



Roles of traditional and social media in disasters

Traditional media are perhaps more likely to influence the behaviour of the communities directly affected by man-made and natural disasters as a result of the fact that they have long played an important role in educating the public on disaster risk. However, media interventions appear to have a greater influence upon general behaviours and are not suitable for the provision of real time, context-specific information (Reilly, Atanasova, 3). In their turn, during a crisis situation, social media channels can be used to provide consisted updates and information about the development of the effects of the disaster to both stakeholders and public opinion. All new media instruments (like blogs, instant messages, tweets, Facebook updates) are an efficient tool that can be used to keep citizens informed, as well as to collect data and information from the audience with regards to the events experienced by them in case of a disaster (Ulmer et. al., 58-59). This might contribute to the development of efficient response strategies that can cover all the needs of the population (not only in terms of communication). In crisis communication, social media can be used to: Communicate with citizens during a disaster; Monitor what is being said about the disaster; Raise target audience's level of awareness; Develop and increase the dialogue between public opinion and authorities/institutions with responsibilities in disaster management; Draw conclusions and lessons learned to manage to anticipate another potential crises generated by a disaster. Recommendations, highlighted by the field literature for institutional use of social media during risk, crisis and disaster communication include: Decide on a strategic plan to accommodate changing organizational and stakeholder requirements as well as the evolving nature of the Internet; Maximize branding by selecting an appropriate name and domain identification, i.e., .gov, .org, .com, etc.; Create a design that is functional, reader friendly and easy to navigate; Incorporate a Contact Us Page, About Us Page and Site Map. Include a Search; Provide box on every page and search hints and recommendations; Keep content current, audience driven, and use plain language free of acronyms; Decide on which forms and publications to include and how to provide for download of data files; Avoid duplicating material from other websites and link to relevant cross agency portals when appropriate; Adhere to federal laws, regulations and directives concerning web content, operations and the protection of personal information. Incorporate transparency features, i.e., a privacy policy, security protocols and guidelines on linking, disclaimers and advertising; Institute a process for continually improving web operations by conducting formal evaluations using online surveys and usability testing; Establish emergency operating procedures and protocols for taking the site off-line for system maintenance and other contingencies. (Byars, 2012, 55).

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Communication](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#), [Preparedness](#), [Response](#), [Recovery](#), [All disaster phases](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Media](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)



Recommendations:

- [Inform citizens about the risk they may face and about possible actions and measures, they can take to reduce vulnerability and better prepare themselves](#)
- [Use cultural factors to improve the effectiveness of disaster communication](#)

Source

[Deliverable D8.2 "Report on the role of the media in disaster risk communication" \(page 165\)](#)

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