

How Social Media are Changing the Landscape of Crisis Communications

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Midwest Disaster 2.0; January 21, 2009



The Numbers

- More than 270 million Americans (87% of the population) own a wireless device
- 90% of Americans are within 3 feet of their mobile device 24 hours a day
- Twitter – more than 7 million users
- Facebook – more than 200 million users
- YouTube – 65,000 new videos each day
- MySpace – 30 million users

A few recent events...



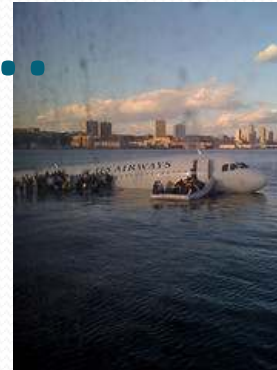
Virginia
Tech, April
2007



Sichuan China EQ,
May 2008



Mumbai, Dec 2008



US Airways
Crash, Jan 2009

Australian Bushfires
Jan 2009



Red River Flood
March 2009



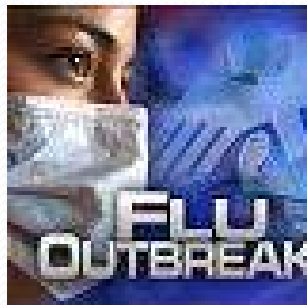
Iran Election
Protests 2009



Philippines,
October 2009



American Samoa,
October 2009



H1N1 outbreak



Haiti EQ
January 2010

A Few Technologies of Note...

twitter

Google™
Maps

digg

LinkedIn



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

facebook

Ning

flickr

myspace.com
a place for friends

You Tube

What's social about social media?

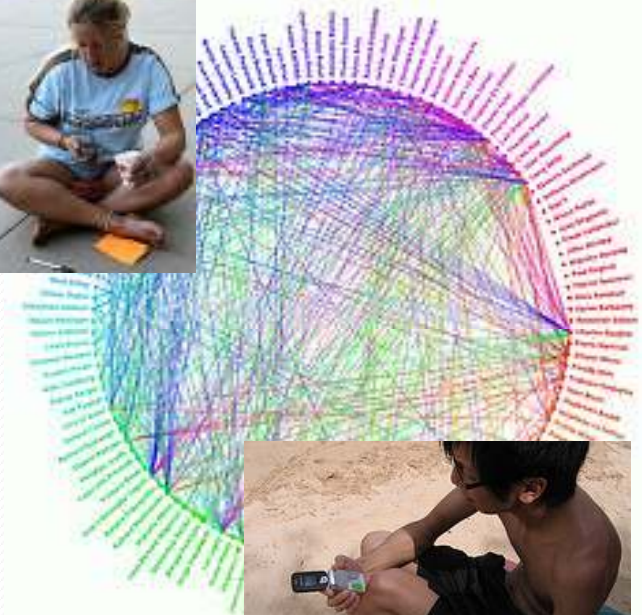
Web 1.0



producer



consumer



WEB 2.0

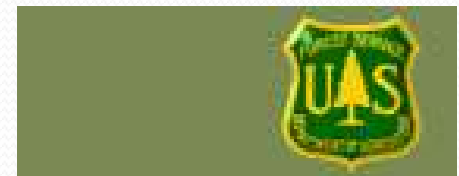


Communication systems are changing

- Greater access to information
- More sources of information
- Faster sharing
- Networked communications
- Public participation; no longer dependent on top-down communications



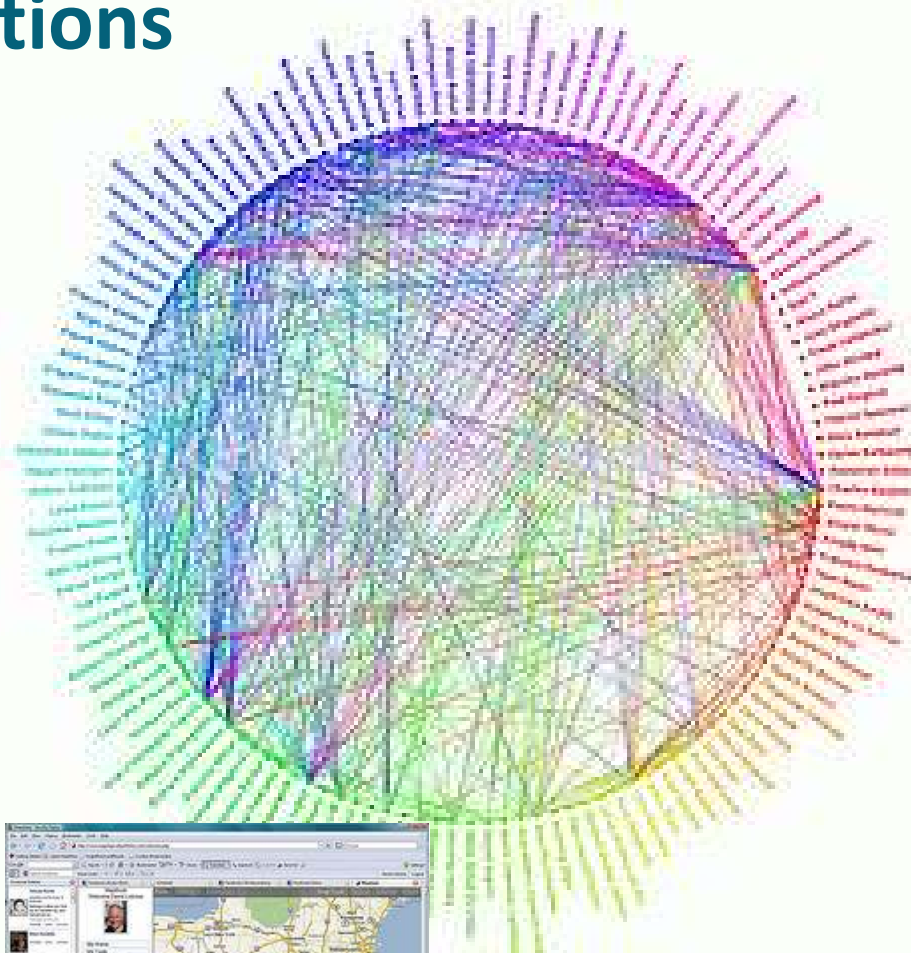
FEMA



Hierarchical communications



Networked communications





What does this mean?

- Minor events become magnified by Web 2.0
 - If you enter the conversation in the middle of disaster, its too late
- The public can be a source of information in disaster
- The public expect communications through multi-media channels
- Calls for transparency are increasing



Empirical research

- 2007 Virginia Tech School Shooting
- 2007 Southern California Wildfires
- 2008 Democratic National Convention
- 2008 Tennessee Valley Coalash Disaster

Virginia Tech School Shooting

- April 16, 2007
- Blacksburg, VA
- Two events: 7:15 am & 9:30 am
- 1 shooter, 32 deaths, multiple casualties



2007 Southern California Wildfires

- Started in Malibu, CA, October 20, 2007
- Over 20 blazes ignited from Santa Barbara to Mexico border
- Destroyed nearly 1500 homes
- Burned over 500,000 acres of land
- Massive evacuations



Democratic National Convention 2008

- National Special Security Event
- International attention
- Significant probability for public disruption



Tennessee Valley Coalash Disaster

- Twenty times worse than the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill
- Use of Twitter to broadcast event news
- Niche group of users, distributed efforts
- Lack of rumor
- Misinformation corrected by users





Decentralized communication is not disorganized communication

- Organized
- Self-correcting
- Accurate
- Concentrated



Social media are a source of information about the public

- Can observe milling online
- “Chatter” can lead to situational awareness
- Misinformation has value as well



Social media use is a benefit to the disaster affected community

- Online social convergence
- Seeking and sharing information
- Organizing resources
- Coping and mental health

Has the potential to develop and strengthen community resiliency



Social media are another channel to disseminate information

- To push information out
- To provide up-to-the minute updates
- Not reliant on major media



Social media use is becoming routinized in disaster

- Distributed technology users create mashups
- Local technology users share local information



Social behaviors offline and on...

Common in the immediate aftermath of disasters

- Convergence
- Altruism

Uncommon in the immediate aftermath of disaster

- Anti-social behaviors
- Panic, looting, malicious attacks



Dangers of disaster myths

- Amplified risk
- Detoured resources
- Misappropriated personnel
- Lives are lost



What concerns *should* be raised?

- Accessible
- Actionable
- Accurate



Integrating social media into the *official* communications landscape

- Incident Command System
 - Intelligence, Operations, Public Information
- Policies
- Plans
- Procedures

To create a more disaster resilient community

Questions? Comments? Feedback?

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**Center for New Media
and Resiliency**