TAKE COMMAND
QUARTERLY REVIEW

SUMMER 2020

SNEAK PEEK

Get ready for a bold new feature of SimsUshare—embedding sims into your online content!

This feature lets you put your INTERACTIVE sims directly into web pages. You can even update your sims in the CTC and automatically publish those changes.

Adding sims that you can walk through to a Learning Management System (LMS) or your training web pages is now hassle-free with SimsUshare.

To see this in action, check out a recent change to our free simulations page (https://simsushare.com/free-simulation-sets/), especially the new box on the righthand side, "Browse Sims Interactively."

This feature will be available shortly for ALL SimsUshare subscribers. Check out our July webinar to learn more!

Browse the Sims Interactively!
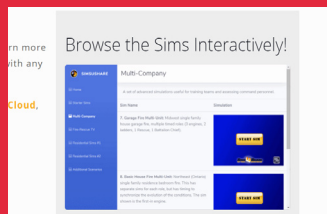
Adapt or Perish
H.G. Wells

Photo by Chao Yen/Flicker
Methuselah Tree*

Change falls basically into two categories—expected and unexpected. When change is expected, it may annoy, frustrate, or cause us any number of headaches, but it should not surprise us. Change is not always easy or welcome, but it is a constant in life. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus summed it up when he said: "Nothing endures but change."

Often change in the fire service involves a stretching or redistribution of limited resources which means of course that someone, or perhaps no one, will be happy with the change. However, good planning, identifying priorities and getting all stakeholders involved can make transitions smoother if not entirely painless. If you know change is coming, don't procrastinate hoping it will sort itself out. It won't. Trying to implement a major change at the last minute, that you knew about months before, is a self-inflicted wound.

The second category of change—the unexpected—can push an organization to or even over the brink. A case in point is this current health crisis. We'll leave it to the pundits to debate if we should have been better prepared, but the reality is the pundits won't be lining up to rescue your organization. It should be obvious that we're not going back to what was considered normal a few months ago. Instead of adopting short-term or temporary solutions, it's time to think long-term.

For example, how will you address training needs? A basic component of training involves sharpening and maintaining individual and team decision making skills. In a perfect, non COVID world, you get everyone together in a classroom for the theory and in the practice yard for the application. That may not always be possible or practical moving forward. Recognizing the need to adapt to changing circumstances, many departments are expanding their simulation-based training so that personnel can participate from multiple locations—even from home if necessary.

This is not a short-term or temporary solution until such time as things go back to what was the old normal. This is a commitment to bring together training scenarios and curriculum in an organized format to use as a regular part of the new normal. This is building for the present and the future so that you are better prepared for whatever unexpected changes lie ahead.

Charles Darwin is often quoted as having said: "It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change." Although it sounds like something he could have said, apparently the quote belongs to a professor of management and marketing at LSU, not Darwin. Even so, it's a thought-provoking quote! Our ability to manage change may well determine if we adapt or perish. 🔥

https://www.flickr.com/photos/yenchao/9187262932/in/photostream/

- In 1957 the National Association of Fire Chiefs recommends the use of a single number for reporting fires.

- In 1967, a presidential commission recommends that a "single number should be established" nationwide for reporting emergency situations.

- In November 1967, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) meets with the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) to come up with a universal emergency number.

- In early 1968, AT&T announces that the number will be the digits 9-1-1 throughout the United States. The code 9-1-1 is chosen because: (1) it is brief, easily remembered, and can be dialed quickly (2) it is a unique number, never having been authorized as an office code, area code, or service code.

Phone used for America's first 911 call

- On February 16, 1968, Senator Rankin Fite completes the first 9-1-1 call in Haleyville, Alabama. This Haleyville 9-1-1 system is still in operation today.

- On February 22, 1968, Nome, Alaska implements 9-1-1 service.

- In 1972, Canada choses to adopt 9-1-1, thus unifying the concept and giving 9-1-1 international stature.

- By the end of 1976, 9-1-1 is serving about 17% of the population of the United States.

- Approximately 96% of the population now have access to 911.

Future Look – What's Next!

Predicting the future is like throwing darts while blindfolded. Throw enough darts, however. and you are bound to hit the target occasionally. Here is our attempt to isolate some technology that will likely impact emergency services in a big way.

- **Autonomous emergency vehicles:** This is where things are going in business, so once they figure out the remaining safety issues, it's a done deal.

- **GEOspatial INTelligence** via drones or real-time satellite networks will include data processing while fighting actual fires, analyzing where the next fire will start, weather patterns, proximity of resources, etc.

- **Mobile robots** are already in use on the fireground, but they still need to learn a few tricks to perform the most common firefighting tasks. However, sending in robots to search for victims where there is an elevated risk of flashover is too obvious not to pursue. AI (Artificial Intelligence) will be the next big leap for these robots.

- **Smart clothing** packed with information gathering sensors will continuously monitor the firefighter's health as well as the changing environment of the fireground.

- **Augmented reality glasses** that display enriched information over and above what is visible to the naked eye.

- **Enhanced GPS** that links to other data banks to access all relevant information associated with the incident location.

- **Big data** including static and dynamic information gathered from real-time sensors. All this information gets immediately filtered, processed, and funneled in a manageable package to incident commanders along with a recommended course of action.

- **Building technology and communication integration** will increase the effectiveness of building sensors. Not only will a building be able to do its own fire prevention, but first responders will be able to tap into the building's smart technology to find out a wealth of information about the type, duration, and location of the fire.

Predicting the future is like throwing darts while blindfolded.

To be honest, no crystal ball is needed to foresee the technological developments on our list because they are already in the works. And, we will likely see them being used sooner rather than later. At SimsUshare, we are also burning the midnight oil to expand our program's capabilities, such as the new ability to embed interactive simulations into any web page (see page 1, sidebar).

Small Town Fire Chief
PART 2
CONTINUED FROM SPRING 2020 TAKE COMMAND

Every small town has its politics and ours was no exception. Volunteer fire departments often ended up in the middle of issues that didn't directly concern them. As a result of one such issue, the fire chief suddenly quit to offer his services elsewhere, thereby creating a need for a new chief to step in very quickly. My grandfather had no interest in the position of fire chief but was chosen unanimously by everyone else to fill the role…at least temporarily. He knew that his lack of education was going to be problem. My grandfather left school in his early teens during the Great Depression to find work, any work. He married young because, well, it was the honorable thing to do (if you know what I mean). He had all the formal schooling he was ever going to get.

With my grandmother caring for the garage's books and other administrative duties, my grandfather got along fine in business. The challenge he now faced as fire chief was how to care for all the department paperwork. He couldn't write letters, fill out forms such as requisitions or deal effectively with the local politicians who seemed to be ever present at the station. Initially others tried to help but before long, my grandfather gave the powers-that-be a deadline and said he would no longer serve as chief from that point on. Forced to act, a new chief was found, and my grandfather returned to his familiar duties as deputy chief/station mechanic.

I left home in my late teens and moved far away to pursue other goals. My grandfather retired from the fire department as he had promised my grandmother, and they enjoyed a few years playing cards and fishing at their small cottage on a lake. My grandmother died first and my grandfather followed a few years later. The fire department gave him a good send off at his retirement and then again at his funeral. He was well respected by all who knew him.
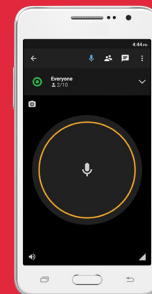
Many years later, during an infrequent visit to my hometown, I stopped by the fire station and found the current chief working busily in his office on the second floor. We didn't know each other but I introduced myself as my grandfather's grandson and the chief immediately put down his pen, sat back in his chair and smiled. He was a young firefighter when my grandfather was deputy chief and he spoke about him with sincere affection. He shared some interesting and often irreverent stories that usually ended in a hearty laugh. Finally, he jumped up as if he had just thought of something important and asked me to follow him. We headed downstairs to an out of the way mechanical room at the back of the station where some tools and other equipment were stored. The chief felt along the wall behind the boiler and pulled out a small dusty glass. As he held it up, he told me that years ago a few firefighters would often gather at the end of a day in the mechanical room and have a drink. That glass, he said, belonged to my grandfather. When he died the firefighters decided as a group that the Deputy's glass should always remain in its spot, hidden away behind the boiler, as a token to the man and his service. 🔥

QUARTERLY TIP:
CREATING A NEW CONDITION/STATE THE EASY WAY

With SimsUshare version 2.9.3 and above, you can now create all the new locations for a condition (referred to as a "state") with just a few clicks!

When using this feature, SimsUshare will ask you to name of the state (Arrival, Extension, Knockdown, etc.), and then which condition, or set of locations, you want to copy to this new state. (If you haven't made any states yet, that's called an "<empty state>".)

Press OK and SimsUshare creates a copy of the locations from the source state you selected and even sets up the navigation. The new locations will be named with the state in square brackets, for example, "Alpha [Extension]". Once you add one or more states, SimsUshare lets you rename them. You can also arrange your locations with states along rows or columns in the CTC dashboard with the "Sort Locations" option.

Our latest version of SimsUshare just made 'easy' even easier!

Choose the "Manage Locations" item in the Locations menu.
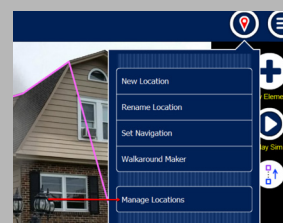
Once in the Manage Locations screen, choose "Create/Fill State".
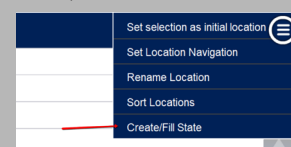
SimsUshare App Update 2.9.4

The main theme of this app update was to make it easier to create and use SimsUshare States, a powerful and unique feature of SimsUshare for managing incident conditions in your simulations. For more information about SimsUshare States, please see our June, 2020 webinar on this topic, "All About those States" in our Webinar Archives.

Here are the main items included in this update:

• Four new realistic effects: Front View Smoke, Side View Smoke, Front View Smoke and Fire, and Side View Smoke and Fire

• Customize the position of the navigation arrows cluster

• Create multiple sim folders (Windows and Mac)

• Allow rotation of Simple Text

• State Management Enhancements

  o Added "Create/Fill-in State" to Locations menu

  o Added Rename State and Delete State

  o Sort locations by state (along rows or columns), for CTC

  o Added "State Time" as an option for effect timing

• Added ability in Merge Simulations to add suffix or prefix to merged locations

• Allow numeric adjustment of effect scaling value

• Allow users to control the background picture compression to permit less resolution loss

• Improved French and Norwegian user interface translations

• Added clock option to clock/timer – allows user to set base time of day

• Over ten (10) updates to CTC functionality since January, 2020.

Stay tuned in the coming months for a revamped Help section which will include new tutorials on States and other enhancements. 🔥

ABOUT THE PAGE ONE PICTURE

The ultimate survivor, Methuselah, a 4,851-year-old Great Basin bristlecone pine tree growing high in the White Mountains of California, has adapted to harsh conditions and extremes of weather.