Social Media and #Disasters 101—It’s Time to Tweet!

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@sbcrisis
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There was no follow-up.

My 1st experience with Avenues came as a Patrol Officer in 2005. Victim of ADW told me that Drew St clique was making Vegas organized crime connections and laundering money through a local tow truck business.

We are at the dawn of a new digital battlefield
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We are at the dawn of a new digital battlefield. Technology.
“The reputation of a thousand years may be deterred by the conduct of one hour.”

Japanese Proverb
WHAT IS #SMEM?

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Why do we need to incorporate social media within our crisis communications plans?
There are 5X as many CELLPHONES in the world as there are PCs.
There are **6.8 BILLION** people on the planet.

**4 BILLION** of them use a mobile phone.

Only **3.5 BILLION** of them use a toothbrush.

http://60secondmarketer.com/blog/2012/03/18/more-mobile-phones-than-toothbrushes/
Surprising Social Media Facts

- Social Media has overtaken corn as the #1 activity on the web.
- 25% of smartphone owners ages 18-44 say they can't recall the last time their smartphone wasn't next to them.
Mobile – is a must!

- Monitoring
- Responding
- Posting
Traditional Communication vs Social Media

- One way
  - Talking to, talking at
  - Sharing information
  - Broadcast

- Conversation
- 2 (or more) way
- LISTENING
- Responding
- “We’re in this together”
Benefits of Using Social Media in a Crisis

Before:
- Helps people be better prepared for a disaster.
- Helps communities understand the extent to which organizations go to keep their communities prepared.

During:
- Communicate directly with disaster-affected residents, first responders, reporters, and stakeholders.
- Local control becomes easier as the public can turn to your organization for validation.
- Provides the capability of sharing information as soon as it is available.

After:
- Social media tools bring the community together—everyone can easily discuss the event and share information.
- Information about aid can be dispensed and easily shared.
- Provides the ability to post pictures of damaged areas or quickly coordinate recovery efforts.
#Twitter Talk
What is Twitter?
Twitter is a Broadcast Text Message to the world...
Twitter is a Conversation?
Twitter is a Community?
Twitter is a Community Conversation?
Twitter During an Emergency

• Set up a Twitter account and gain followers before an emergency occurs
• Messages must be 140 characters or less
• Short and to the point
• Tweet and direct message cap**3
• Immediate distribution with unlimited reach
• Should be monitored 24/7 to respond to rumors and misinformation
• Use hashtags (#) for further reach
Twitter vs. Facebook

Twitter
- Tweets <140 characters
- You can follow someone, but they don’t have to follow you back
- You can look at someone’s public profile and see their tweets without following them
- You are shown every update in your Twitter feed

Facebook
- 16,000+ characters
- You friend someone and you are mutually connected
- You can Like Brand Pages such as Gables, Coke, Oreos and receive their updates
- You are not shown every update in your Facebook timeline
When something bad happens, you have three choices – you can:

• Let it define you
• Let it destroy you, or
• Let it strengthen you.
CASE STUDIES - THE EVOLUTION OF #SMEM
Social Media and the Joplin Tornado
Joplin Tornado - May 22, 2011

- Catastrophic EF5 multiple-vortex tornado struck Joplin, Missouri in the late afternoon of Sunday, May 22, 2011
- Reached a maximum width of nearly 1 mile during its path through the southern part of the city
- Third tornado to strike Joplin since May 1971
- 158 people killed and over 1,100 injured
- Deadliest tornado in America since 1947
- Joplin Tornado Info was created less than two hours after the tornado hit

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Joplin Tornado Info

• Facebook page launched at 7:36pm on Sunday, May 22, 2011
• First post was: “St. John’s has been hit; that’s all we know for sure.”
• Volunteer administrators monitored and updated the page 24/7 for the first 3 weeks following the tornado
• All posts were verified beforehand, accuracy was key
• Rumor control
• People came to the page for reliable, useful and timely information
Joplin Tornado Info Response Phase

• Clearing house for information, communication and “connecting the dots” between needs and resources
• Locating loved ones
• Equipment/resource requests and offers
• Volunteer inquiries
• Triage locations
• Fresh water depots, shelter, clothing
• Charging stations
• Was considered the go-to site for up-to-date, accurate information
• Every post was answered
Social Media Best Practices

• Always refer to an official source
• When creating a Facebook page, monitor posts
• Staff the page 24/7 until rescues are complete, basic needs are met, utilities and communications are restored
• Remember to include who, what, when, where, how and why in your posts
• Verify all information you post
• Watch the speed of your “timeline” - frequent posts vs too many
Social Media Best Practices

- Never speak ill of other organizations (even if they deserve it!)
- It’s a crisis, not a contest – borrow, post, re-post, share
- Check every group or person offering help before posting it
- Avoid hearsay and clear up rumours, avoid sensationalism
- Refer to those affected as survivors, not victims
- Remember – you are a resource for those affected first, a resource for their families second, and a resource for the surrounding area third.

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Social Media and Hurricane Sandy
HURRICANE SANDY
BY THE NUMBERS

8 MILLION
WITHOUT POWER IN THE US

18,000
FLIGHTS CANCELED

NEW YORK

300
PATIENTS EVACUATED FROM NYU MED

6,400
NEW YORKERS IN SHELTERS

NEW JERSEY

2.6M
HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT ANY POWER

4,500
NEW JERSEYNANS IN SHELTERS
Social Media and Sandy

• Social media played an integral role during Hurricane Sandy
• NYC.gov, Facebook, Flikr, Twitter, Tumblr and Youtube informed people in near real-time
• Regular tweets from:
  – FEMA
  – Red Cross
  – SEMAs
  – NYC Office of Emergency Management
  – National Guard
  – Mayor Bloomberg’s office
  – Con Edison
Pre-Event (Preparedness Phase)

• Emergency evacuation route information
• Evacuation orders
• Regular hurricane updates
• Promoting personal preparedness (stock up on supplies, food, water in advance)
• Tracking of storm
Before the Storm

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Response Phase

- Emergency shelter information
- Finding missing people, reuniting people
- Food, water distribution details
- Where to receive medical attention
- What areas to stay away from
- Dispelling rumours
Tweets During the Storm

NYC Mayor's Office @NYCMayorsOffice
Mayor: in the Battery, in the Rockaways and on Staten Island, the surge will be highest between 6:30 and 10:30 tonight. #Sandy
Retweeted by FDNY
Expand

FDNY @FDNY
@bklyndafna That area is busy now. Units are working as quickly/safely as possible. Will make sure dispatch is on it. Keep in touch with him
View conversation

FDNY @FDNY
@FranFraim735 We respond to NYC, so contact your power provider or emergency services on Long Island to find out more. Hope your mom's ok.
View conversation

Mike Bloomberg @MikeBloomberg
Reminder: 311 online may be the faster way to get information or to report non-emergencies: on.nyc.gov/YglVA3 #NYC PLEASE RT
Retweeted by FDNY
Expand
Safety Tips

NYC Mayor's Office @NYCMayorsOffice
If you have water coming out of your faucet, it is safe to drink.
#Sandy
Retweeted by FDNY

FDNY @FDNY
If you, or someone you know, is using a generator, please ensure that it is being used safely: nyc.gov/html/fdny/html... #Sandy
Expand
Rumor Control

• FEMA had web page solely dedicated to Hurricane Sandy rumor control
• FEMA tweets to correct misinformation via #Sandy RUMOR CONTROL:
  – The rumor that FEMA is offering $300 cash cards for food is FALSE
Fact or Fiction?

Don’t believe everything you see/read on the internet!

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“Don’t believe everything you read on the Internet just because there’s a picture with a quote next to it.”

—Abraham Lincoln
Response Phase

- NYC.gov did a remarkable job getting messaging out in as many ways possible, including social media
- All Mayor Bloomberg’s press conferences were posted on Youtube
- Press conferences were live-tweeted by @nycmayorsoffice
- Summary of press conferences posted to Facebook and Tumblr
- Spanish-language
- In future, amplify Twitter application will allow crowd-powered emergency messaging (donate your twitter account to help spread the word during emergencies)
#Sandy
Important information and updates about Hurricane Sandy

Tweet à propos de #Sandy

@Sandy

Tweets

New York Daily News @mydailynews
The latest update on New York’s damaged transportation systems from @knlnews bit.ly/SkKyvM #Sandy

WNYC Radio @WNYC
Elmo, resident of Sesame Street, talks to kids about Hurricane Sandy on the @BrianLehrer Show. Hear it here: wnyc.org/shows/bl/2012/

Mike Bloomberg @MikeBloomberg
Most recent report has nearly 750,000 New Yorkers without power. Power could be out for at least 2-3 days, maybe longer. #SandyNYC

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Fact or Fiction?

Don’t believe **everything** you see/read on the internet!
Recovery Phase

- Still many areas to be rebuilt
- Parts of lower Manhattan were still without full power one month later
- Volunteers from across North America helping to rebuild
- Occupy Sandy
- New York Cares
- Movement for Peace
Post-Event Information

NYC Mayor's Office @NYCMayorsOffice
Anyone impacted by #Sandy, including homeowners, renters and businesses, should go to disasterassistance.gov to register for assistance.
Retweeted by FDNY
Expand

FEMA @fema
There is a disaster recovery center at 11331 Beach Channel Drive in #Rockaway, NY 11694. #Sandy #SandyNY Food, water, cell charge, register
Retweeted by FDNY
Expand

NY Blood Center @NYBloodCenter
Please RT to help - now you can find all New York Blood Center blood drive information on one page! support.nybloodcenter.org/sandy #sandy #recover
Retweeted by FDNY
Expand

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Long Beach Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund

315 likes · 127 talking about this

http://www.youcaring.com/fundraiser_details?fundraiser_id=12870&url=longbeachhurricanesandyrelief Due to the events of Hurricane Sandy Long Beach New York has had a devastating loss. Many people are without homes, food, water clothes and more having lost.

About
OCCUPY SANDY

#WE GOT THIS

JOIN THE RELIEF EFFORT AT OCCUPYSANDY.ORG
FREE Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms from FDNY

IF YOU:
1. Don’t have one.
2. Are unable to purchase.
3. Are on a budget.
4. Living in a mobile.

You Must Have A WORKING
Smoke and Carbon
Monoxide Alarm

MovementForPeace.org
Midland Aid Station
Lessons Learned

• Releasing the **correct** information is the most important priority
• No room for errors or inconsistencies
• Validate all sources and information
• Develop social media guidelines, policies and protocols ahead of time
• Develop “How To” guides for top social media platforms
• Constantly monitor social media
• Social media is not a substitute for traditional media
THE PROS AND CONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA
What about those who aren’t “connected”?

- Additional way of getting EM messaging out, not only way
- May not be connected to social media, but listen to traditional news (who get much of their info from SM)
- Most have family or loved ones who are connected and would promptly share emergency information directly

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A Lesson from the Red Cross

Ryan found two more 4 bottle packs of Dogfish Head's Midas Touch beer.... when we drink we do it right #gettingslizzerd

HootSuite - 2/15/11 11:24 PM

Rogue tweet frm @RedCross due to my inability to use hootsuite... I wasn't actually #gettingslizzard but just excited! #nowembarassing

We've deleted the rogue tweet but rest assured the Red Cross is sober and we've confiscated the keys.

RT @Michael_Hayek: #craftbeer @dogfishbeer fans, donate 2 @redcross 2day. Tweet with #gettingslizzerd. Donate here http://tinyurl.com/5s720bb

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Social Media Strategy

facebook

twitter

Linkedin

YouTube

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Emergency Managers are NOT Social Media Gurus, and Vice-Versa!
PLAN YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY
What to Include in Your Social Media Strategy?

- What your organization will try to achieve through its use of social media
- To what level your organization will engage in social media and in what context this level may change during different phases of an emergency (e.g., Level 1 – monitor only, Level 2 – monitor and respond to select posts, Level 3...)
  - Consider levels of activation and de-activation
  - Decide in advance what your organization will/won’t respond to
What to include in your SMEM Strategy?

• A content strategy outlining what types of information will be shared and how often (if applicable)

• Any formal links your organization will make with other related organizations (including guidance on how information will be shared between organizations and who has authority to do what
Include Your Employees in the Plan

• Seek out those staff who are more familiar with social media platforms on a personal level
• Train them in social media communications roles they will undertake during an emergency
• Encourage employees to familiarize themselves with your organization’s Twitter account, Facebook pages, etc...
Include Your Employees in the Plan

• During an emergency, your employees can help push your messaging out to the public

• Let employees know ahead of time what is expected of them during an emergency
Staffing for Social Media

• Who will engage in social media?
• Consider staffing requirements before an emergency and train where necessary
• On-the-job training and experience before an emergency is key
• Include a social media component in any EM training provided
• Run pre-event tests of your use of social media (incorporate within existing simulation exercises)
Staffing for Social Media

• Encourage staff to engage in social media in their personal time
• Develop policy for all staff working inside the EOC and response (personal vs official use of SM)
• Maintain a network of SM personnel within your organization and among other related organizations
Managing Resourcing Levels

• To actively engage, resourcing levels will be high (24/7) – need a devoted SM team
• Ensure your level of engagement doesn’t exceed your available resources
• Scale your use of SM to the size of your team
• Consider shift changes
• Ensure back-up personnel are trained and ready to stand in
Managing Resourcing Issues

• Train as many staff as your resources permit
• Where feasible, partner up with other related organizations
• Take advantage of local or international volunteers (if appropriate), particularly for monitoring and gathering info during response phase – VOST
• The Virtual Operations Support Group lists active teams of volunteers across the world: http://vosg.us/active-vosts/
• Use social media management tools (HootSuite, Tweetdeck)
HOW TO USE TWITTER
#HASHTAGS IN A CRISIS
Establish One Main Hashtag

• At the onset of an incident, establish your main hashtag
• 15 characters or less (preferably 10)
• Should be included in every tweet posted during the incident
• You can strategically add other hashtags for specific information
• Gives the public and media a term to follow
The Easier to Read, the Better

• If you string words together, capitalize the first letter of each word (#CrisisCommsInfo)
• Make your hashtag easy to remember and easy to spell
• Keep your hashtags incident-related
• What term would people search if they wanted to get information on the incident?
More Twips (Twitter Tips)

• Run a Twitter search of your hashtag to be sure it isn’t a general term already in use
• Monitor the hashtag throughout the incident
• Using a hashtag on every tweet produces a stream of information you can monitor
• Your hashtag can also provide valuable material during your post-crisis evaluation
#SafetyBeforeSelfie!
Don’t be a Village Idiot!
Summary

• Social media is here to stay
• If you don’t already have one, start working on a social media component to add to your current Crisis Communications/Emergency Response Plans
• Harness the power of social media to hear and be heard
• If you learn the rules and understand the tools, you can use social media to your great benefit
Summary

• Social media is here to stay

• If you don’t already have one, start working on a social media component to add to your current Crisis Communications/Emergency Response/Security/Business Continuity Plans

• Harness the power of social media to hear and be heard

• If you learn the rules and understand the tools, you can use social media to your great benefit!
QUESTIONS?
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