

INACHUS: Integrated Wide Area Situation Awareness and Survivor Localization in Search and Rescue Operations

Athanasiou G¹, Amditis A¹, Riviere N², Makri E³, Bartzas A⁴, Anyfantis A⁵, Werner R⁶, Axelsson D⁷, Girolamo E⁸, Balet O⁹, Schaap M¹⁰, Kerle N¹¹, Bozabalian N¹², Marafioti G¹³, Berzosa J¹⁴, Gustafsson A¹⁵
¹Institute of Communication and Computer Systems, GR; ²Office National D'etudes Et De Recherches Aérospatiales, FR; ³TELINT, UK; ⁴EXODUS A.E., GR; ⁵MICRO2GEN, GR; ⁶Fraunhofer Institute, GE; ⁷CINSIDE AB, SE; ⁸ASI Europe, IT; ⁹DIGINEXT, FR; ¹⁰Crisiplan B.V., NL; ¹¹Universiteit TWENTE, NL; ¹²Entente Pour la Foret Mediterranee, FR; ¹³SINTEF AB, NO; ¹⁴TEKNIKER, SP; ¹⁵Totalförsvarets Forskningsinstitut, SE

Abstract

Emergencies and crisis are an inevitable fact of modern life, with extreme weather events, fires, hazmat spills and traffic accidents happening often and in every jurisdiction. The potential consequences are indisputable: serious injury and/or death to the public and to responding personnel, damage to public and private property and the risk of long-term financial repercussions, among others. Under the resulting chaotic and challenging working conditions, Urban Search and Rescue (USaR) crews must make quick decisions under stress to determine the location of trapped victims as quickly and as accurately as possible. The EU FP7 project INACHUS presents a holistic approach in providing a system that aims at achieving significant time reduction related to the USaR phase by advancing wide-area situation awareness solutions for improved detection and localization of trapped victims, assisted by simulation tools for predicting structural failures and a decision support mechanism incorporating operational procedures and resources of relevant actors. In the proposed approach structural damage analysis is performed based on the input coming from 3-D airborne and ground-based laser scanning, images and their subsequent analysis through advanced photogrammetric and computer vision techniques, and Structural Health Monitoring (SHM) sensors pre-installed inside the buildings. Furthermore, INACHUS involves new types of sensors and technologies for detecting and localizing trapped survivors in disaster situations (among others bio-chemical sensors, ground-based seismic sensors, infrared sensors, real-time locating systems, radars, etc.). Several miniaturized sensors are integrated into a snake robotic system capable of penetrating into the rubble and providing useful information to locate possible trapped survivors. Robust snake robot design together with a novel control system enables operator controlled robot operations in complex environments. This paper presents the general concept of INACHUS solution together with preliminary evaluation results of the applied techniques evincing that the proposed system could significantly contribute to successfully addressing the societal demand to increase survival rates in the aftermath of natural or man-made disasters by tackling a plethora of practical operational challenges, including greater effectiveness of USaR operations with the same number of human resources and enhanced situational awareness.

Keywords: Search and Rescue; Survivor Localization; Structural Damage Analysis; Sensors; Remote Sensing.