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Leveraging Satellite Data for Water Resource Tracking and Rural Assistance in the Sub-Saharan Desert

Ramona Devi

Abstract: ***This paper introduces a comprehensive solution aimed at assisting underprivileged individuals in the Sub-Saharan desert by utilizing satellite data provided by NASA and other companies, to track the availability of water resources in their vicinity. The proposed solution comprises three interconnected stages: a Two-way SMS Hotline communication system, a dedicated website, and a user-friendly software app. These stages are designed to bridge the information gap, providing essential data on clean water, weather, vaccination drives, and awareness initiatives in rural and underserved areas. Accurate forecasted data is integral to the system to alert, warn, and make residents aware of the necessary steps to ensure their health and safety.***

Keywords: Satellite data, Water resources, Tracking, Rural Assistance

1. Introduction

The Sub-Saharan desert region is known for its harsh environmental conditions, making it challenging for underprivileged communities to access vital resources like clean water, information on weather patterns, vaccination drives, and health and safety initiatives. This paper presents a prototype solution that leverages satellite data from organizations like NASA to address these challenges [1-5], ensuring that unserved and underserved rural areas have adequate networking resources to connect with essential information. Section 2 explains the satellite data integration for the proposed solution. Three stages of solution are given in section 3. Use cases are presented in section 4 and section 5 talks about the challenges faced in the implementation of such a system.

2. Software Data Integration

The cornerstone of our solution hinges on the utilization of satellite data, which is readily accessible through partnerships with organizations like NASA. These data sources provide a continuous stream of real-time information concerning weather patterns, the availability of water resources, and a range of other critical data points. What sets this system apart is the development and integration of highly accurate forecasting models. These models are the linchpin of the system, as they facilitate the generation of timely alerts, warnings, and notifications for users in the challenging Sub-Saharan desert region. Accurate forecasted data is not just advantageous but essential for proactive decision-making, ensuring the health and safety of the local residents.

The system architecture, depicted in Figure 1, illustrates the intricate data flow that underpins the entire operation. Data can be sourced directly from satellites or even from alternative vehicles like drones, with all this valuable information being meticulously stored in a database. One key assumption in this paper is that open-source data, readily available online, can be harnessed and leveraged to craft this comprehensive three-stage solution.

This data, whether in its raw form or after undergoing advanced machine learning analyses, is invaluable in determining the nearest available resources [6-9], be it clean water sources or upcoming vaccination drives, based on a user's geographical location. Furthermore, advanced machine learning models can be enlisted to scrutinize this data, enabling the generation of pertinent forecasts, such as drought or flood predictions. These forecasts are instrumental in facilitating preventive measures and strategic planning. Users can conveniently access this wealth of information through their cellular phones or the internet, either via the website or the dedicated smartphone app. The intricate workings and functionalities of each stage are elucidated in the subsequent section, providing a comprehensive understanding of how the system operates and delivers vital information to the Sub-Saharan desert region.

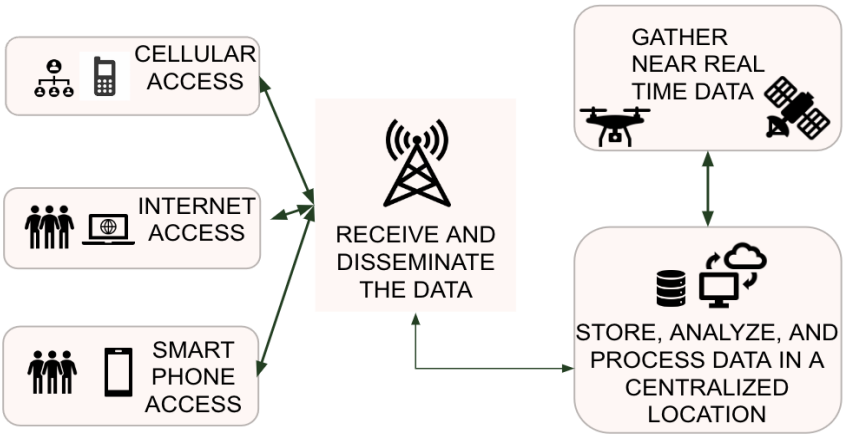

Figure 1: System architecture

3. Design Framework

This section gives a detailed explanation of the three stages of the solution design framework. This framework caters to people who have no, limited, and easy access to the internet.

A. Stage 1: Two-way sms hotline communication

A large section of society in the sub-saharan does not have access to the internet, so this first stage caters to this section of the region. The stage of the solution focuses on setting up a Two-way SMS Hotline communication system. This system is a vital component as it ensures that information reaches areas with limited internet connectivity, thus reaching those who need it most. The SMS Hotline facilitates the exchange of essential resource information such as clean water availability, real-time weather updates, upcoming vaccination drives, and awareness initiatives. Residents can receive updates and share their information through simple SMS interactions. The hotline's architecture can be visualized, as illustrated in Figure 2, which provides a clear depiction of the system's underlying structure. This diagram reveals the dynamic interaction between the API, drawing data from a satellite database, and its role in delivering information to the user in response to alerts or user-initiated requests.

A Two-way SMS Hotline can be a game-changer for individuals grappling with the scarcity of information regarding essential resources in Sub-Saharan regions. It acts as a beacon of connectivity in areas with unreliable internet access, allowing residents to access crucial data on clean water sources, real-time weather updates, vaccination campaigns, and health and safety initiatives via simple text messages. This real-time communication channel not only delivers immediate updates but also enables users to engage with the system, making inquiries or reporting local conditions. It mitigates language barriers, supports community engagement, and empowers communities to take control of resource management and problem-solving.

Furthermore, the SMS Hotline is an invaluable tool for disaster preparedness and response, issuing early warnings and facilitating coordination during emergencies. It plays a pivotal role in notifying residents of upcoming vaccination drives, enhancing health and safety awareness, and fostering a sense of inclusion among underserved populations. By bridging the information gap, the SMS Hotline empowers individuals and communities, facilitates resource allocation, and bolsters proactive measures for their well-being.

To implement this stage, partnerships with local cellular companies and community leaders are necessary to gain permission and ensure the effective distribution of information. Additionally, collaboration with startups and initiatives working in specific areas can extend the reach of the SMS Hotline.

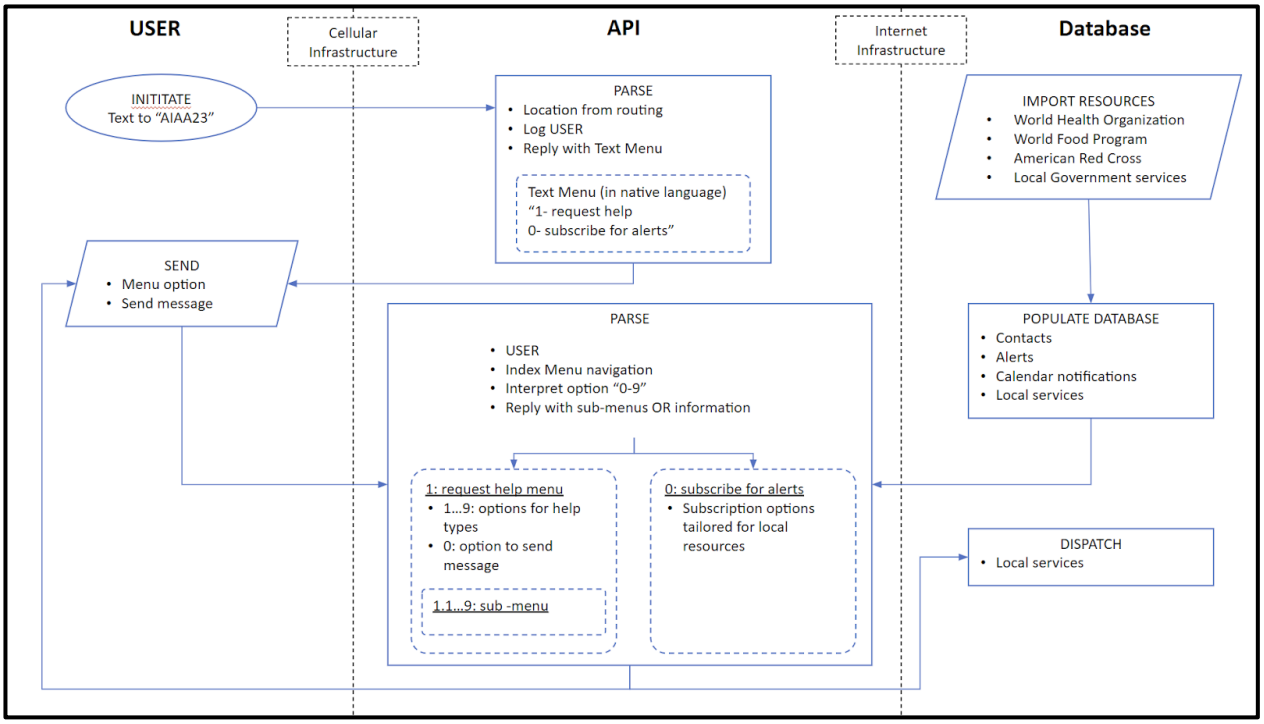

Figure 2: SMS Hotline architecture

B. Dedicated Website

Building on the SMS Hotline, the second stage involves the development of a dedicated website. This stage serves the people who have limited access to the internet and can visit nearby towns to do so. The website serves as a more detailed and comprehensive resource hub, offering in-depth information and additional features. It caters to users with internet access, whether through internet cafes or educational resources. Users can access online tutorials, articles, and other resources related to health, safety, and resource management. The website acts as a knowledge repository, increasing users' awareness and education.

A snapshot of such a website is shown in Figure 2.

A dedicated website serves as an indispensable resource for addressing the information void related to essential resources in Sub-Saharan regions. Unlike SMS communication, a website offers a more comprehensive and visually engaging platform for users with internet access. It provides detailed information on clean water availability, weather updates, vaccination campaigns, and health and safety initiatives. Users can access a wealth of resources, including articles, tutorials, and interactive tools, allowing them to delve deeper into these topics and broaden their knowledge base.

Moreover, a website extends its reach to individuals who can access the internet through facilities like internet cafes or educational centers, making it a vital tool for education and awareness. This digital hub bridges the gap between urban and rural areas, offering a centralized location for users to access, learn, and stay informed about essential resources. It is a platform that not only provides information but also empowers users to make informed decisions, promoting resource utilization and personal well-being.

Publishing the website and making the community aware of it is a challenge that can be addressed through community outreach and training programs to teach users how to navigate and use the website effectively.

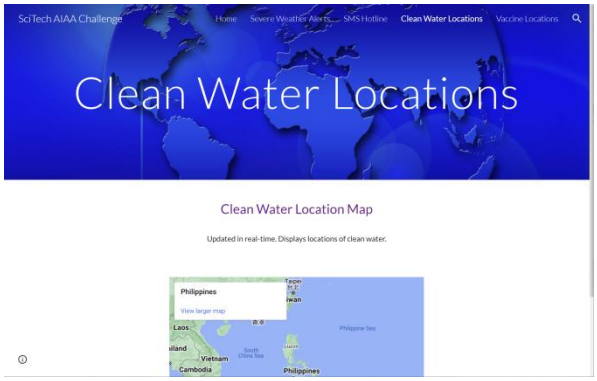

Figure 2: Website snapshot

C. User-Friendly Software App

The third stage introduces a user-friendly software app accessible via smartphones, further enhancing accessibility and user experience. This stage of the solution works for people having easy access to the internet. The app offers automatic notifications, easy navigation, and personalization of alerts and notifications. It mirrors the features found on the website, providing a more interactive experience. A snapshot of an example smartphone application is shown in Figure 3.

However, it's important to acknowledge that smartphone ownership is not widespread in these regions. This stage may only cater to a portion of the population, possibly around 1/5 of the total users.

A smartphone application offers a highly accessible and user-friendly means of addressing the information deficit surrounding essential resources in Sub-Saharan regions. For

individuals with smartphones, it serves as a powerful tool that provides real-time updates and personalized notifications about clean water sources, weather forecasts, vaccination drives, and health and safety initiatives. The app's user-friendly interface and automatic alerts make it an efficient way for users to stay informed and take immediate action when necessary.

Beyond delivering information, a smartphone app enhances the user experience through interactive features and customization options. Users can personalize their alerts and notifications, ensuring that the information they receive aligns with their specific needs and preferences. This level of interactivity fosters a sense of empowerment and personal agency in managing essential resources. Furthermore, the app's visual and interactive elements can facilitate better understanding and engagement, making it an effective tool for education, resource management, and health and safety awareness, particularly for the 1/5 of the population with access to smartphones in Sub-Saharan regions.

Figure 3: Smart application snapshot

4. User Cases

Satellite data [10] plays a crucial role in addressing numerous challenges in Sub-Saharan countries, offering a wealth of applications that significantly improve the quality of life and aid in various sectors. In agriculture and food security, satellites provide valuable insights into crop monitoring and weather forecasting. Crop health, moisture levels, and pest infestations can be monitored, helping farmers optimize their agricultural practices. Weather predictions enable farmers to plan planting and harvesting seasons effectively, contributing to food security. Water resource management is another area where satellite data proves indispensable. These satellites monitor water levels in reservoirs, rivers, and lakes, aiding in the detection and management of drought conditions. Furthermore, they predict floods by observing rainfall, river levels, and soil moisture, providing vital information for disaster preparedness.

In healthcare, satellite data aids in tracking disease outbreaks, such as vector-borne diseases like malaria, allowing health authorities to respond promptly. It also helps identify remote areas in need of vaccination campaigns, ensuring that healthcare initiatives reach those most in need.

Satellite data is a powerful tool for infrastructure development and urban planning. It assists in mapping unplanned settlements, identifying areas that require infrastructure development, and planning transportation routes, thereby improving connectivity in rural regions.

Natural resource management benefits from satellite data as it detects illegal logging and deforestation, helping in the conservation of forests. Additionally, satellites are instrumental in identifying mineral deposits and supporting resource exploration.

Disaster management relies heavily on satellite data. Early warning systems for natural disasters, such as cyclones, earthquakes, and wildfires, use this data to provide critical information to at-risk populations. During disasters, satellite imagery aids in locating and coordinating search and rescue efforts.

Satellite technology enhances education and connectivity. It enables internet access in remote areas, improving educational opportunities and communication. Educational resources use satellite imagery and data to enhance students' understanding of their environment.

Environmental conservation efforts also benefit from satellite data. It aids in tracking wildlife movement and behavior, supporting conservation initiatives. Additionally, it helps protect national parks and wildlife reserves from illegal activities.

Climate change research is another critical application of satellite data. It provides essential information for studying climate change, including monitoring ice caps, sea levels, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, satellite data is essential for security and defense purposes. It supports border and maritime surveillance, enabling the monitoring of activities in vast and often remote regions. In conflict or post-conflict areas, satellite imagery helps assess damage and plan recovery efforts.

The availability and accessibility of satellite data have revolutionized these sectors, providing valuable insights and aiding in the sustainable development and disaster management efforts in Sub-Saharan countries.

5. Challenges

Several challenges need to be addressed in the implementation of this solution, including

- Collaborating with cellular companies and local communities to set up the SMS hotline and gain necessary permissions.
- Partnering with startups or initiatives to extend the reach of the system in specific areas.
- Promoting the website and app to the community and providing training on how to use these resources.
- Ensuring the ongoing maintenance of the SMS hotline, website, and app.
- Addressing potential language barriers, especially when using Natural Language Processing tools for translations and pre-programmed texts.
- Building trust within the community, ensuring that users have confidence in the information and individuals behind the system.

6. Conclusion

The proposed prototype solution aims to bridge the information gap in underprivileged areas of the Sub-Saharan desert. By leveraging satellite data, we can provide essential resource information to those who need it most. The Three-stage approach, including Two-way SMS Hotline communication, a dedicated website, and a user-friendly software app, caters to users with varying levels of connectivity and device access. Accurate forecasted data is a crucial component of the system to ensure timely alerts, warnings, and awareness of the steps to be taken. This comprehensive solution has the potential to make a significant positive impact on the lives of underprivileged individuals in the Sub-Saharan desert, enhancing their access to essential information and resources.

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