

# WikiTTX: A Web Collaboration Technology-based Table-Top Exercise System

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**Abstract** - The increasing occurrences of natural, man-made and medical disasters in recent years emphasise the importance of frequent training exercises of emergency officers, first responders as well as the communities themselves to anticipate, prepare for and react to possible disasters. However, training exercises are mostly time, resource and cost consuming and require physical presence of the individuals involved. Table-top training exercise is the least complex and most preferred training method. Collaboration technologies like Wikis, Blogs and Online Chats allow geographically distributed collaborators to work together in virtual communities. These technologies can be utilized in the development of the framework of a cost effective and web-distributed table-top exercise system. The proposed framework will help encourage emergency officers and communities to better prepare themselves for disasters, and save lives.

**Keywords:** Web collaboration, Wiki, online chat, emergency training, table-top exercise.

## 1 Introduction

The increasing occurrences of natural, man-made and medical disasters in recent years all over the world highlight the importance and the need for frequent training exercises. The actions taken in response to the Boxing Day Asian Tsunami, cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, and the latest medical pandemic affecting around 40 countries world wide, influenza A H1N1, show that many organisations, government officials and emergency personnel are not adequately prepared for events that may occur to disrupt, injure or kill. Training exercises for possible disaster scenarios will ensure government officials, first responders and the community themselves are better empowered to anticipate, prepare for, and react to emergencies. They are also the most effective way to plan or test the functions, comprehensiveness, applicability, and effectiveness of an emergency preparedness action plan.

Of the three types of exercises (table-top, functional, and full-scale), table-top exercise or TTX is the least complex and can be held frequently without noticeably affecting normal operational activities. Table-top exercise is traditionally conducted by having participants discuss and role-play their way through scenario-based exercises

while guided by a facilitator, with a recorder or scribe who manually note down the responses on a board or overhead projector for later reference [1]. Figure 1 describes the steps involved in a conventional TTX, while Table 1 details the prerequisites as well as functionalities of a conventional TTX. TTX is the cheapest training exercise due to its role-playing method, compared to full-scale drills. The disadvantages of conventional table-top exercises are; all participants must physically be in the same location, and the manual method of capturing and documenting the results and responses.

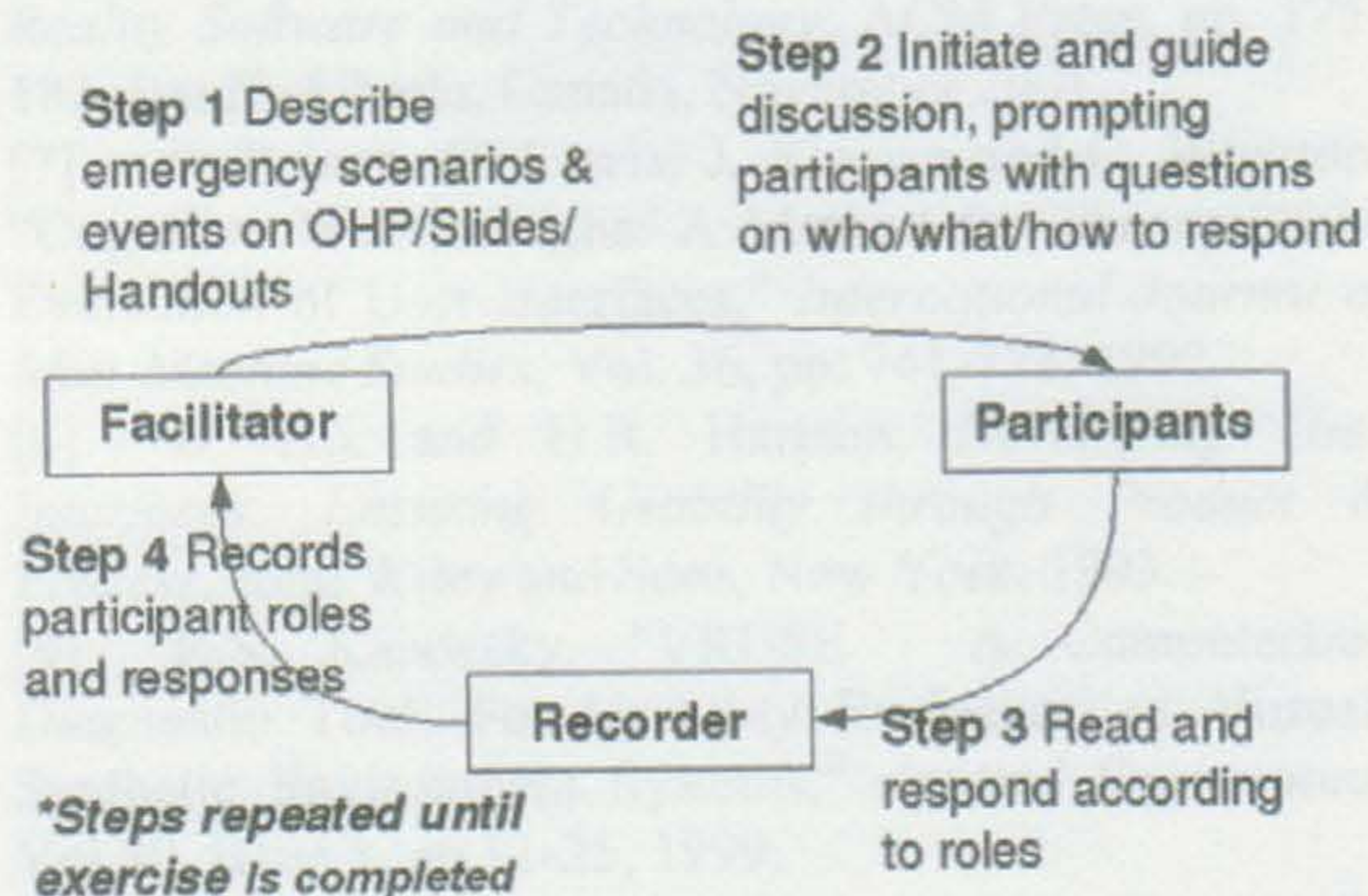


Figure 1: Conventional TTX Process Flow

Prerequisite/Functionality	Conventional TTX
Physical location of participants	Same meeting room
Display of emergency scenarios	Slides/Handouts/OHP
Communication method	Verbal/spoken words
Identification of roles & names	Placards (Role/Name)
Documenting exercise responses	Recorder writes on board/slides/OHP
Archival of exercise documents	Recorder compiles and type document

Table 1: Prerequisites/Functionalities of Conventional TTX