



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

Status:

Laureate

Year:

2013

Organization Name:

Airbnb

Organization URL:

airbnb.com

Project Name:

Airbnb Response to Hurricane Sandy

Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:

Human Services

Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, thousands of people in NYC and across the East Coast were left stranded without shelter. Airbnb joined with Mayor Bloomberg and the city of New York to connect those in need with people who were able to provide free housing through the Airbnb platform (see: <http://on.nyc.gov/PXSFiR>). Airbnb created a page (www.airbnb.com/sandy) where hosts in New York could easily list their places for free, and Airbnb waived all of its fees for bookings that took place. Over 1,400 listings appeared on the Sandy list. For more, see: <http://blog.airbnb.com/airbnb-is-partnering-with-mayor-bloomberg-to>; <http://blog.airbnb.com/its-time-to-share-help-us-provide-relief-for>.



When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)

November 2012. Since initial deployment, we changed our back-end payment structure so that hosts in NY could list their places for \$0 per night, providing free housing to Sandy victims.

Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)

Yes. We estimated that 1,400 hosts in NY listed their place on our Sandy page.

Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)

The entire project was inspired by one Airbnb host in Brooklyn named Shell. <https://www.airbnb.com/users/show/319077>. Shell rented five rooms in her Brooklyn loft on Airbnb, and she listed them all for free after Sandy hit NY. This inspired us to make it easy for other hosts to do the same.

Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)

We believe it was a unique joint effort between the city and Airbnb. Other cities could look to partner with organizations like Airbnb in the future to manage with disaster relief -- communications, housing, etc. "Since Sandy hit, we've seen numerous examples of the private sector using technology to find new ways to help people," said Mayor Bloomberg.