



**IPRO 370
Crisis Management & Security (CMS)
Program**

**Final REPORT
Spring 2008**

Overarching principle

Improving the security of organizations through comprehensive crisis scenario based testing.

Faculty

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Sponsor

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0.0 Table of Contents

0.0 Table of Contents.....	2
0.1 Introduction	3
0.2 Background.....	4
0.3 Purpose	6
0.4 Research Methodology	7
0.5 Assignments	8
0.6 Obstacles.....	12
0.7 Results.....	14
0.8 Recommendations	16
0.9 References	17
0.10 Acknowledgements.....	19
0.11 Appendix A – CD Table of Contents.....	20
0.12 Appendix B – Code of Ethics.....	21

0.1 Introduction

The initial idea for this IPRO project came about after the terrorist attack on the US on 09/11/2001. Organizations after this attack needed a way to test their Crisis Management and Security plans. Our sponsor, Irene Rozansky from R&A Crisis along with Dan Tomal, decided together to offer this idea to the IPRO management, and thus IPRO 370 was created.

IPRO 370: Crisis Management & Security (CMS) Program, Spring 2008, is in the fourth IPRO phase. Our goal this semester was to:

- Build a community of users that would utilize our CMS Program
- Make improvements to the website that came from suggestions from the community of users

The potential for a crisis is all around us and happens every day. It is imperative that organizations are prepared in all areas of risk management where potential vulnerabilities can occur. Crisis management involves identifying the crisis, planning a response then confronting and resolving it.

We have taken a web-based application to assist business continuity professionals in the assessment of their crisis management plans. This web-based application allows a growing community the ability to easily create realistic scenarios and track the results of their exercises.

0.2 Background

Those who fail to plan, plan to fail. The goal after a crisis occurs is that your business is around and fully functional. The upfront planning is a way to ensure that happens. A well written and tested plan will assist organizations to sacrifice a minimal amount of time, money, and effort when recovering from a disaster.

After “9/11”, many organizations realized that they did not have a way of testing their Crisis Management and Security plans or their current way of testing was inefficient. The management of the organizations that did test their crisis plans used table-top exercises utilizing scenarios and injects. This method is very time consuming.

Key terms that will be used throughout the final report:

- **Crisis** is anything that has the potential to significantly impact or cause instability within an organization.
- **Management** is the controlling and directing of a situation in a positive proactive manner.
- **Plans** are a method of acting, proceeding, developing in advance.
- **Table-Top Exercises** are activities in which management and other heads of departments in an organization converge around a table and list “what if?” scenarios.
- **Scenarios** are stories, or sequence of events that cause a crisis for the management of an organization.
- **Injects** are an extension or mini-scenario that causes a scenario to further develop, forcing management into a more critical crisis.

A company’s ethical point of view regarding crisis management should be a moral and conscious one. Upfront, tough, and direct approaches will show their commitment to their employees. Unfortunately, organizations view crisis management to different extremes. Some simply do not have a crisis plan, while others have a department/team allocated to ensure that their plans are written, tested, and maintained properly.

Every year, companies invest millions of dollars creating plans to ensure that their business only experiences minimal interruption during a crisis. One of the most important and often overlooked

aspects of this preparation is fully testing the crisis management plan to ensure that it is sufficient. A proven method for testing these plans is constructing scenarios and executing what are called “table-top” exercises. During these exercises, crisis management planners use these scenarios to walk through their crisis management plans, providing them with a process to recognize their vulnerabilities.

0.3 Purpose

The main purpose of the CMS Program this semester was to develop a community of users that would utilize the CMS Program website to test the Crisis Management and Security Plans of their organization. Our IPRO group planned to obtain feedback from the community of users so we could improve upon the website based on the suggestions we received.

0.4 Research Methodology

Our goal during this semester was to improve the CMS website and create a community of users.

The research methodology that our team selected was the Action Research Model. This model process would help us solve problems and make improvements, and then continuously repeat the process. The steps of action research include: statement of problem, collect data, analyze the data, take action (make changes to our website), and repeat the process. This seemed to be the most appropriate research methodology available.

Our team also collected and organized the facts surrounding our goal of building a community of users and through brainstorming, a marketing idea was born. We decided to utilize popular video websites to assist us in our goals of marketing the CMS website. Sites such as YouTube, MySpace, 5min, as well as others would be used. Data was collected from the various websites in the form of user comments. Our programming and technical team then made many of the suggested changes from the new users. This process of collecting data and making changes to our website was repeated throughout the semester.

0.5 Assignments

During the start of the semester, after defining how many teams we needed to accomplish the required IPRO milestones, our classmates volunteered for one or more of the many teams. All of our different team members chose not to keep timesheets as a measurement of our individual progress.

Team 1: Leadership & Deliverables Team

This team was responsible for the management of the IPRO. Goals included ensuring that all deadlines were met, tasks were being executed and focused in a timely and efficient manner, and assistance was offered where needed. As a result of these responsibilities the team created a positive working environment. The following three team members each shared in the responsibility of facilitating the sessions.

Members:

- Don Monte (co-facilitator)
- Saurabh Singhal (co-facilitator)
- Andrew Wanic (co-facilitator)

Tasks Achieved:

- Created a timeline associated with each sub team to ensure project completion.
- Using the team iGROUPS site, utilized the appropriate email correspondence to ensure proper communication among the team.
- Updated individual assignments and team organization as deemed necessary.
- Effectively lead our team to meet the goals set for by all of our teams' members and under the direction of the IPRO facility and our sponsor.
- Ensured that the writing and submission of required reports/documents are met according to specified guidelines.
- Reviewed what a crisis management plan should consist of, while analyzing commonalities within our plan.

Team 2: Records Management Team

This team was responsible for the record keeping at meetings and also ensuring timely communication on team activities.

Members:

- Don Monte
- Vito Zabawski

Tasks Achieved:

- Created a place on iGROUPS to store weekly minutes for the purpose of communication for the team.
- Recorded the team's ideas and communication during team meetings
- Ensured that all team members had current and correct team information during the semester

Team 3: Formal Reports Team

This team was responsible for the project plan, midterm report, and final report of our IPRO project. This included writing the documentation and gaining feedback for changes from the entire class before submission.

Members:

- Don Monte
- Andy Staats

Tasks Achieved:

- Compiled and submitted the iGROUPS project plan documents.
- Compiled and submitted the iGROUPS midterm report documents.
- Compiled and submitted the iGROUPS final report documents.

Team 4: Code-of-Ethics Team

This team was responsible for the project's code-of-ethics documentation and submission. This team constantly reviewed the work of the other teams and made sure that we were in compliance with our code-of-ethics guidelines.

Members:

- Chris Housley

- Vito Zabawski

Tasks Achieved:

- Developed and submitted a code-of-ethics for our IPRO
- Ensured compliance with our code-of-ethics guidelines by continuously monitoring our group's activities

Team 5: Marketing Team

This team was responsible for marketing the website to assist in building a community of users for the product. Primarily, the team maintained contact with organizations to use, provide us with feedback to improve the tool, and also promote the website.

Members:

- George Bochnik
- Matt Chojecki

Tasks Achieved:

- Found organizations to use our website
- Obtained feedback from our community of users
- Provided feedback to Programming & Technical Team to ensure necessary changes were made

Team 6: Programming & Technical Team

This team was responsible for the code and construction of our web site, including the database that drives the web site for our CMS program. They worked in conjunction with R&A Crisis Management Services and all of the video websites that our group used to promote the CMS program.

Members:

- Ziggy Kusnierz
- Saurabh Singhal

Tasks Achieved:

- Set up a no login guest user for our website
- Moved our website to a different domain

- Developed the necessary website modifications for website workability and customization
- Produced videos that were used in promoting our website
- Posted instructional videos on popular video websites (YouTube, etc.)
- Developed ways to incorporate the team's suggestions to improve our web-based tool
- Improved the security of the website

Team 7: Presentation Team

This team was responsible for developing and delivering the presentation slides that were used in our midterm and final presentation.

Members:

- Chris Housley
- Ziggy Kusnierz
- Don Monte
- Saurabh Singhal
- Andy Staats
- Andrew Wanic

Tasks Achieved:

- Developed the midterm presentation
- Developed the final presentation and other material for IPRO day
- Delivered the presentations

0.6 Obstacles

There were several major obstacles that we encountered throughout the:

- Finding a successful way to promote and market our website
- Some video websites would not let us keep our video posted on their website
- Revising the intro video of www.crisistesting.com

The first major obstacle was resolved when we found a successful way to promote and market our website. Our marketing team found it difficult to find the right person to talk with at the organizations which they contacted. Also they came up with a way to promote our website through the use of other video websites.

The next obstacle was resolved when we overcome or worked around of promoting our video on the certain websites that considered the information for our website as spam. This problem was addressed by the addition of a guest login on our website that did not require a password.

The last major obstacle was resolved many extra hours of work that was put into the introduction for our website. The original flash video was created in a format that is not easily editable, and had to be completely reworked from scratch. This was an unforeseen obstacle that was brought to our attention by our sponsor, Irene Rozansky, after viewing the original intro. We also decided to include a brief welcoming message to play along with the new flash.

Ethical issues

There was an ethical issue that had occurred during the team's activities, this was the addressing the confidentiality of user information from a user on our website.

Teamwork

Our team did have one official teambuilding activity. Early in the semester, we had one of our weekly meetings at a restaurant a block from IIT's Rice Campus.

The effectiveness of our team is that we accomplished a more robust, realistic, user friendly end result. We all had different skill sets, talents, and ideas of what our objective should include. In the end we came together and created something we are proud of and have ownership in its success.

To overcome our team's different views and ideas, especially with some of the design ideas, we used the method of instant feedback. This allowed us to discuss, problem solve, prioritize ideas, and identify actions items needed to achieve them.

Communication

An important part of project completion and teamwork was constant communication. We achieved this through iGROUPS, sub-team meetings, meeting notes, and weekly updates. Most importantly, doing our best to create an atmosphere where team members felt they could express their ideas. Realistically, all team members did their best to achieve this openness but like any team environment we did face some obstacles of changing another team member's views or ideas.

There were no "specific extra communication activities" performed within our team. Our goal was to be respectful, listen, and supply constructive feedback as needed.

0.7 Results

Our primary research findings came after the project team:

- Started to establish a community of users
- Gained feedback, both positive and negative, from the users
- Made many substantial changes to our website based on the feedback given
- Found that our marketing team could not contact the correct people at many larger organizations, such as FEMA

The secondary research findings by our marketing team were that they sent out many emails promoting use of our website, and received practically no responses.

Conclusions based primarily on the research findings were:

- Our team found a way to market the CMS website utilizing other video websites
- Help screens were added to our website because many in our new community of users suggested help sections for our website because they were unfamiliar with our product
- A non-login or guest account was added to our website
- A manage scenario functionality was added to our website
- A manage inject functionality was added to our website

The team's conclusions:

- The IPRO 370 sponsor should continue to utilize our website CMS program
- Society should utilize our CMS portal to benefit their organizations
- Future IPRO 370 project teams are not necessary
- Expand the number of scenarios and injects that we currently have
- Allow users of the CMS website greater customization for scenario building
- Develop a help section on the website detailing how to use a scenario while setting up an exercise so as to create a successful live test
- Continue to debug the CMS website and ensure complete functionality
- Develop tutorial videos for walk-through assistance with the website
- Post tutorial videos on popular websites such as YouTube and MySpace to get attention

- Have a strong focus with marketing our website to outside companies
- Integrate the CMS website with the website of our sponsor
- Submission of required reports/documentation

0.8 Recommendations

The next steps for the future sponsor and/or IPRO 370 teams are to further pilot test our product, continue making website enhancements, continue promoting the website by increasing the CMS Program visibility in professional websites, obtain professional and authentic promotions, find a corporate sponsor to bring the CMS Program the next level, and finally setup ongoing support and maintenance for the CMS Program website.

0.9 References

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0.10 Acknowledgements

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Ms. Rozansky and her knowledge of crisis management were critical to helping us understand and target key areas of crisis management plans. Her guidance allowed us to understand the importance the purpose of crisis management. She also helped us understand our scenario builder is not only an important tool, but a necessity. Through her assistance, we were able to benchmark our findings into a workable and progressive project.

0.11 Appendix A – CD Table of Contents

Abstract

Code of Ethics

Final Presentation

Final Report

Midterm Report

Poster

Project Plan

Team Minutes

Web Site

0.12 Appendix B – Code of Ethics

Overarching standard

To assist organizations in testing crisis management plans through the use of web site application called Crisis Management & Security (CMS) program.

The Law

Pressure

- Use of the CMS program for non project related reasons.

Risk

- Transmit information in unlawful manner.
- Disclosing confidential information to parties unauthorized to view it.

Measure

- To ensure that all follow and familiarized themselves with the relevant laws and regulations.

Canon

- To ensure that the greatest safety measures possible are included in the design of the program.

Contracts

Pressure

- Meeting customer demands, accordingly to contract agreement.

Risk

- Violate the terms of contract by granting access to CMS program to parties outside of the project.
- Action of the project users might violate the terms of the contract.

Measure

- Participate in a general discussion of the terms of the agreement with the provider.

Canon

- Tolerate the terms of agreement with the provider.

Professional codes

Pressure

- Produce enhanced version of the CMS program in a limited time period.

Risk

- Assign individuals to a role which they are not qualified to perform.
- Unnecessary competition between the project members.

Measure

- Compliance with the canon is indicated by the absence of lawsuit filed against the group for unprofessional conduct.

Canon

- Focus to provide service to the users and sponsors with experience and objectivity.

Industry standards

Pressure

- Limited resources and difficulty with following Industry standards.
- Lack of knowledge and incorrect interpretation of existing Industry standards.

Risk

- Project completed, and not fully tested with regards to industrial standards.

Measure

- Absence of penalties for failure to follow the standards.

Canon

- Provide pragmatic and realistic solutions with regards to industrial standards.

Community*Pressure*

- Project completion on time.

Risk

- Release the product which is not fully tested.
- Release the product without providing the guidelines (tutorials) for use of the program.

Measure

- Fully effective and tested crisis management & security program.

Canon

- To promote security for society through product such as CMS program.

Personal relationship*Pressure*

- Unequal participation of individuals in the project development.

Risk

- Causeless judgment of other members project involvement.
- Lack of input from other project members.

Measure

- General sub consciousness about importance of team work.

Canon

- Truthfulness, general understanding among persons in process of completing the project.

Moral values*Pressure*

- To meet beyond normal scheduled school hours to complete the project.

Risk

- Conflict with persons personal plans.
- Weekend days for some might have spiritual value.

Measure

- Equal involvement in the project between individuals. .

Canon

- Team work is a key to success.