Ushahidi Announces Funding, New Website and Pilot Program
A Platform for Crowdsourcing Crisis and Disaster Information

ORLANDO, FL - September 4, 2008 – Ushahidi (www.ushahidi.com) the mobile phone and web-based tool for gathering crisis information, today announces funding for further development of the Ushahidi platform by Humanity United, a new website and alpha testing pilot program of the rebuilt Ushahidi Engine. Ushahidi has secured a grant of $200,000 from Humanity United, an organization dedicated to ending modern-day slavery and mass atrocities, to take the foundational elements of the first version of Ushahidi, originally used in Kenya, to create a platform that can be used around the world.

With Ushahidi, activists around the globe will have a simple and effective tool to manage SMS and web-related news and report gathering from the public, which can be used in events ranging from political disruption to natural disasters like earthquakes and hurricanes as seen recently with flooding in India and hurricane Gustav in the US.

"In Kenya, Ushahidi demonstrated the power of geographically mapping real-time citizen reports and crisis-related information to help civilians avoid conflict," said Randy Newcomb, President and CEO of Humanity United. "The Ushahidi platform will soon empower anyone in a crisis situation to utilize the tool for their own community, and provide a central place for citizens to easily post critical information via mobile phone or the Web."

Ushahidi is also announcing the redesign of www.ushahidi.com to help people better understand and get involved with the project. Ushahidi is being developed by a group of volunteer developers and designers, hailing primarily from Africa. With representatives from Kenya, South Africa, Malawi, Ghana, the Netherlands and the US, Ushahidi has extensive global roots.

"In a crisis situation you don't have time to create your own application," states Erik Hersman, co-founder of Ushahidi. "Ushahidi is designed to fill that need – a platform for immediate deployment anywhere a disaster strikes around the world." The new Ushahidi Engine is being created to use the lessons learned from Kenya to create a platform that allows anyone around the world to set up their own way to collect and visualize information, especially crisis information. The core platform will allow for plug-in and extensions so that it can be customized for different locales and needs. This tool will be tested and made available as an open source application that others can download, implement and use to bring awareness to crises in their own region.

Ushahidi, which means "testimony" in Swahili, is a website that was developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election fallout at the beginning of 2008. Ushahidi's roots are in the collaboration of Kenyan citizen journalists during a

time of crisis.   Ordinary citizens were able to report incidents that they saw by mobile phone (SMS), email and web form.

Ushahidi plans to make the Ushahidi mapping tool available globally for free. After initial testing with NGOs the tool will be distributed to interested parties and organizations, and the Ushahidi team will provide technical customizations and support as needed.

A number of organizations have been selected to alpha-test the new Ushahidi Engine, including; Peace Caravan, Repacted Kenya, Foko Madagascar, Don't Block the Blog Pakistan and AIDSportal Zimbabwe.

About Ushahidi: Ushahidi is a non-profit organization founded with the goal of creating a free and open source platform to help with early warning by aggregating and visualizing citizen reports in disaster and crisis scenarios. Ushahidi was originally deployed in Kenya during the post-election violence in January 2008, and continues growth with a strong African-driven development team from around the continent.   Find out more at www.ushahidi.com/newsroom.

About Humanity United: Humanity United is an independent grantmaking organization committed to building a world where modern-day slavery and mass atrocities are no longer possible. Humanity United supports efforts that empower affected communities and address the root causes of conflict and modern-day slavery to build lasting peace. Learn more at www.humanityunited.org.

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