

Build Community Before the Storm: Social Media Engagement for Crisis Communication

Dr. Jeannette N Sutton (University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY)

Longitudinal crisis communication strategies on social media include stakeholder engagement activities that shift in emphasis during threat and non-threat periods. This webinar will aim to help you think about social media engagement as a set of tactics to accomplish key communication goals such as influencing the beliefs, intentions, and actions of message receivers related to weather phenomena along the risk continuum. Much of the focus of this presentation will draw from a recent study of Twitter messages collected from twelve NWS Weather Forecast Offices during a three-month period in spring 2016. By investigating the message contents and technological affordances of Twitter, we identify the strategies that facilitate sharing information, building community, and driving action. An examination of message strategies over time invites us to identify shifting priorities among public communicators that align with crisis communication best practices and to suggest strategies for increasing effective risk communication for future events.

Jeannette Sutton (Ph.D., University of Colorado Boulder, 2004) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and the Director of the Risk and Disaster Communication Center at the University of Kentucky. She is an international expert on warnings for imminent threats and the strategic use of social media for risk communication. Her research is funded by the National Science Foundation, with a supplement from NOAA, to investigate terse communication via social media during crises and disasters.