Problem
Fast and precise internal (departmental) and external (regional and public) communication is crucial for emergency responders. Saving seconds from initial communication saves hours in response time. Our study therefore aimed to determine the decisionmaking processes of emergency responders in crisis situations and to catalog their information needs.

Methods
We conducted 9 user research sessions, and interviewed 12 participants. All studies were conducted near or at the participant’s workplace and were audio recorded.

Each interview was coded using the following scheme:
- Difficulties / Obstacles
- Benefits
- Quotes
- Tools
- Social Media
- Communication

Findings
Needs and Constraints
- Familiarity and regional standardization are vital for internal communication
- Time-critical problems and specialized communication needs create barriers for tool standardization
- Cultural and political barriers to information sharing can lead to communication difficulties between departments

Current Situation
- There are many varied communication and analytical tools across departments
- This abundance of tools without reasonable curation leads to an “application haystack”

Proposed Solution: EOC Communications Protocol
- Intuitive and familiar
- Regionally standardized
- Customizable

Current Tools
Each organization utilized their own set of tools, however, WebEOC, an information management tool, was constant. Communication tools and social media aggregation tools were also common.