**UMSI Initiatives**

**Edward G. Happ**

**Executive Fellow**

I am launching three initiatives at the UM School of Information, to essentially address three questions:

1. How do we solve problems when our a-list of tools are swept away?
2. Can we gain important insights by combining all the “small” data in the silos of NGO reports into “big data”?
3. Can student and tech company workers learn more by working side-by-side in the under-resourced world of NGO IT?

Here is a summary of the three initiatives:

**The 2G Lab**

The Problem?

1. Working with technology in the sometimes-connected developing world is different and hard
2. Only 40% of the developing world has a mobile internet connection; less than 40% have smartphones
3. The design constraints for technology in the developing world are significant
4. The digital divide persists for the foreseeable future

The What & How?

1. Dial-a-context telecommunications environment
2. Simulate crisis scenario for voice and data
3. Immersion experience: problem solving in a bi-modal crises simulation
4. Test apps and systems in constrained environments
5. The UL for fit-for-purpose developing country app

Benefits?

1. Sensitize entrepreneurs for relevant design
2. Learn how to work with technology in crises
3. A test-bed for lightweight apps and devices

 Next Steps? (for Students)

1. Sign up for Crisis Informatics course in the fall
2. Join Advisory Committee for Crisis Informatics (ACCI)
3. Contact Ed Happ at ehapp@umich.edu for more details

**The Data4Good Center**

The Problem?

1. Data science (big data, etc.) is beyond the reach of small nonprofits;
2. Comparative data for technology use among small nonprofits is lacking;
3. Fundraising data dwarfs beneficiary data

The What & How?

1. IT agility index among NGOs
2. IT relevancy index among NGOs
3. IT assessments in crises
4. Crisis technology trends
5. NGO PDF report mining
6. Big data sets (donated/shared) and analyses for small NGOs
7. Partnering with UN/OCHA HDC in The Hague

Benefits?

1. Access to Big Data and analytics for small organizations
2. Better NGO decision-making
3. A clearing house for selected NGO research data

Next Steps? (for Students)

1. Sign up for Crisis Informatics course in the fall
2. Join Advisory Committee for Crisis Informatics (ACCI)
3. Contact Ed Happ at ehapp@umich.edu for more details

**The UMSI-NetHope Internship Program**

The Problem?

1. Students want front-line internship programs that are relevant to the issues and careers in which they have an interest.
2. The humanitarian sector has supported interns in program areas, such as public health, but technology interns are rare.
3. With persistent underfunding of IT in most nonprofit organizations and the coming revolution of rethinking most business as digital enterprises, the time is ripe for creating a feeder system of IT talent for nonprofit work.
4. Technology corporations want graduates who can deal with chaotic, uncertain situations

The What & How?

1. Phase 1 – proof-of-concept phase in 2017, placing 3-5 UMSI students at NetHope member organizations.
2. Phase 2 – scale-up the program at UMSI in winter 2018.
3. Phase 3 – organize and pilot a placement program for matching UMSI graduates with nonprofit sector jobs
4. Phase 4 – expand the program to other University of Michigan schools, especially engineering and computer science.
5. Phase 5 – expand to additional universities

Benefits?

1. Practical educational experience for students in nonprofit IT organizations
2. The value-add of information savvy students for NGO projects and fieldwork
3. The placement of the next cadre of information technology graduates in the nonprofit sector
4. The value proposition for tech company sponsors includes:
5. Help develop the next generation of leadership who can adapt to disruptions in developing countries
6. Students may work on NGO IT projects focused on a given tech platform
7. Students do a “two-for” tour: one semester in field and one at tech co.
8. Cadre of well-balanced, experienced students for recruiting
9. Opportunity for a UMSI-NetHope co-branded intern program
10. Enhance a CSR program with employee-student “buddy system” field assignments

 Next Steps? (for Students)

1. Sign up with the Engaged Learning Center to express interest in this internship program
2. Contact Ed Happ at ehapp@umich.edu or Kelly Kowatch at kkowatch@umich.edu for more details