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Open Data, Sendai, and Resilient Cities: Disaster Risk Reduction through Data Preparedness

Natural and industrial disasters have notably increased in frequency and intensity since 1980, and socio-political disasters have increased even more. Population pressures, internal and external conflict, and resource inequity have each increased the vulnerability of large populations poorly prepared to withstand shocks, particularly in our secondary population centers. There are, however, tools and techniques, processes and experiments, designed to reduce some of these vulnerabilities. Several of them are in the earliest stages of evaluation and we don't know enough yet, but they look encouraging. If, over time, they prove effective, they can serve as a template for improving human security in even the most hazardous of human environments. If they do not prove effective, we'll have learned some valuable, and painful, lessons on how much we don't yet know. A number of experts, including this speaker, think that technology has a central role to play in improving our human security in the face of multiple threats, but it's a contentious subject. We'll discuss two organizations (out of many) that are weighing that balance between technology, ethics, and law for securing a more broadly rewarding future "free from want, and free from fear".