

Social media communication by emergency management authorities during a major Winter Storm

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Abstract

Offices of Emergency Management (OEM) are increasingly using social media to communicate with citizens during disasters. Taking the perspective of social actions, we investigate citizen's reposting behavior of OEM disaster messages through the theoretical lens of the Dual Pathway Model (DPM). We attribute their reporting to: authorities' social media strategies and citizens' negative emotions. Considering the collective nature of OEM-citizen communication, we select social media discussion topics as the unit of analysis, and we focus on shared topics that are discussed by both parties. We validate the theoretical model using organic X data during the 2021 Texas Winter Storm Uri. This research contributes to the literature on disaster management by uncovering drivers of public's information sharing behavior of OEM social media communications. Findings of the current study may help OEMs to conceive social media actions that can generate greater reach to the communities that they serve.

Keywords

Emergency management, communication, social media, X (formerly Twitter) dual pathway, topic modeling.

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