

Partner Spotlight – Any Green

Q: How did you get interested in disaster safety?

A: As we initially developed MyRadar, we were focused on delivering a fast, easy-to-use app that would display the radar for the user's area and for the rest of the world. As the app took off, we realized there were other related facets to environment conditions that equally effect users in a devastating way, including wildfires and earthquakes. When you combine these natural disasters with the weather-related catastrophes, such as tornados , hurricanes, and flooding, we began to realize that we had an opportunity to help users avoid or otherwise deal with these natural disasters, either in the form of advanced alerting or with post-event situational awareness and preparedness. It was a natural progression for us to continue to help users beyond just the radar of the event; we knew we could make use of our app and services to help people.



Andy Green

Q: Can you tell us about specific projects or programs you are working on in the risk reduction and resilience field?

A: There are a number of different fronts we're trying to tackle; expanding our event alerting capabilities has been on the front burner for most of this year, but one of the more exciting projects we're just now starting on - and perhaps a very timely one - is the ability to more accurately identify and predict potential wildlife-urban interface hotspot areas that are prone to wildfires, and to create a public dataset that allows municipalities, federal agencies, and consumers to be acutely aware of the risks of areas around them prone to fires, to alert them and to provide supporting data to help them find ways to head off potential ignition and the disaster that follows. We're currently engineering a satellite constellation called HORIS that will use hyperspectral imagery, combined with thermal and visible imagery, all using a patent-pending mechanism combining them all with machine learning algorithms to provide data and detail not current available with existing orbital platforms. Due to launch by the end of next year, the data we collect from those satellites will be used as input to the abovementioned dataset, and we hope to make a dent in limiting the outbreak of the types of catastrophic fires we're seeing in the western United States right now.

Q: What do you think are the driving forces that are advancing the cause of resilience today?

A: Honestly, I think it's a combination of advancements in technology and the creative, innovative impulses from individuals and companies that can see this plethora of new tools and that then work to find out how they can all be combined and congealed into tools to help us tackle the problems we face. In many cases, some of the technology that appears on the scene is intended for an entirely different purpose, but then there are those companies and academic institutions that daydream to find new ways to make use of the technology - to combine it with other tools and tech - and make something new and unexpected out of it. While the tech and the people are helping to advance the cause - the darker driving force is that the world is warming, and we are slowly seeing the effects of that warming materialize before our eyes. The damage costs are rising dramatically, and the devastation is impossible to escape or ignore. If we are to conquer the challenges that lie ahead of us, we are all going to have to work our hardest and use the most innovative thinking possible to find the solutions.

Q: How can the FLASH Partnership support your efforts?

A: Public awareness is key to keeping everyone on the same path towards the goal of a safer world. There is an unfortunate amount of misinformation in the world, and we must exhaust every channel to flood the airwaves with all the accurate, reliable, sensible, and science-based information available at our disposal. FLASH's DNA fits perfectly with this mission.

Q: Do you have any other comments or additional words of wisdom to offer our readers?

A: Back in the late 1980's, my first company helped connect users to the Internet, where they could find an incredible, nearly unimaginable wealth of knowledge at the click of a mouse. Even at this early stage, I knew the power of the Internet and how it would usher in a new information age for the whole of humanity. I did not, however, foresee the extent to which that power could be used to spread disinformation. It is critical for us as a society to learn to distinguish credible sources with those that are merely out to cash in on a click no matter what the cost to society. Unless we manage to conquer that challenge, we run the risk of having this powerful tool create more negative consequences than positive.