



## **Disaster Communications in a Changing World**

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Publisher's name, year of publication: Elsevier, 2009-07-11 ISBN: 978-1-85617-554--8

Number of pages:218

The front cover of this book features a picture that perhaps sums up how far we have come in communicating and managing news of disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans and accidents and terrorist incidents. It's a screen shot of the Twitter web site. The advent of the internet, blogging, social networking, YouTube etc means "first informers" or witnesses have the ability to leapfrog traditional news channels and those who want to manage news. As the authors say, governments' role as gatekeepers of news is now an anachronism. This book looks at the key elements of disaster communications and how to manage news and information in the context of new media.

Much of the material covers the planning that organisations should have in place anyway - like a Crisis PR plan and providing front line staff with media training. However, it looks in detail at integrating new media and imbedding it into planning and implementation before disaster strikes. It is not just a dry analysis but very much a book to be picked up and used as a reference with lots of practical suggestions such as dealing with interviews and uses case studies to illustrate dos and don'ts. There are descriptions of other resources to consult such as web sites and a short bibliography of other books to read but given its subject most of the references are to other web sites

If the book has a fault, it is its North American bias. However that is a small criticism in the context of the insight that the authors, both experts with practical experience, provide for dealing with communications management whether TV or text messaging. It should be on the bookshelf of anyone likely to have to handle communications in a crisis either in the public or private sectors

300 words for The Tourism Society Magazine Autumn 2009

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