

PPA12

Government Emergency Messaging through Social Media – Insights from Southern California

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Abstract

Emergency management is a critical government function that can help mitigate the impact of natural disasters, public health emergencies and human-related incidents. During emergency management, disseminating information to the public is one of the most critical tasks. Communities in the many areas of southern California have been rated among the areas most impacted by natural disasters, while also having the most vulnerable population in the US. Amid these crises, government agencies in the area have increasingly been using social media platforms to communicate critical public health information or disaster response information such as evacuation notice, shelter information, hotlines and important updates. How effective are these social media communications in emergency responses? What level of engagement exists between government agencies and citizens on social media? Are residents satisfied with the government's emergency responses and these social media communications and engagement? To answer these questions, this research project collects government emergency communication data from cities and counties in Southern California and analyzes these data using machine learning and natural language processing. The study provides empirical evidence for government agencies and policy makers on how to effectively communicate and respond to emergency events using social media and better help citizens navigate these crises.

Conference Track

Public Policy and Public Administration