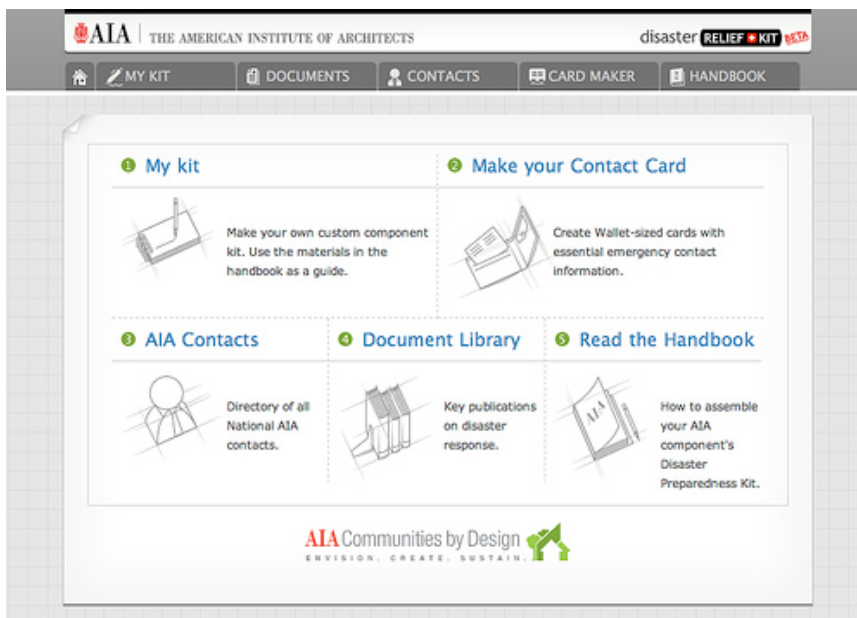
Other Resources:

- ▶ Pandemic Preparedness Capacity Project, <http://preparedness.interaction.org/>
- ▶ Photo gallery of the toolset: <http://is.gd/1gSS>
- ▶ Overview of the project: <http://is.gd/FVZ>

b. American Institute of Architects: Making Disaster Response Tools More Accessible

Situation: The American Institute of Architects had a critically important handbook instructing disaster relief workers on how to provide aid with respect to housing in a disaster area. The problem was that the handbook was only available in a clunky binder or in a long, printed PDF, and neither was an ideal format for accessing this kind resource in the heart of a disaster area. A secondary concern was that the handbook was a stagnant resource that quickly became outdated.

Solution: To address these problems we turned the disaster relief handbook into a dynamic website that runs on a USB drive without any internet connection. Since the handbook now functions just like a website with a content management system, staff can update and add information easily. Additionally, we created a directory of local contact information that can be edited by a wider community, which allows the American Institute of Architects to crowd-source the updating of its phone book.



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To make it easy for relief workers to use the handbook we put it on a USB drive that they can carry on their key chain. Whenever they have access to a computer, whether there's an internet connection or not, they can plug it in and access the handbook. We didn't want this tool to become stagnant either, so we built it so that whenever the USB drive is plugged into a computer, it searches for an internet connection. Every time it finds one it syncs up with the latest version of the handbook available online, uploads any local updates, and downloads this new version to the USB drive. This gives disaster relief workers the powerful combination of a resource that's current and accessible, no matter what the conditions are on the ground.



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Other Resources:

► Overview of the project: <http://is.gd/1eLy>

► Image Gallery: <http://is.gd/1eLu>

► Other blog posts about the project:

Database Backups for Drupal on a Stick, <http://is.gd/1eLp>

Getting a Web Server to Run on a USB Drive, <http://is.gd/1eLo>



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c. World Bank: Improving Internal Communications

Situation: CommNet, the 670+ person communications team at The World Bank, is spread out in dozens of countries around the world, and its Washington, DC-based staff frequently travel and work from abroad. The team needs to be able to discuss their work, collaborate on projects, and share documents, deadlines, and meeting times in a secure and timely manner that works for individuals in different countries and office settings.

Solution: We built the intranet that the communications department uses to meet these needs. It addresses all of the needs stated above with the latest tools, is customized to their workflows, and is integrated with their third-party enterprise systems, all the way down to the sign-on protocol. Since so many of their programs have a regional or country-specific focus, we geo-tagged the information housed in their intranet and display this information on a map. Staff can then search for relevant content in this way and drill down to get exactly what they're looking for.

Additionally, the World Bank wanted to be able to pull information out of the intranet and publish it on other websites to further open up the lines of communication and increase access to this content. We made it possible to do this by creating numerous republishing channels via private RSS feeds that can easily be pulled into and displayed on other intranets on their private network.

Below is an image of the site, which runs entirely behind the World Bank's internal firewall and is not accessible to the public.



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Other Resources:

- Blog posts about the project:

One of the Five Big Companies that Gets Knowledge Management,
<http://is.gd/1gSD>

Better Displaying Events on Intranets: Groupwise doesn't cut it.,
<http://is.gd/1gSE>

d. United Nations Millennium Campaign: Creating Multilingual Solutions for Your Audiences

Situation: The UN Millennium Campaign's annual Stand Up Against Poverty event is a Guinness World Record-setting public action campaign that brings together people around the world to organize community advocacy events on the same day. The UN Millennium Campaign wanted organizers to come to a website within the 24-hour period to enter data about the number of participants at their event, and to do so they needed to access the site in several languages. The UN Millennium Campaign wanted two big wins from its website: to get people talking about the Millennium Development goals and to make a big splash in the media by breaking their own world record. We designed the online strategy and deployed a multilingual website to help them achieve this.

Solution: For the 2007 event we built a website with a public interface that was translated into four languages other than English. While Drupal already had a great toolset for developers to make translations, the UN Millennium Campaign needed to save time and money by letting their staff do the translation work, and their staff lacked the technical training to use the existing tools. To facilitate this process, we built an on-screen translation tool that allowed their staff to view any page on the site, identify untranslated phrases, and translate them to a new language without technical training.

The next hurdle with the project had to do with data collection. Since the UN Millennium Campaign was already relying on the Democracy In Action CRM (DIA) product for managing their information, they wanted to collect data in DIA instead of Drupal. However, the DIA toolset did not allow for translating submission forms. With a powerful translation toolset in place on the Drupal side, we were able to set up a form in Drupal that talked to DIA using their API, and the UN Millennium Campaign staff were easily able to translate the Drupal pages. This let them effectively use a powerful CRM product that offered no multilingual support for a multilingual project, and helped them break their own prior world record by logging over 40 million participants in



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the one-day event. We are currently redesigning the website in several languages for 2008's event (design pictured below).



Other Resources:

- ▶ Overview of the project: <http://is.gd/1eLy>
- ▶ Image Gallery: <http://is.gd/1eLu>
- ▶ Blog posts about the project:
 - Stand Up Against Poverty, <http://is.gd/1flo>
 - 38 Million People Stood Against Poverty! <http://is.gd/1fly>
 - Displaying Photos Easily and Compellingly with Flickr Widgets, <http://is.gd/1gSH>
 - Unlimited Images for Your Content with Drupal and Flickr, <http://is.gd/1gSI>
 - The Drupal i18n Saga Continues. Here's Drupal 6 i18n!, <http://is.gd/ndH>



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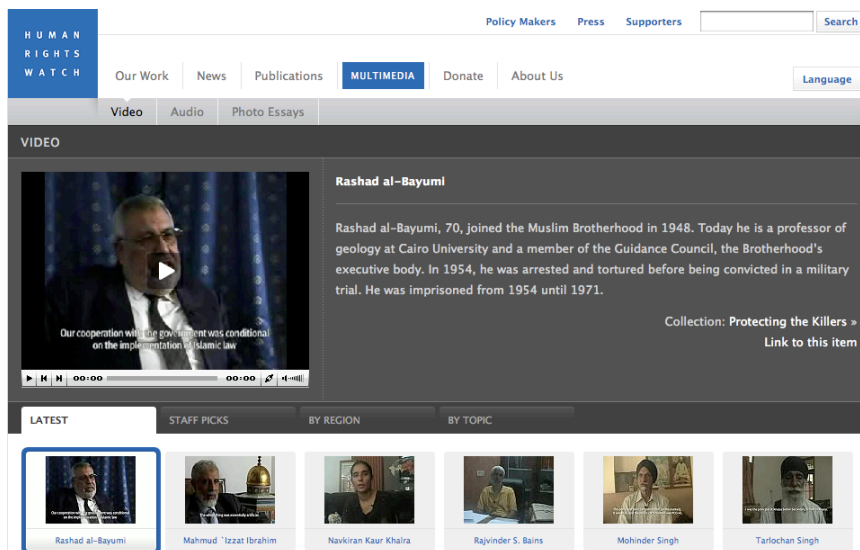
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e. Human Rights Watch: Multimedia Solutions for Global Audiences

Situation: Human Rights Watch has been a major leader in documenting and spreading awareness about human rights abuses around the world, and as part of their work, they have created original video and photo works that communicate their messages. Photos can speak for themselves, but videos need to be translated for a global audience to appreciate them, and video production is expensive. For their new website, due to debut in Fall 2008, Human Rights Watch needed an effective way to translate online videos into other languages, but there were no good online tools available.

Solution: Using the open source video application JW Player, we built a custom video solution for Human Rights Watch that allowed them to host the online video on their own site instead of using YouTube or another third party service. By combining the strength of the video player with Drupal's multilingual tools, we were able to build a toolset that allows Human Rights Watch's staff to use the website to write multilingual closed-captions and time them to synchronize with the videos. This solution helps them on two levels: not only does it make multilingual video easy and affordable, but it also means Google will love them even more – the translations will be visible to Google since they are being written in the CMS itself.



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Resources:

► Blog posts:

Editing Multilingual Video Captions Using CCK Field in Drupal,
<http://is.gd/1gSA>

Adding Multilingual Subtitles to Videos in Drupal with the JW FLV Media
Player, <http://is.gd/1857>



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f. World Resources Institute: Building Multilingual Tools That Benefit Smaller NGO's

Situation: The World Resources Institute's EMBARQ program helps municipal governments create sustainable transportation in their cities. EMBARQ works on projects in a dozen cities around the world and has established five regional Centers for Sustainable Transport on four different continents. Its audience is truly global, and the program is actively building new relationships with city planners, managers, and other transportation stakeholders in new cities.

EMBARQ's team approached us to develop a website for them in four languages. They also wanted to build a tool to create an online presence for their five centers and equip staff with easy-to-use communications tools that would allow them to interact with regional audiences in local languages.

Solution: For this project (launching in October 2008), we built two multilingual websites – a complex one that could make use of the full internationalization toolset and feature EMBARQ's original video and photo content, and a very simple one with basic content types that could be translated into any language. The complex site (pictured below) will serve as the main site for EMBARQ and will have an active management team of three people plus a staff of translators available to maintain it.



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For the simple site, we built a Drupal installer profile that could be used to easily replicate the site for each center and then be translated accordingly for the appropriate locale. Basic translations for each language are included in the installer profile, along with a little theme trickery that allows novice users to customize each version with the center's own colors and branding. EMBARQ now has a lightweight toolset that will allow them to quickly turn on new websites for their colleagues abroad without needing the help of a web shop. Its basic content types and workflows mean easy administration for smaller web teams. Since the centers are each independent, having unique websites will allow them to customize and grow their web presence when needed.



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g. Managing News: Tracking the News in All Online Mediums

Situation: The way public conversations happen has changed. Mainstream media outlets and large companies are no longer the primary messengers. People now have access to the megaphone through the internet, and they are using it to share news, ideas, and opinions on just about everything.

There are hundreds of millions of blogs, niche websites, community forums, videos, and photos online. More conversations move online everyday, and increasingly people are turning to them to get their news and information. The power to communicate to a wide audience has shifted.

Organizations need to follow these emerging conversations to know the full story about their issues and brands, and they need to step in and engage these new messengers to influence those conversations. But how can they possibly listen in and make sense of so much chatter?

Solution: We built Managing News to help organizations listen to the news and conversations happening online and identify which are the most important so they can respond.

Managing News is a news aggregator that can be used collaboratively by teams to read and respond to the news. Users can enter a topic, a company, a brand, or a part of the world they're interested in, and the system will track the chatter on these topics within minutes of it appearing online. It then analyzes the chatter to help identify hot topics and emerging trends.

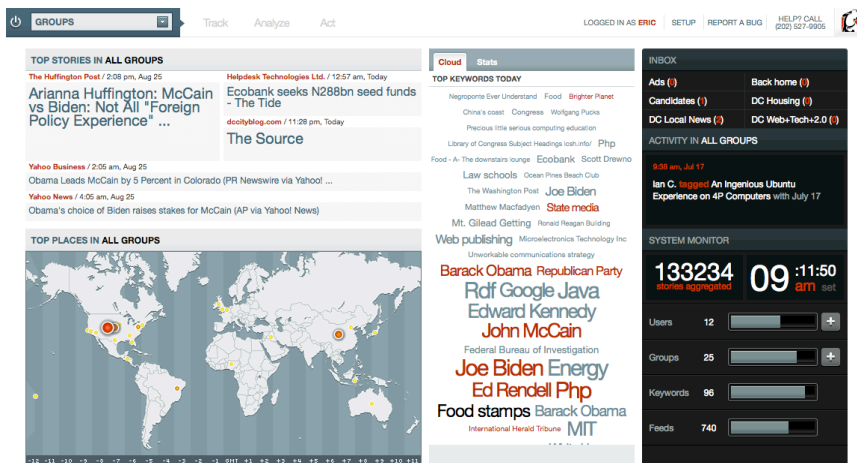
Here's a look at the most recent version of the tool:



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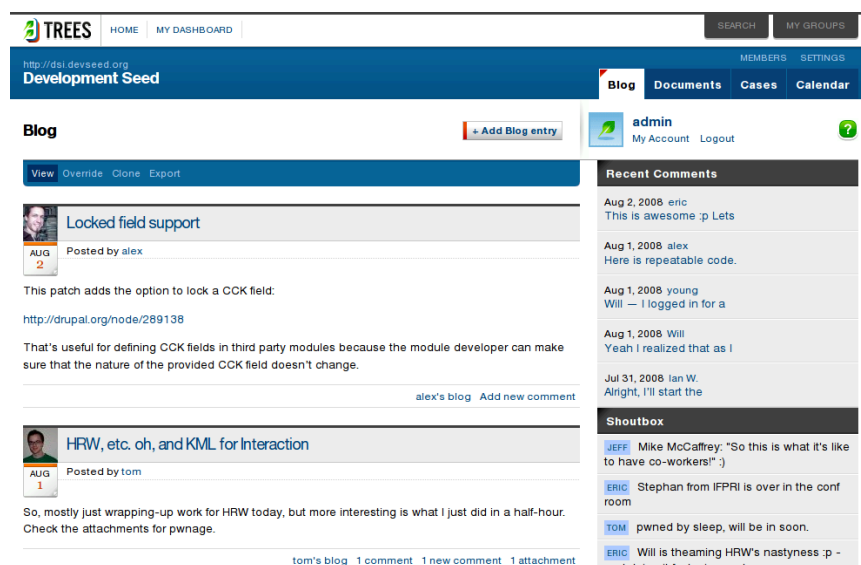
Other Resources:

- ▶ Project: www.managingnews.com
- ▶ Managing News blog: www.managingnews.com/blog
- ▶ Other blog posts about the project:
 Surviving Information Overload: FeedAPI Mail Watches Your Mailing Lists, <http://is.gd/17md>
 Newsquake: Yesterday's Caribbean Earthquake News Mapped, <http://is.gd/1hce>
 Drupal, Meet Python, <http://is.gd/1hcH>

h. 8 Trees: Connecting Dispersed Teams

Situation: Transferring and managing knowledge is a major challenge for all organizations. It's an even greater challenge when an organization is trying to communicate among geographically dispersed teams. After building several custom tools to improve knowledge management, like the one described above for the World Bank, we saw the need to build an affordable intranet that could work right out of the box for many organizations.

Solution: We built a clean intranet – we call it 8 Trees – that has all the basic elements teams need to improve knowledge management and communications: a blog with commenting for discussions, a shared calendar, and a space to hold and work with documents. 8 Trees' simple workflow makes it intuitive to use and, combined with its powerful communications tools, leads to huge performance improvements within teams.



Other Resources:

- Blog posts about the project:

Introducing Spaces for Drupal, <http://is.gd/Wbl>

Bait People to Internal Portals with Targeted Newsletters, <http://is.gd/1gSb>



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i. SMS Framework: Reaching People Via SMS and Mobile Phones

Situation: By November 2007, the total number of mobile phone subscriptions in the world had reached 3.3 billion, or half of the human population. There is no doubt that improving mobile access to information is increasingly important. Whether used to collect news, transmit survey information to a website, receive alerts about breaking news or disasters, or create a bridge from an organization's web presence to real life experiences, mobile applications are becoming increasingly important. In 2007, over 798 million people around the world accessed the internet from their mobile phone. That is a huge communications market that is still relatively untapped.

Solution: Our release of the SMS Framework 1.0, along with the road map for a 1.1 version, is making Drupal a more attractive platform for organizations that need powerful, decentralized data collection tools. We've been the lead developers of the SMS Framework for Drupal for over a year and have built the infrastructure that allows people to interact with websites via SMS messages and then in turn allows websites to interact directly with people via SMS notifications. This infrastructure integrates with major third-party services like Clickatell and, most recently, the open source service Gnokii, which allows a two-way SMS gateway to run off a USB drive.

Resources:

- Blog posts about the project:

SMS Framework + Notifications and Messaging Modules = Wicked Simple SMS Notifications in Drupal, <http://is.gd/1gRC>

SMS Framework 1.0 released + 1.1 Roadmap on Drupal Groups, <http://is.gd/QrW>

Improving SMS Double Opt-In Process with SMS Framework, <http://is.gd/IYC>

Setting Up a Two-Way SMS Gateway with Gnokii and Drupal, <http://is.gd/1gZX>



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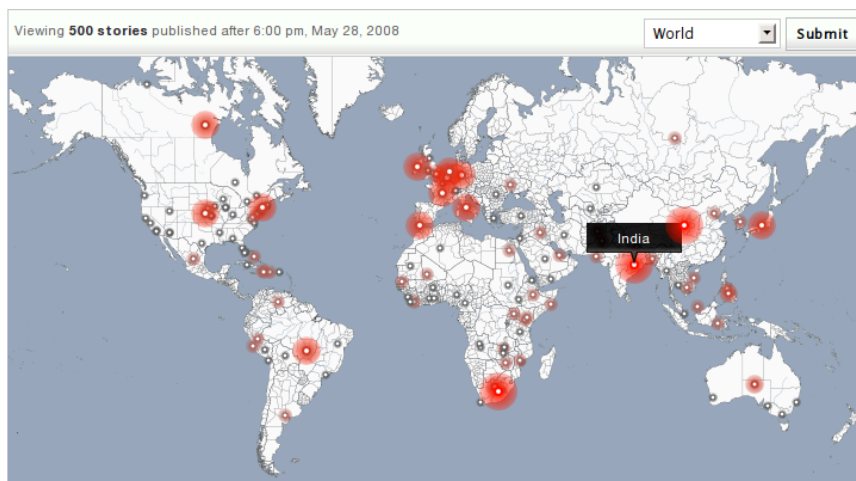
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j. Mapping Tools: Plotting Data for Clarity and Efficiency

Situation: Complex data can be communicated with clarity, precision, and efficiency with good maps. When you need to communicate the greatest amount of information in the shortest time - while reducing distortion and ambiguity - maps can be one of the most powerful tools to show the data.

As geospatial tools have become more prolific (thanks to great tools like Google Maps), there has been an explosion in “chartjunk,” Edward Tufte’s term for excessive and irrelevant information in graphical displays. In other words, one-size-fits-all map applications are overbuilt for what many organizations want to do with them. On the other hand, maps that are clear and focus well on data are still extremely resource intensive. Systems like Drupal need a better geospatial presentation toolset, and Mapnik might be the answer.

Solution: We build tools with Drupal and Mapnik that make embracing clear communication techniques and simple yet powerful displays easier to implement. We’ve developed the technical modules that allow a tool like Drupal to integrate with maps like the one below. We also deploy the infrastructure to power serious mapping servers so your maps and your website stay accessible.



An Introduction to Development Seed

- a. InterAction: Visualizing Data to Prepare for Pandemics
- b. American Institute of Architects: Making Disaster Response Tools More Accessible
- c. World Bank: Improving Internal Communication at the World Bank
- d. UN Millennium Campaign: Creating Multilingual Solutions for Your Audiences
- e. Human Rights Watch: Multimedia Solutions for Global Audiences
- f. World Resources Institute: Building Multilingual Tools That Benefit Smaller NGO's
- g. Managing News: Tracking the News in All Online Mediums
- h. 8 Trees: Connecting Dispersed Teams with Intranets
- i. SMS Framework: Reaching People Via SMS and Mobile Phones
- j. Mapping Tools: Plotting Data for Clarity and Efficiency

Other Resources:

► Blog posts:

News Tastes Better When Its Mapped, <http://is.gd/1gV0>

We Will Geocode Anything, <http://is.gd/1gV2>

Geotagging With the Provincial Drilldown Widget, <http://is.gd/NEy>



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Conclusion

This is just a sample of our work. To see more of our projects and read more about our development, please check out our portfolio, <http://www.developmentseed.org/portfolio> and browse our blog. If you'd like to talk further about these projects or schedule an in-person meeting, please contact Eric Gundersen at eric@developmentseed.org or call 202.250.3633.



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