Social Media Strategies During Disasters

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Social Media Workshop
Sponsored by DHS, SPAWAR &
St. Clair County

Social Media Strategies during Disasters

Presented by Laurie J. Van Leuven
January 25, 2012
Laurie J. Van Leuven Background

- 12 years in Emergency Management
- 12 years in local government
- 6 years in Critical Infrastructure Protection
- 4 years public information
- Level III IMT – Planning Section Chief
- Naval Postgraduate School – Center for Homeland Defense and Security
- Appointed to FEMA as Fellow in Washington DC
- Situational Awareness Section – FEMA’s NRCC
- Social Media Disaster Forum project for FEMA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Jeff Friedland, Matt Snyder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 a.m. – 10:45</td>
<td>Social Media during Emergencies</td>
<td>Current Industry Practices, Value Proposition, Strategies and Tactics</td>
<td>Laurie Van Leuven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Group Exercise</td>
<td>Scenario Development</td>
<td>All participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>All participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Incident Objectives</td>
<td>What are your incident objectives?</td>
<td>All participants</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What information does the public need?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What information does the public have to share?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Current Capabilities and Tactics, Lessons Learned, Goals, Objectives &amp; Strategic Needs</td>
<td>All participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 p.m. – 2 p.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Next Steps</td>
<td>Strategic Needs Prioritization</td>
<td>All participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 p.m. – 3 p.m.</td>
<td>Wrap up</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jeff Friedland, Matt Snyder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Whole Community = Resiliency

- Traditional emergency info travels from one to many; P2P info travels rapidly from many to many
- Citizens are the true first responders - we need to leverage their capabilities
- The Whole Community wants to access and share emergency information
- Digital mediums and smartphones for information sharing and can empower citizens as sensors in the field
Future Technology
1. Mobile/Smartphone

With origins tracing back to Finland and Japan in the '70s, mobile phones have fast become the most widely used gadgets in the world. The first billion units sold in 20 years, the second billion in four and the third billion in two. By the end of 2010, the subscription rate stood at 5 billion, or 75 percent of all people on earth. The tech leaped forward in 1983 with the Motorola DynaTAC 8000X, the first truly portable cellphone. The smartphone, with us since 2000, is now a pocket-size PC. Wireless and GPS- and multimedia-enabled, it facilitates instantaneous personal connections that make phone conversations seem like cave paintings. People of developing nations, even those without an electrical grid, can tap into the world's commerce and culture. After a scant 11 years of development, the device seems to have limitless potential.
Smartphone Adoption

- Steady increase in smartphone usage (not just phone calls anymore)
- 109 million U.S. users (46.7 percent) used mobile media in 2010 (+7.6%)
- 4 of the top 5 acquired devices in 2010 were smartphones
- Likely that future telecommunication vendors will only sell smartphones
- People using smartphones for social networking (+56%)
Incidents, Public & Social Media

• Mississippi River Valley Flooding (May 2011) – Consolidated social media content
• Southeast Severe Storms /Tornadoes (April 2011) – Facebook
• **Japan Earthquake (March 2011) – YouTube videos**
• New Zealand Earthquake (Feb 2011) – eqviewer crisis mapping, mashups
• Political and Civil Unrest in the East (Iran Elections, Egypt) – Twitter and YouTube
• **Haiti Earthquake (Jan 2010) – Twitter, Mashups, crisis mapping**
• Times Square Bomb (May 2010) – Wikipedia
• Tennessee Flooding (May 2010) – YouTube, Flickr, Blogs, FB
• Gulf Oil Spill (May – July 2010) – Facebook, Flickr
• Iran Election Riots (June 2009) – State Dept Request Twitter Defer Maintenance
• **Plane crash on the Hudson (Jan 2009) – Twitter and Flickr**
• Australian County Fire Agency (Feb 2009) – Twitter, FB, Flickr, Google maps
• FDA recall of salmonella tainted pistachios (March 2009) – Twitter
• H1N1 Outbreak (May – Oct 2009) – Twitter, Flickr, widgets, apps, YouTube, RSS feeds
• Lakewood, WA Police Shooting and Ft. Hood Shootings (Nov 2009) – Twitter
• Mumbai terrorist attacks (Nov 2008) - Twitter and blogs
Japan Earthquake / Tsunami
Driver: Expectations are Rising

More than two-thirds agree that response agencies should regularly monitor and respond to postings on their websites.

- Emergency response agencies should regularly monitor their websites and social media sites so they can respond promptly to any requests for help posted there: 69%
- I would feel that I should phone the agency to make sure they have seen the request: 59%
- Since this request for help is posted to the social media site of an emergency response organization, the organization is probably already acting on this request: 49%
- It’s very likely that the emergency response organization doesn’t even know about this request: 44%

Imagine that you are on a social media site for an emergency response organization such as FEMA or the American Red Cross and you see a recent post that includes an urgent request for help. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Percentages indicate Strongly Agree and Agree)

Three out of four would expect help to arrive within an hour

- More than one hour, 16%
- Less than 15 minutes, 28%
- 30 minutes to one hour, 19%
- 15-30 minutes, 27%

If you posted a request for help to a social media website, how long do you think it should reasonably take for help to arrive?
Humanitarian Efforts: Digital Volunteers

Christchurch Recovery Map
Community information for the Christchurch Earthquake of 22 Feb 2011.

Where are you?
Locating where you are on the map helps identify what reports are most relevant to you.

I am in... Go

Submit a report
Submitting a report helps others identify hazards/solutions in your area.

Submit a report

Ask for help
Ask for assistance from the Student Volunteer Army.

Ask for help

Click on map icons to see local reports

Full Screen Map

Category Filter

- All Categories
- Notices and information
- Other
- Services available
- Infrastructure Status
- Medical
- Hazard zone
- Evacuation zone
- Transport
Scenario: Severe Storms

- Severe storms including dangerous winds and torrential rain has slammed many states in the northeast. Widespread damage has disrupted infrastructure and critical services to communities including power and utility outages.
- Emergency responders are overwhelmed with calls for assistance.
- The extent of damage to roadways is unclear, but many were damaged by floodwaters or are impassable due to flooding or debris.
- Roads and bridges that connect various communities have sustained significant damage and some communities are isolated.
- Railroad operations and other transportation and shipping systems are not able to operate.
- What are the best ways to alert and notify the public?
- How might smartphones and social media be leveraged to facilitate flood evacuation and long-term needs in the aftermath?
Seymour Official Web Site

NEWS:

Garbage and Recycling are on regular schedule this week!
(1/16/12)

* The Department of Public Works (as of 1/3/12) will be picking up Christmas trees. Please put them by the curb. Thank you!!


Bid Notice Chatfield LoPresti Playground Package due 2-9-12.pdf

Board & Commissions 2012 Meeting Calendar

Seymour First Selectman Scholarship 2012.pdf

2011-2012 Winter Parking Ban List.pdf

Residents are encouraged to bring any brush or limbs to the Transfer Station if at all possible. Thank you.

Any questions please call (203)735-6028 or (203)735-5830.

Please Add us on Facebook!!!!!!

www.facebook.com/seymourct.org Is the Office of the First Selectman page

www.facebook.com/seymour.ct Is the Seymour, CT page

Please follow us on Twitter!!!!

www.twitter.com/seymourTownHall

• News on Homepage links to PDF files
• Promote Facebook Page
• Promote Twitter Page
Not one mention of the storms or flooding on July 8, 2011.
Not one mention of road closures, power outages, or response efforts.
Not one mention of how to report damages.

Smart Practice includes multiple strategies to amplify your messages.
Life Safety via Access to Information

- Situational Awareness is critical for decision-making
- Many sources of information converging at same time
- Emergency managers cannot “control” all information exchanges
- No existing National Strategy

Situational Awareness

- Official Government Info
- First hand knowledge
- Sirens / Alerts
- Word of mouth
- Opt in Text Alerts

Local
- Public Safety
- Emergency Mngrs
- Transportation
- Utilities
- NGOs

Regional
- Public Safety
- Emergency Mngrs
- Transportation
- Critical Services

National
- FEMA
- DHS
- NWS, NOAA
- Coast Guard
Emergency Communication Tools

- Not an all or nothing approach
- Existing tools still valid
- Social media adds new options with different strengths to the mix
- Best for providing interactive exchanges, supporting dialogue, sharing of multimedia information
- This is not an exhaustive list – more tools come online all the time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Communication Tool</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Interactive</th>
<th>SA by EM</th>
<th>SA by Public</th>
<th>Visual</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Distribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ning Community</td>
<td>An online platform for people and organizations to create custom social networks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Maps (Mashups)</td>
<td>An interactive display of dynamically geocoded data sets</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flickr</td>
<td>View, upload and share digital photos</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikis</td>
<td>Website that allows users to add, delete, or revise content</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Send and receive alerts, warnings, and situational info in real-time</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Threads</td>
<td>Effort to increase public access to ongoing dialogue</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Meetings</td>
<td>Face-to-face forum for less immediate concerns facing a neighborhood or community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Quick exchange of info among users who are connected to each other’s networks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>Social networking competitor to Facebook leveraging existing Google apps</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>Door knocking, bullhorns or traffic guides with real time instructions to impacted public</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 1 1 Calls</td>
<td>Emergency telephone number used by public to report and request an emergency response</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>Business related social networking site</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>Watch videos of incident, damages, and response and recovery efforts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Updates</td>
<td>Digital information posted on an agency’s web page</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>A web log of author’s observations and opinions and viewer comments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Alert System</td>
<td>Alert disseminated over broadcast media for public notification of an emergency situation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Releases</td>
<td>An official statement prepared and issued to the media</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opt in Text Alerts/Emails</td>
<td>Allows for distribution of information via email or cell phone to recipients who have opted in</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdialing Phone Messages</td>
<td>Prearranged info via telephone in a defined geographic area</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Conference</td>
<td>Prearranged interview with news reporters</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Bulletin Boards</td>
<td>Physical signage system used to post updates and information for community members</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sirens</td>
<td>Loud, audible alert system to signal an emergency within a physical proximity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*SA = Situational Awareness
Current Tactics: Too Much Clutter

- Too much clutter
- Sporadic participation
- Incomprehensive chatter
- Lack of consistency
- Social media reports accumulate rapidly
- Too many sources
- Difficult to absorb, verify & assess
- Who to listen to?
- Which actions to follow?

- Sporadic participation
- Incomprehensive chatter
- Lack of consistency
Information Exchange Limitations

Public Exchange in Cyberspace:
- Friends
- Acquaintances
- Family

Agency Exchange in Cyberspace:
- Public Safety
- Critical Services
- NGOs

Limited overlap
Observations: Successful Results
Assessments: Comparative Gov’t

Case Study: Queensland, Victoria (Australia) Flooding 2010-11

Figure 11: The potential of social media in emergency management communications

Recommendation 33:
The VFR recommends that:
The state develop and implement a single web portal as a means of providing emergency information to communities and local government on an ‘all hazards’ basis, including the information referred to in recommendations 74, 89 and 92.

Recommendation 41:
The VFR recommends that:
the state actively pursue the use of social media as part of its emergency warning and public information system.

Recommendation 42:
The VFR recommends that:
the state undertake further trials to explore the opportunity for greater use of social media as a credible source of information to and from the public during an emergency.

Review of the 2010–11 Flood Warnings & Response
Final Report by Neil Comrie AO, APM
1 December 2011
Hedging: Need to Address Gaps

**Drawbacks Cited in CRS Report**

1. Accuracy of Information
2. Malicious Use
3. Technological Limitations
4. Administrative Cost Considerations
5. Privacy Issues

Emergency Warnings and Alerts

Although there has been much discussion of using social media to issue emergency warnings that advise citizens to seek shelter, evacuate the area, or take other protective measures, it is unclear whether social media have been used to officially issue emergency warnings.

Social Media and Disasters: Current Uses, Future Options, and Policy Considerations

Bruce R. Lindsay
Analyst in American National Government

September 6, 2011

Additional Considerations and Potential Policy Implications

While there may be some potential advantages to using social media for emergencies and disasters, there may also be some potential policy issues and drawbacks associated with its use.

Concluding Observations

Social media appear to be making inroads into emergency management for a variety of reasons. For one, accurate, reliable, and timely information is vital for public safety before, during, and after an incident. As people continue to embrace new technologies, use of social media will likely increase. Moreover, as its popularity grows, a significant number of people will likely choose social media as their main source of information. They may also increasingly expect that agencies will also use social media to meet their informational needs. Many emergency managers and agencies have already adopted the use of social media to meet this expectation. However, they also started using social media because they believe it provides another tool to disseminate important public safety information.
The Crowd has Spoken

- Steady increase in social media use
- Smartphone adoption skyrocketing
- Public as producers of information, not just consumers – desire to share
- Expectations are rising – Public not likely to give up the convenience of instantaneous information
- How will emergency management adapt & influence better solutions?
More Justification

SOCIAL MEDIA: FIRE CHIEFS, POLICE CHIEFS & ALL EMERGENCY MANAGERS PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THIS MAN IS SAYING.

Bill Boyd: Social Media & Emergency Management
You Know You Want To…but How

So, you’ve decided to enter the world of Social Media.

• Which strategies will fit your goals?
• Which Technologies will work for you?
• How should you begin?
• Should you start small or go big?

To Tweet or Not to Tweet
Social Media = Active Participation

“Once you can understand where the conversation is, who leads, the type of voices and the best place for you to add your voice, you can then start becoming a more active participant.”

– Mitch Joel
Define Your Social Media Strategy

1. What do you want to accomplish?
2. Who is your target audience?
3. How much time and resources can you invest?
4. What other organizations can you bring into the fold?
What Do You Want to do?

- To learn more about social media and incorporate it into your communications strategy.
- To distribute information to citizens quickly through popular social media vehicles.
- To engage interactively with citizens and gather emergency situational information.
- To create a community of participants, provide an interactive forum, and build knowledge to inform decision-making.
Who is Your Target Audience?

- Local residents and business owners
- Visitors from outside the area
- Media and news agencies
- Emergency responders
- Service providers
- Non-governmental organizations
- Volunteers
- Health care providers
- Friends and relatives of impacted residents
How Much Time and Resources Can you Invest?

- Do you have staff members who are familiar and savvy with the technology?
- Do you have dedicated PIO staff available to monitor and post?
- Does your IT department support the strategy and will they develop the tools?
- Can you invest in infrastructure (servers) to manage surge capacity?
Which Organizations Can You Bring into the Fold?

- Technology developers, manufacturers, service providers (Microsoft, Sun Microsystems, Twitter)
- Various responder agencies and organizations (Fire, Police, Utilities, Health, Red Cross)
- Media organizations (most have new media divisions)
- Academia (students, interns, research, universities, etc.)
- Volunteers – establish a “Twitter Posse”
Four Different Strategies

1. The Foot in the Water Approach
2. The Big 2 Approach (Facebook & Twitter)
3. The Neighborhood Approach
4. Disaster Forum - Multidirectional
Foot in the Water

- Set up accounts on popular Web 2.0 sites.
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Linked In
  - Flickr
  - YouTube

- Practice posting updates, uploading photos/videos, asking questions, and getting familiar with the culture and norms.

- Experiment with hashtags and events.
The Big 2 Approach

- **Facebook**
  - 750 Million Active Users (250M via mobile)
  - 50% log on daily
  - 30 Billion pieces of content (links) shared monthly
  - Average user spends 55+ minutes / day

- **Twitter**
  - 200 Million Registered Users
  - 350 Billion Tweets / day
  - 8\(^\text{th}\) largest web site in the world
  - 75 % from outside web site (i.e. via direct texting)
Twitter Tips

- **Hashtags ("#" Symbols)**
  - The # marks keywords or topics in a Tweet
  - A way to categorize messages regardless of Followers
  - Clicking on a hashtagged word shows all other Tweets in that category
  - Don’t exceed 3 Hashtags per message
  - Hashtagged words that become very popular are often Trending Topics
  - Many services/aps to help manage Twitter

October 5, 2010
The Neighborhood Approach

- Find out how tech savvy neighborhoods are using social media
- Engage with local blogs and community event calendars
- Provide information in searchable format
- Provide maps, photos and diagrams for context
Multidirectional Disaster Forum

- Seek interactive dialogue
- Provide a forum for relevant conversations
- Build a wide community of contributors, but save the front row seat for official information (local government / emergency management)
- Develop sharing platform supporting multimedia inputs from official sources via RSS feeds and ireports from unofficial sources
- Build the site to handle increased traffic during an emergency
- Play ball with the private technology sector
A more comprehensive approach requires strategy development & stakeholders.
Emergency management and public safety agencies must meet a wide range of expectations and mandates.

Decision-making at all layers of society must be accomplished efficiently to save lives.

Meta-disasters require information sharing, engagement, and actions from all members of the community (local to global).
Cyberspace is cluttered with data (generated by the public and by emergency agencies) during disasters.

Emergency Managers need to verify and organize the noise on social media sites - and so do citizens.

Crowdsourcing, verification and credibility guidance will help ameliorate the negative aspects.

An interactive disaster forum that serves as an interface will yield improved situational awareness and actionable information for the Whole Community.
Evaluate, Monitor and Adapt

Create a Cycle of Evaluation

Evaluate -> Monitor -> Implement -> Plan -> Adapt -> Evaluate

Plan
Implement
Adapt
Evaluate
Monitor
Take Aways

• People want visualization tools not just narratives (maps, photos, videos, GIS data, graphs) Turning to social media to fill in gaps
• Emergency management and public safety agencies are increasingly using social media to distribute information
• Current social media atmosphere is cluttered and chaotic
• The impacted public may be new to the area (relocated, vacationing, business travel) – They might not know where to turn for information
• Other interested publics seeking information & situational awareness:
  – Family members in other regions checking on loved ones
  – People who escaped without damages and who have resources or assistance to offer
  – Emergency management agencies at all layers of government (Neighboring states, FEMA, IMTs, EMACs etc.)
• Visit https://communities.firstresponder.gov – Making Communities Safer Through Social Media
Questions & Answers

Laurie J. Van Leuven
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Lvanleuven@scires.com
@laurievanleuven

Check out FEMA’s Online Think Tank
Vote for Social Media & Smartphones for Situational Awareness
http://fema.ideascale.com/
Group Exercise

Scenario Development – Size Up Report

➢ Hazard: ________________________________

➢ Incident Name: ________________________________

➢ Deaths / Injuries: ________________________________

➢ Staffing Limitations: ________________________________

➢ Infrastructure Status: ________________________________

➢ Utility Outages: ________________________________

➢ Future Projections: ________________________________

➢ Evacuations: ________________________________

➢ Shelter / Population: ________________________________
Incident Objectives

Initial Operational Period Incident Objectives:
1. ___________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________________
4. ___________________________________________________

Ongoing Objectives:
1. ___________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________________
4. ___________________________________________________
What Information does Public Need?

- Describe the type of information the public needs.
- Could any information from an unofficial source be appropriate?
- How will the public get information?
- Where will they turn if they don’t find what they’re looking for?
Information Does EM Need from Public?

- Describe the type of information EM needs.
- What type of information might the public have that could be useful to EM?
- Could any information from an unofficial source be appropriate?
- How will EM get that information?
- Describe the possible consequences if EM does not receive important information from the public?
Group Exercise

Needs Assessment

- Identify 3 necessary information capabilities
- Identify gaps or shortcomings to improve
- Identify 3 current tactics used
- Identify 3 future strategies to be used

Think About:

- The effectiveness of current efforts that work well
- Lessons learned from recent incidents
- How would the public describe your Agency’s communications channels?
Next Steps

- Strategic Needs Synopsis
- Report and Recommendations
- Social Media Policy Review
- Develop Strategy
- Adapt Plans, Policies and Procedures
- Training, Testing and Exercises
- Implement New Strategies and Tactics
- Evaluate, Monitor and Adapt
Follow Me

#SMEM
#SMEMedchat Friday’s @ 12:30 EST

@laurievanleuven

Laurie J. Van Leuven
206-387-5651
Lvanleuven@scires.com
Wrap Up

• Questions, Comments, Observations…