Social Media in Emergency Management

Alex Ambrosius, RIEMA External Affairs



Purpose

- To provide participants with an understanding of social media and its uses, current tools, methods, and models
- To properly leverage social media for crisis communication within their perspective organizations

<u> Agenda - Module 1</u>

- Module 1: Understanding Social Media (SM)
 - 1. What is SM
 - 2. Objectives of SM
 - 3. Traditional Media vs. SM
 - 4. Challenges of SM
 - 5. Choose the Right Platform to Match Objectives
 - 6. Community Outreach

Agenda - Module 2

- Module 2: Adopting Social Media For Your Organization
 - 1. Develop SM Policies
 - 2. Increasing Effectiveness
 - 3. Messaging
 - 4. Monitoring
 - 5. Learn to Deal With Trolls
 - 6. Building Credibility

Module 1:

Understanding Social Media



What is Social Media?

- "An innovative way of socializing where we engage in an open dialogue, tell our stories, and interact with one another using online platforms" – Associated Press
- SM allows users to share information and create online communities through the integration of technology, social interaction, text, picture, video, and audio

Objectives of Social Media

- Gets a message out faster/instantly
- Reaches more people via mobile communications devices
- Instant, highly scalable form of communication
- Relatively low operating costs
- Direct from the source

Traditional Media Vs. Social Media

Traditional Media

One-way communication system

Only TV & radio provides real-time info

Info controlled by media/press

Closed system

Social Media

Two-way communication system

Provides real-time info

Info can be updated instantly by anyone

Open system



Challenges of Social Media

- Privacy Issues
 - Organizations may be faced with the challenge of posting sensitive information
- Internal Policy
 - Policies should outline how SM will be used within your organization
- Training
 - Staff assigned to SM need to be properly trained
- Organizational Culture
 - May need to shift organizational makeup of your public relations personnel



Challenges of Social Media

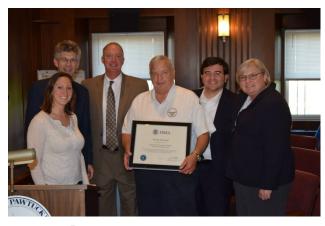
- Who Will Use SM?
 - Dedicate staff solely to work on SM?
 - Assign SM as an additional duty?
 - How many people will have access?
- What SM outlets will your organization use?
- How will SM support your strategic messaging?

Choose the Right Platform to Match



Community Outreach

- SM can be utilized to portray your organization's community outreach initiatives
 - Meeting with external partners
 - Speaking at an event
 - Attending/working a conference
 - Trainings & exercises









Module 2:

Adopting Social Media For Your Organization



Develop Social Media Policies

- Policies should address the following:
 - Use of SM
 - Types of SM your organization uses
 - Proper vs. improper conduct
 - Processes





Increasing Effectiveness

- Utilize #'s!!!
 - Improve the ability for organizations to categorize messages and to monitor more efficiently
- Prepare canned responses and posts for different types of crisis situations
 - Beneficial for emergency managers to manage during an emergency
- Utilize messaging and monitoring

<u>Messaging</u>

- Keep messages brief
- Include links and/or pictures
- Support a unified message
 - Work with others to help deliver an effective message to the public
 - The more partners involved, the bigger audience you'll reach
- One voice, multiple channels
 - Coordinate through single POC to speak with same voice and message throughout all channels
- Plan ahead



Monitoring

- Emergency managers can play an interactive SM monitoring role to capture situational awareness
- If your organization plans on using SM solely for broadcasting information, post a disclaimer that states you do not actively monitor to help manage public expectations
- Useful monitoring sites:
 - Twitter
 - Tweetdeck





Learn to Deal With Trolls

- Be prepared to put up with some negativity
- Distinguish between trolls and those frustrated due to event-related circumstances
 - Trolls try to disrupt, destroy, or change information to

fit their own agenda

- Trolls are typically repeat offenders
- Don't engage!
- Don't get discouraged!



Learn to Deal With Trolls

- Difference between trolling and lifethreatening
- Address reporting threats in your policy





Building Credibility

- Build a reputation
 - Be a useful source of information
 - Be professional
- Create a presence
 - Establish a following BEFORE an emergency
 - Post often
 - Find a balance
- Stay involved and current with information
 - People want to know what's happening NOW

Contact Me!

- Alex Ambrosius
 - **Phone:** (401) 462-7337
 - Email: alexander.ambrosius@ema.ri.gov
 - Twitter: @RhodelslandEMA
 - Facebook: <u>facebook.com/rhodeislandema</u>
 - Web: riema.ri.gov

Questions?



Twitter: @RhodeIslandEMA

Facebook: <u>facebook.com/rhodeislandema</u>

Web: <u>riema.ri.gov</u>

