

Lightship Works Turns to IBM to Help Transform Disaster Response

British Columbia start-up is adopting IBM AI and IBM Cloud to give first responders fast access to insights during critical incident responses.

VANCOUVER, BC – August 29, 2019 – IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced it is working with Lightship Works, an intelligent field operations start-up in Kamloops, British Columbia, to integrate AI with IBM Watson on IBM Cloud into its disaster response solutions, helping give first responders and central organizations alike up-to-the minute insights during emergency situations. Additionally, by hosting its mobile application on IBM Cloud, Lightship Works is able to infuse higher value services, including Watson Speech to Text and Natural Language Processing, into its solution.

Lightship Works develops mobile applications that combine updates from first responders and recovery agencies with data from infrastructure, weather services, sensors, and real-time tracking of people and equipment in order to provide a true common operating picture to facilitate decision-making during complex incidents. The company is now working with IBM to integrate AI into its solutions to enable them to quickly learn and discern large amounts of information, like real-time and forecast data, and then feed those insights back into the application for ongoing updates. That way, for example, if crews are fighting a wildfire in a specific area, they can receive automatic alerts if the data suggests the wind is likely to shift direction or has changed intensity; this helps crews to stay out of the way of the moving fire. This AI-integrated solution runs on IBM Cloud for a highly-connected, secure, and adaptable platform for the application.

Lightship Works brings the four phases of emergency management – mitigation, preparation, response and recovery – together in the mobile system. Across all phases, it gives authorized agencies, like fire, police, local governments, and recovery not-for-profits, access to real-time information to inform critical decisions. If, for example, trees go down or roads become covered with mud, Lightship Works' system can quickly alert response crews to plan safer routes. Additionally, rather than generic daily reports written for multiple agencies, Lightship Works can provide individual first responders with personalized views of the information they need, when they need it.

"Technology is a game-changer that augments capacity of first responders and recovery agencies," said Jaethan Reichel, CEO and co-founder, Lightship Works. "We are witnessing a trend where natural disasters are becoming more complex, frequent, and of higher intensity than ever, so it is really important that the technology be easy to use but also incredibly stable, secure, and responsive. That is one of the reasons we decided to work with IBM."

The tri-municipal North Shore Emergency Management in Greater Vancouver is working with Lightship Works on Research & Development (R&D) as it relates to emergency preparedness, response, and recovery work.

"This technology is intended to enhance and improve emergency management processes and has significantly helped our teams," said Mike Andrews, Deputy Director (Operational Readiness), North Shore Emergency Management. "We are pleased that Lightship Works is working with IBM. When we are in a crisis scenario, there is a critical dependence on reliable technology for things like situational awareness, resource requesting, rapid damage assessment, and evacuation notification tracking. It's vital that it works."

An IBM Canada innovation team on a province-wide tour met the Kamloops-based Lightship Works and recognized the value of their work and the opportunities for collaboration.

“When we met Lightship Works through Innovate BC, we immediately recognized the value they had already created with their application, and we wanted to help further enhance that solution to help address advanced information integration,” said John Longbottom, Senior Innovation Development Executive - Western Canada with IBM Canada. “As part of IBM’s work with start-ups, there is a strong focus on building an agile ecosystem to help create innovative solutions to the most pressing issues currently facing Canadian businesses.”

About IBM Canada

IBM Canada is headquartered in Markham, Ontario and is one of Canada’s top 10 private R&D investors. IBM has a unique approach to collaboration that provides academic researchers, small and large business, start-ups and developers with business strategies and computing tools they need to innovate. For more information, please visit www.ibm.com/ca.

About Lightship Works

Lightship Works is a field operations platform that provides a comprehensive incident response, in-field data collection, and asset management solution to large industry, local government, and emergency management organizations through simple-to-use mobile applications. Lightship Works’ ease of use and flexibility has allowed the platform to gain traction in day-to-day industrial operations as well as during critical event response, including during the recent disastrous freshet and wildfire seasons in British Columbia.

Media requiring more information or who would like an interview or a demo, please contact:

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