

Use of space technology for disaster management: data access and its place in the community

M.E. Andrews Deller

Open University

m.e.andrews@open.ac.uk

The ways in which remotely sensed data can be used to manage and so alleviate the consequences of natural hazards and disasters have never been fully exploited. If prediction of impending disaster is to be useful, those affected by catastrophes and those who come to their aid must work together. A global strategy based on a vision for disaster management that does not involve those affected in their own disaster preparation, mitigation, avoidance, rehabilitation and relief efforts, is doomed to failure. Local people are experts in ground truth: all that is needed therefore, is the means for those with remote sensing expertise to pass on their skills, relevant knowledge and highly informative data in a way that can be understood and valued. To do this; those threatened by catastrophe must understand how disaster relates to their lives and homes, how to use information that can help them lessen the affects of catastrophe, and how satellite data is one of the best means of reducing the hazards that effect them. This can be achieved by making available remotely sensed images (Colour lithographic printing is cheap and an excellent source of educational aid) that enhance natural features - topography, vegetation, water, rock differences and their effects, natural hazards, volcanoes, landslides, and active faults. Appropriate data would be perspective views, stereo anaglyphs, Landsat TM 742 images, ASTER 631 images and SRTM DEM data all free or low cost. With timely, reliable information, preventative measures can be taken. Surface structures, clearly enhanced on satellite images, can guide refugee placement managed to ameliorate disasters rather than exacerbate them and local people can take charge of their own lives. (273words)