

Chapter 1 : How technology is changing disaster relief - BBC News

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Gulf Coast in , Facebook was the new kid on the block. There was no Twitter for news updates, and the iPhone was not yet on the scene. By the time Hurricane Sandy slammed the eastern seaboard last year, social media had become an integral part of disaster response, filling the void in areas where cell phone service was lost while millions of Americans looked to resources including Twitter and Facebook to keep informed, locate loved ones, notify authorities and express support. Gone are the days of one-way communication where only official sources provide bulletins on disaster news. Researchers have now started publishing data on the use of social media in disasters, and lawmakers and security experts have begun to assess how emergency management can best adapt. The new playbook will not do away with the emergency broadcast system and other government efforts. Rather, it will incorporate new data from researchers, federal agencies and nonprofits that have begun to reveal the exact penetration of social media in disasters. Following the Boston Marathon bombings, one quarter of Americans reportedly looked to Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites for information, according to The Pew Research Center. The sites also formed a key part of the information cycle: Community members via a simple Google document offered strangers lodging, food or a hot shower when roads and hotels were closed. Google also adapted its Person Finder from previous use with natural disasters. Each disaster sparks its own complex web of fast-paced information exchange. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC , it can both improve disaster response and allow affected populations to take control of their situation as well as feel empowered. Drawing up an effective social media strategy and tweaking it to fit an emergency, however, is a crucial part of preparedness planning, says disaster sociologist Jeannette Sutton, a senior research scientist at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs who studies social media in crises and disaster. For the Boston Marathon incident, she found no consistent hashtag on Twitter, which can make tracking relevant information difficult. As part of disaster preparedness, she says, it would be useful to teach the public how to use social media effectively, how to get information from the Web and also how to put out useful information. One is the rapid spread of misinformation—as was the case after the Boston bombings with the identification of a missing man as a possible suspect. Rumor Control , run by FEMA, attempts to nip misinformation in the bud, but in general there are no clear lines about who has responsibility to police social media information or how—or even if—that would work. Another key risk is scammers using social media to steal cash. After the Newtown, Conn. The Haiti earthquake is often pointed to as the watershed moment that changed how social media is used in disasters. She is based in Washington, D.

Chapter 2 : When the Media Is the Disaster: Covering Haiti | HuffPost

The Japan Disaster Relief team (JDR) was established with the aim of providing international emergency relief operations in response to requests from disaster-affected countries and/or.

Soon after almost every disaster the crimes begin: The perpetrators go unpunished and live to commit further crimes against humanity. They care less for human life than for property. They act without regard for consequences. They still have blood on their hands from Hurricane Katrina, and they are staining themselves anew in Haiti. Another photo was labeled: A third image was captioned: He was accidentally shot by fellow police who mistook him for a looter. Hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, needed, and still need, water, food, shelter, and first aid. The media in disaster bifurcates. Except perhaps for that shooting of a fellow police officer -- his colleagues were so focused on property that they were reckless when it came to human life, and a man died for no good reason in a landscape already saturated with death. In recent days, there have been scattered accounts of confrontations involving weapons, and these may be a different matter. But the man with the powdered milk? Is he really a criminal? What Would You Do? Imagine, reader, that your city is shattered by a disaster. Your home no longer exists, and you spent what cash was in your pockets days ago. Your credit cards are meaningless because there is no longer any power to run credit-card charges. Actually, there are no longer any storekeepers, any banks, any commerce, or much of anything to buy. The economy has ceased to exist. The thirst is far worse than the hunger. You can go for many days without food, but not water. And in the improvised encampment you settle in, there is an old man near you who seems on the edge of death. He no longer responds when you try to reassure him that this ordeal will surely end. Toddlers are now crying constantly, and their mothers infinitely stressed and distressed. The guy with the corner store has already given away all his goods to the neighbors. The old man might not die, the babies might stop their squalling, and the mothers might lose that look on their faces. Other people are calmly wandering in and helping themselves, too. If you grab that stuff are you a criminal? Should you end up lying in the dirt on your stomach with a cop tying your hands behind your back? Should you end up labeled a looter in the international media? Should you be shot down in the street, since the overreaction in disaster, almost any disaster, often includes the imposition of the death penalty without benefit of trial for suspected minor property crimes? Or are you a rescuer? Is the survival of disaster victims more important than the preservation of everyday property relations? Is that chain pharmacy more vulnerable, more a victim, more in need of help from the National Guard than you are, or those crying kids, or the thousands still trapped in buildings and soon to die? And in disaster after disaster, at least since the San Francisco earthquake of , those in power, those with guns and the force of law behind them, are too often more concerned for property than human life. In an emergency, people can, and do, die from those priorities. Or they get gunned down for minor thefts or imagined thefts. The media not only endorses such outcomes, but regularly, repeatedly, helps prepare the way for, and then eggs on, such a reaction. It incites madness and obscures realities. Two things go on in disasters. The great majority of what happens you could call emergency requisitioning. Someone who could be you, someone in the kind of desperate circumstances I outlined above, takes necessary supplies to sustain human life in the absence of any alternative. It is, says the disaster sociologist Enrico Quarantelli, who has been studying the subject for more than half a century, vanishingly rare in most disasters. Personal gain is the last thing most people are thinking about in the aftermath of a disaster. In that phase, the survivors are almost invariably more altruistic and less attached to their own property, less concerned with the long-term questions of acquisition, status, wealth, and security, than just about anyone not in such situations imagines possible. The best accounts from Haiti of how people with next to nothing have patiently tried to share the little they have and support those in even worse shape than them only emphasize this disaster reality. Crime often drops in the wake of a disaster. The media are another matter. They tend to arrive obsessed with property and the headlines that assaults on property can make. Media outlets often call everything looting and thereby incite hostility toward the sufferers as well as a hysterical overreaction on the part of the armed authorities. Or sometimes the journalists on the ground do a good job and the editors back in their safe offices cook up the crazy photo captions and the wrongheaded

interpretations and emphases. They also deploy the word panic wrongly. Panic among ordinary people in crisis is profoundly uncommon. The media will call a crowd of people running from certain death a panicking mob, even though running is the only sensible thing to do. In ordinary times, minor theft is often considered a misdemeanor. No one is harmed. Unchecked, minor thefts could perhaps lead to an environment in which there were more thefts and so forth, and a good argument can be made that, in such a case, the tide needs to be stemmed. A number of radio hosts and other media personnel are still upset that people apparently took TVs after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in August. Now, which matters more to you, televisions or human life? People were dying on rooftops and in overheated attics and freeway overpasses, they were stranded in all kinds of hideous circumstances on the Gulf Coast in when the mainstream media began to obsess about looting, and the mayor of New Orleans and the governor of Louisiana made the decision to focus on protecting property, not human life. A gang of white men on the other side of the river from New Orleans got so worked up about property crimes that they decided to take the law into their own hands and began shooting. They seem to have considered all black men criminals and thieves and shot a number of them. Some apparently died; there were bodies bloating in the September sun far from the region of the floods; one good man trying to evacuate the ruined city barely survived; and the media looked away. It took me months of nagging to even get the story covered. This vigilante gang claimed to be protecting property, though its members never demonstrated that their property was threatened. They boasted of killing black men. And they shared values with the mainstream media and the Louisiana powers that be. Or when a lot of wealthy Wall Street brokers decide to tinker with a basic human need like housing. Well, you catch my drift. Learning to See in Crises

Last Christmas a priest, Father Tim Jones of York, started a ruckus in Britain when he said in a sermon that shoplifting by the desperate from chain stores might be acceptable behavior. Naturally, there was an uproar. Jones told the Associated Press: The means by which it arrives is a separate matter. Right now, the point is that people in Haiti need food, and for all the publicity, the international delivery system has, so far, been a visible dud. Under such circumstances, breaking into a U. It might be the most effective way of meeting a desperate need. Why were so many people in Haiti hungry before the earthquake? Those are not questions whose answers should be long delayed. Even more urgently, we need compassion for the sufferers in Haiti and media that tell the truth about them. Meanwhile countless people remain trapped beneath crushed buildings. And what is absolutely accurate, in Haiti right now, and on Earth always, is that human life matters more than property, that the survivors of a catastrophe deserve our compassion and our understanding of their plight, and that we live and die by words and ideas, and it matters desperately that we get them right. At the dawn of the millennium, three catastrophes were forecast for the United States: Rebecca Solnit lives in San Francisco with her earthquake kit and is about to make her seventh trip to New Orleans since Katrina. Her latest book, *A Paradise Built in Hell*, is a testament to human bravery and innovation during disasters. Copyright Rebecca Solnit.

Chapter 3 : How Social Media Is Changing Disaster Response - Scientific American

Social media was independently evolving in the years leading up to , but the size and inherent emotional appeal of that disaster created the right environment for it to flourish, says CDC's.

Personal use only; commercial use is strictly prohibited for details see Privacy Policy and Legal Notice. Undersea cables, international news agencies, the press, radio and television, and, most recently, digital and mobile technologies—all have played myriad and complex roles in supporting emergency response and notification, and in helping constitute a shared experience that can be important to social mobilization and community formation. The geographical location of disasters and the identities of victims, the increasingly visual nature of disaster events, and the ubiquitous nature of media in our lives, all shape and influence which kinds of emergencies attract global media and public attention, and how we come to understand them. Globalization has compressed time and space such that a whole range of disasters—from natural events cyclones, earthquakes, and hurricanes to industrial accidents and terrorist attacks—appear on our television and mobile screens with almost daily frequency. There is nothing inherent about these events that give them meaning—they occur in a real, material world; but for many of us, our experience of these events is shaped and determined in large part by our interactions with media industries, institutions, and technologies. The eruption, which produced a column of ash reaching 45 kilometers into the stratosphere, remains the largest ever recorded volcanic disaster in human history. It contributed to a major disruption in global temperatures and to the deaths of nearly , people. On August 31, , Mount Krakatoa, also in Indonesia, erupted violently as well, setting off a tsunami that killed nearly 40, people who inhabited the islands of the Sunda Strait region between Java and Sumatra. Strong waves were reported as far away as France, barometers peaked in Bogota and Washington, and bodies washed ashore in Zanzibar Winchester, Beyond the objective severity of both disasters, measured by the losses of life and transformative environmental impacts, what distinguishes them is how quickly word spread of the Krakatoa eruption. Response and recovery efforts could be undertaken and adjustments to international trade routes adjusted. The eruption of Krakatoa was effectively the first global geological media event in history. On November 10, , a train derailed in the City of Mississauga, located just west of Toronto, and an evacuation order was initiated after one car BLEVEed Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion , threatening to release styrene, toluene, caustic soda, propane, chlorine, and other highly toxic chemicals into the local environment. The Peel Regional Police Force was the agency responsible for directing the disaster response and public evacuation, and the officer in charge of operations, a duty inspector, came to the scene as soon as he had been notified about the accident. His first concern was establishing an adequate command post from which to coordinate emergency responders, direct the distribution of contamination and hazard control, facilitate an evacuation of the area, and prepare for eventual investigation and recovery. Yet, keenly aware of the importance of the mass media to both public notification and crisis management, his second priority was to establish a media center at the accident scene to ensure the disaster would be controlled and handled effectively. In October , a series of wildfires beginning in Malibu, California blazed a trail of devastation across much of Orange County toward San Diego and the Mexico border. The fires destroyed nearly 1, homes and burned over half a million acres of land, causing enormous economic losses and mass evacuations. One of the biggest challenges for residents in disaster areas is the lack of access to reliable, up-to-date, official information necessary for ensuring their safety and protection. This can be important for raising money to support post-disaster recovery and for placing the spotlight onto failures in governance or decision making that can precipitate the occurrence of these events. But news coverage itself is an insufficient source of information for most people who are directly affected by disasters. It can be slow, sensationalized, and deferential to the views of authorities rather than the needs of the population. These examples, drawn from different places and moments in time, help illustrate the varied and important roles that media play in disaster and emergency situations. From global communication infrastructures to legacy news organizations, community forums, mobile platforms, and social networking sites, media are an essential part of effective warning and alert systems and a key piece of the broader disaster information landscape. They

provide a window to dramatic events that happen either a continent or a mile away, and they afford a space in which various actors governments, humanitarian organizations, civic groups, and corporations struggle to shape and determine the meaning and impact of these events on our lives. When disaster strikes, the ability to provide accurate, reliable, and credible information to reduce risks to populations, to mobilize response efforts and, ultimately, to save lives, is vital. Effective communication during a disaster is also important to ensuring credibility and trust—that the population will trust the authorities to protect the public as its first priority at a time when lives may hang in the balance. This article focuses on these and other issues in the study of media and disasters. Specifically, it explores the role of disaster journalism and the impact of globalization on transnational media flows and disaster representations. Finally, it considers the impact of new and emergent technologies such as online news, mobile phones, social networking, and open data platforms, and how these innovations have facilitated the creation of new disaster information ecosystems and social mobilization processes. We are not equipped to deal with so much subtlety, so much variety, so many permutations and combinations. Lippmann was writing about how media shape our perceptions of social and political affairs, and of the importance for political elites to understand this process if they wish to govern effectively—but he may well have been writing about the pictures we form in our heads about disasters, especially those that occur in far-flung places beyond our direct, lived experience. What is the nature of these accounts? How do media frame the meaning and significance of disasters? How are these events transformed from what are often local, space-bound happenings with many different dimensions into coherent stories that can be easily understood and retold? When a disaster occurs, newsrooms move into action: Occasionally, media will explore issues relating to pre-disaster readiness could this have been anticipated? Very often, they will chronicle and tell a story about the chaos and devastation of the event, with constant updates about damage to infrastructure, tallies of bodies injured and lives lost, and forecasts about dire economic consequences e. Frequently, these accounts will reflect the relative power and influence of different stakeholders—victims may be prominent, but their definitional influence will be secondary to those of the authorities. The complex story of disasters are often specifically time-bound and immediate, which should not be surprising given the event-centered nature of so much news coverage. But it also rubs uncomfortably against the normative desire for a more complete picture of the social, structural, political, or economic factors that are often at play in any given disaster, regardless of whether the event was caused by climactic forces, failures in governance, weak regulations, or the personal failings of political or corporate leaders. Disaster reportage tends to follow distinct narrative patterns, and our understanding of these patterns affords insight into processes of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. In their research on media coverage of airline crashes, Vincent, Crow, and Davis argue that the narrative arc of disaster stories has three phases: In the immediate aftermath i. What did you see? This role positioning changes as the narrative evolves. In the investigation phase, experts, government sources, or official company spokespeople are relied upon more heavily, to help put the facts of what happened into context and to lay out a framework for what will occur next. Family members may also be used during this second phase of a disaster to give the coverage added emotional texture, reminding readers of the human toll of the tragedy. On occasion, conflict may also ensue among stakeholders if the source of the crisis is a severe lapse in duty to protect the public, or an unwillingness to accept responsibility for wrongdoing. Disaster journalism often falls short of providing the kind of reporting we should expect or require for understanding how or why these events occur, the different impacts they have, and how to prevent them from happening in the future. Analyzing a decade of U. Whereas natural disasters are often framed as random occurrences with no obvious causal agent, man-made crises are more easily narrated, presumably because of the ready availability of identifiable villains and victims. Their research also showed that while media coverage of pre-disaster events provide helpful warnings and information on how to be prepared, coverage of recovery and reconstruction is comparatively weaker, with far less attention given to what precipitated the disaster and the impact it will have on communities trying to recover and rebuild: Other scholars have pointed to similar limitations. In addition to reinforcing the views of official, authoritative sources, this approach ignores non-official activities such as search and rescue efforts led by volunteers and ordinary citizens. The modern mediascape is characterized by a blurring of the boundaries between print,

broadcast, and digital media, and increasingly between and among legacy news organizations, social media platforms that aggregate both professional and citizen reporting, blogs, and other non-traditional media outlets. These changes alter the terrain in which sources shape coverage, the possibilities for how journalists tell stories, and how the public learns about what happened. While media have arguably never been as fractured and fragmented as they are today, they have also never been more ever-present. The ubiquity of media in our lives has helped constitute a public disaster imaginary: Disasters are intertwined with the course of human affairs in ways that were unimaginable decades ago. The rapid global movement of capital and standardization of information, the increasingly networked systems of global communication, the connection between disasters and geo-political interests, and the internationalization of poverty and marginalization all have a bearing on our interpretation of these events Alexander, ; Cottle, The effects of disasters are farther reaching, and our perceptions of them as more regular, intense, and immediate are more profound than they have ever been Beck, Media audiences are also more globalized, with populations spreading the world over through patterns of international migration and refugee settlement. Media Globalization and Disasters Mainstream media institutions i. In regard to their reporting roles, media are important in three ways: All roles are immensely importantâ€”as information broker, media ensure that people living in an area affected by a crisis or disaster situation will understand whether they are at risk and what they can do to protect themselves and those around them; as a signaling institution, media can mobilize relief efforts and advocate for aid and assistance; and as landscape of source struggle, media enable key actors in the disaster response arena to play out and perform their roles in ways that shape or problematize their actions and perspectives. Disasters are thus communicated and constituted within these communication flows, and often in paradoxical ways. How Media Inform Global Publics about a Disaster Our awareness of emergencies and disasters is defined in large part by news media. When disaster strikes in distant places, both established and start-up news outlets become the primary sources of information about events as they unfold on the ground Franks, Despite the fact that large-scale disasters are more likely to occur in the developing world, they are more likely to receive sustained coverage and attention if they occur in the west. Moreover, Titanic survivors arrived in New York, where, almost immediately, they were interviewed and photographed by the press; by contrast, survivors of the Empress of Ireland landed in Rimouski, Quebec, where no equivalent media cavalry awaited. Media representations of disasters are also shaped by interactions between humanitarian agencies and NGOs, which are required to raise awareness and public funds for their work, and state or supranational agencies, which oversee and administer the disaster and emergency field. A persuasive way of conceptualizing this interaction is through what Wolfsfeld called the political contest model, which envisions the news media as an arena or landscape within which sources struggle and compete to shape the tenor and tone of the coverage. Following Cyclone Nargis, which in caused the worst natural disaster in the recorded history of Myanmar, UN agencies became locked in a struggle with government officials who were constantly threatening to restrict their activities. For both aid groups and the reporters covering disaster, this presented a series of practical and moral challenges. Not wishing to lose access to affected areas, NGOs significantly adjusted their advocacy work to downplay their criticism of government programs. At the same time, they also partnered with journalists who were covering the crisis to provide embedded access to their relief junkets. For aid groups, media coverage presents an opportunity to incrementally move the political and international discussion forward in a way that advances their interests and conflicts with government; for journalists, it provides opportunities of access, but not without the cost of ethical dilemmas regarding the cost of their independence see Green, The extent to which news media are dependent on sources and vulnerable to source influence is also structurally determined by the availability of newsgathering resources. The massive cuts in foreign news reporting in recent years have made it increasingly difficult for aid groups to communicate directly with reporters from the theatre of disasters, and for stories about international crises to make it into international news if there is little interest Kalcsics, As Moeller argues, Most mainstreamâ€”especially televisionâ€”media are locked into the business model they have; establishing dozens of country bureaus or even many regional bureaus is not seen as financially feasible. As a result, most of the mainstream media are increasingly second-level sources. According to Green , such collaboration can be mutually beneficial: That leaves the freelancer with the

near-impossible task of figuring out how to cover the cost of transportation, fixers, translators, equipment, and accommodation while still being able to eat. That calculation changes when a UN agency or an NGO springs for the cost of a flight or offers a place to stay. The changing economic status of many media outlets also means that international stories are, increasingly, competing with one another and with stories from western countries for reader attention. The interdependence between media and aid groups can also produce misrepresentations of disasters that, by effect or design, induce public compassion to raise funds for humanitarian groups and help secure ratings for news organizations. At times this co-dependence is mutually beneficial, as was the case during the outset of the famine in the Horn of Africa. The BBC report was immediately followed by news that the U. Disasters Emergency Committee DEC had launched an emergency appeal to help the more than ten million people affected by the crisis. In other cases, media provide in-depth criticism about the activities of humanitarian NGOs, as was the case with a minute BBC radio documentary produced in by journalist Edward Stourton. However, too often media stories about disasters are tragically depoliticized, evacuated of any sustained critical attention to the political contexts that condition their very emergence. This lack of critical reportage is often attributed to a combination of insufficient newsgathering resources, poor local knowledge, and heavy reliance on official i. Media Representations of Disaster It has long been understood that media representations of disaster constitute and reproduce a view of the developing world as continually crisis-prone. At the same time, narratives of loss, suffering, and destruction can also help constitute a shared sense of identification with people with whom we otherwise have no common identity or purpose. These two forces are always in tension: The Ethiopian famine of the s offers a case in point, in which images of vulnerable, starving children filled the pages of global newspapers and featured prominently in television news broadcasts. While the extensive coverage aroused a global reaction that likely would not have occurred without the presence of such arresting images, the coverage of the famine was also wildly inaccurate and hugely oversimplified. Public opinion generated pressure to provide aid to foreign governments, which had long known about the unfolding crisis.

Chapter 4 : The role of media in disaster management | Urban Gateway

Media coverage of disasters in , and before, have varied considerably, with some disasters getting almost no coverage and others receiving a lot. The media is criticized for this by humanitarian organizations as well because of this, and yet these organizations also need the media to try and get their message out.

Examples given on these forgotten emergencies included: A comparison whereby the Asian tsunami media blitz prompted unprecedented generosity. Follow-ups on natural disaster recovery During the immediate aftermath of the Asian tsunami, much was reported on the aid and generosity from around the world. Many countries offered large sums of money for aid. Yet, almost a year on, there has hardly been anything in the mainstream news broadcasts on the amount actually delivered, rather than initially pledged, or how it has been used. Issues such as the quality of the aid, or the conditions associated with the aid, or what countries may sacrifice when receiving such aid is hardly mentioned, certainly not as prime time news headlines. To be fair, while they may not make headline news, they may still get covered, though in less prime time situations, as the Red Cross also notes: Forgotten disasters are often chronic and diffuse, changing little day by day. Unlikely to qualify as news, such crises may feature as current affairs stories especially on the websites of news organizations. Humanitarian media coverage in the digital age , World Disasters Report , Chapter 6, International Red Cross As the Red Cross added, principles of aid demand that disaster response should build on local capacities and yet they reported examples of where this did not happen e. Sri Lanka receiving air-freighted bottled water. Why is building on local capacities important? It encourages and supports the local economy, especially at a time of disaster. Furthermore, local supplies are cheaper, and do not involve additional costs such as transportation. This is a general issue of aid, even in non-emergency situations, whereby much aid effectiveness is reduced by tying it to purchases from the donor. But just a few headlines on the aid delivery would not only allow the public to see how their governments have responded to their outpouring of generosity, but also allow the public to keep up the pressure, and, without a lot of public having to dig around to find this information. Limited type of coverage context or deeper issues often missing And, while there has been a lot of coverage of some of these disasters in the immediate aftermath and the subsequent relief effort, it is often limited around the factual issues which is important and should not be reduced , with very little deeper context. There are signs that things are changing. Issues generate stories Red Cross adds. The scares and culprits associated with climate change are the stuff of headlines. The media did also report on the failings and successes of the humanitarian agencies and their response in the wake of such monumental catastrophes, the unprecedented large donations that could result, and the often incredibly large number of organizations that would be very, very difficult to coordinate efficiently. The Red Cross report mentioned a number of times in this article was, for example, itself mentioned by some mainstream media outlets. The apparent increase in mainstream reporting on such issues may, however, also be a bit over-simplistic and the non-governmental organizations themselves often do not know how to make best use of modern media: According to Professor [Steve] Ross [of Columbia University], By a four-to-one margin, journalists say criticism and skepticism in the press about relief organizations has increased. However, argues disaster expert John Twigg, journalists should avoid easy answers: Media treatment of disasters is stereotyped. Relief is either heroic or failed there is nothing in between. Ross criticizes journalists for a lack of specialist knowledge about humanitarian issues and sources, tight budgets, impatience and crisis fatigue. But he also criticizes NGOs for inadequate media training, not sharing information publicly, confusing marketing with press relations, and not exploiting Internet-based tools. Humanitarian media coverage in the digital age , World Disasters Report , Chapter 6, International Red Cross Is there a sign of any positive change? The Red Cross is hopeful: Some media trends actually favor humanitarians: The Internet and hour news have vastly increased the market for humanitarian testimony. Humanitarian media coverage in the digital age , World Disasters Report , Chapter 6, International Red Cross But the media are less likely, of course, to report on themselves, certainly not in any headlines. In addition, discussion of more complex issues such as the causes of poverty are harder to come by it seems. Poverty and the crippling effects of third world debt are certainly

issues that need more coverage by the mainstream. They are not issues only when the G8 meet, but they are unfortunately ever-present. So when the media appears to be reporting on poverty at the time of a G8 summit, are they really being driven by the agenda of the politicians rather than the issue of poverty? Given that some 30, children die on average each year from the effects of debt and poverty, one would surely expect more coverage of such a global issue than is currently given, and one would hope it is not just a fashionable news item when rich country leaders come together for a meeting. Back to top What is the direction of the media? If so is it the politicians that the media report and interview on to attempt an explanation which risks becoming propaganda? The G8 Summit debt relief proposals was certainly had positive spin put to it which the media did not report much on, thus giving the impression to the population that a lot was achieved. What does it take to become a headline? If a government makes a big deal out of a disaster somewhere in the world, we are sure to hear about it in the media. On-going wars where millions may have died may get hardly any coverage at all, as mentioned further above. Many of the links I have used above do come from mainstream sources, yet those are not the major headlines on prime time television broadcasts or newspapers. Sometimes they do form part of the major headlines but are only covered with a few sentences or maybe mentioned for a couple of days or so. Natural disaster coverage would seem to be one of the more safer political topics to cover. And yet, even if media coverage of natural disasters appears to be selective, this should begin questioning our assumptions of what world news from a media outlet really is: In the wake of the terrible Asian tsunami at towards the end of and its aftermath into, with the immense media coverage, there was hope that perhaps finally the Western mainstream media were making a turn and beginning to cover truly global events and provide real world news. Cynics at the time claimed the western media and their governments were only interested in the region because of all the western tourist areas that were affected and that the impressive wider coverage was for such reasons. At the time, it felt that this time those cynics were wrong. One year on, it is hard to claim that the cynics were wrong. The mainstream may have taken a step forward to report more about the rest of humanity in the time of natural disasters, but it still seems there is a long way to go in improving quality of coverage of natural disasters, deeper context, and more generally, of near-constant, less dramatic.

Chapter 5 : Disasters, relief and the media - Jonathan Benthall - Google Books

Aimed at those concerned with aid and development as well as with media and cultural studies and anthropology, this text examines the way in which relief agencies and the media interact, and.

There prevails a general comprehension to minimise the losses both to life and property to a maximum possible level through effective communication, utilising technology-based systems. Social scientists and experts are of the view that through a system of devoted international cooperation, human sufferings caused by catastrophic impacts of disasters could be reduced significantly. This cooperation revolves around public information and education; improved warning systems; disaster preparedness; and mitigation. These measures are aimed at ensuring improved public safety and lower economic losses. If we observe closely, communication is the most important means for achieving all of the above-stated objectives. There is a paradigm shift toward disaster management approach in recent years. That is to prepare and plan for hazards in a proactive manner rather than waiting for them and reacting later. This pre-emptive approach has evolved after a strong realisation that post-disaster relief remains ineffective if no measures are taken before the disaster strikes. It can be claimed that preparedness is actually the most important phase of post-disaster management. In recent history, communication has proved critical for the cause of disaster mitigation. Advent of mass media in recent years has helped sensitise people in most effective manner through live coverage of hazards and prompt reporting. Understanding the importance of media communication, various humanitarian organisations have also established communication departments responsible for strong internal and external communication and media relationing. There are certain activities in hazard mitigation and post-disaster activities, which are directly dependent on mass media. These activities are focused on creating public awareness about the risk and responses. Various advanced communication means can be used to give early warnings, evacuation plans and help post-disaster activities. The media can play a leadership role in changing the mindset of society for making it more proactive rather than reactive. It also has the responsibility to make the message more valuable and credible for the general public. Sensational and hyped news can give birth to another crisis in the form of chaos and fear, causing more losses. In the last decade or so, there has been a flux of electronic media channels in Pakistan along with other countries of the region. The electronic media has an outreach to the masses, being present in every nook and corner of the country, and it is playing a comprehensive role in opinion making. One major contribution that the electronic media can make is establishment of early warning systems in far-flung and disaster-prone areas. Radio channels can play a primary role, as they have an outreach to most remote areas. The media contribution can lead to the development of a more robust community, which is more aware and educated about disaster preparedness and mitigation. We can see the example of Japan where the nation has stood united against the destruction of earthquakes coming on a regular basis. There are continuous awareness programmes, trainings and drills going on which are produced and telecast by the media throughout the country. The role of media is vital in the overall promotion of a better disaster management regime within a state. The role of print media cannot be neglected as it has been observed that receivers of the information have more trust in the written message than the word of mouth. The information given in newspapers is perceived as a reliable advice and people take it more seriously. Another much neglected aspect during the pre- and post-disaster activities is the lack of communication and coordination among humanitarian organisations, development partners and state agencies. This leads to duplication of efforts along with lack of effective work on ground, particularly in the sensitive areas. Improved communication among various organisations is a must, but that is only possible in pre-hazard period. There must be identified focal persons and departments dedicated for such coordination. For disaster mitigation or response, focal persons can remain in contact with partner organisations and government officials for effective measures. This is one area where the media should be much more responsible in disseminating information. The media should not only be providing correct information and the right message at the right time but should also create an environment of solidarity and faith. This will help in augmenting the collective responsibility of all segments of society to tackle the challenges posed by any disaster. Service

members during Disaster Management Exchange at the U. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons - [http:](http://) Press Cutting Service This article is culled from daily press coverage from around the world. It is posted on the Urban Gateway by way of keeping all users informed about matters of interest. The opinion expressed in this article is that of the author and in no way reflects the opinion of UN-Habitat Opportunities.

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Written at a time when disasters both natural - drought, famine - and manmade - the war in Yugoslavia, civil strike in South Africa - fill our TV screens and newspapers, and when politicians are arguing over how many refugees Britain should accept, this book examines the way in which relief agencies and the media interact, and illustrates many of the organizational, moral and political.

A few weeks earlier, a 7. There was even a tornado that hit homes and public centers and wounded some individuals in the cities of Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu in Cebu days before Yolanda came crashing through. All these events were more than enough to make the people tense and grappling for assurances and solutions online. And there were others who were debating, if not fighting, over who to blame. Others were perpetuating hoaxes. More people are now turning to social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, in times of social crisis. According to author Amy Sample Ward, the three core reasons behind this are bandwidth, response, and power. This is tantamount to reach, action, and impact. On a positive note, social media played a huge role in disaster response during the recent calamities in the Philippines. Connecting with loved ones: Within 24 hours after a disaster happened, people start tagging and posting the names and pictures of missing loved ones. It was an online sounding board to keep everyone updated whether their families, relatives, or friends had survived or not. They were also sending private messages and chatting with acquaintances and looking up Facebook pages of news sites, to get any kind of information, in piecemeal or otherwise. At the same time, social media has enabled survivors to inform their loved ones far from home that they are safe. One case was when super Typhoon Yolanda survivors submitted hasty-written notes to a TV reporter who turned to social media to post these notes. Since the recent disasters affected huge areas and there were only a few people with minimal technical assistance during the first few days, social media filled in the information gaps. Netizens were pointing out areas that had not yet received relief goods or even informing the authorities where dead bodies still remained uncollected. This was done through shares, maps, photos, and statuses. We could even find information on how to donate, where to get supplies, how to get shelter, and what companies and individuals are doing for the survivors. The best way to get information about needed assistance like C flights, medical help, and where to give and receive relief goods was through social media. It was also a proven sounding board during a call for volunteers. Friends were reunited through an effort to organize relief operations for the survivors. Everyone helped in keeping tabs. At the same time, people were sharing practical information on energy conservation and survival tips. They were sharing news that heighten the level of awareness across the world on the recent disasters, feeding the sense of urgency to help the survivors. Empowering and stress debriefing for survivors: The affected individuals were empowered because they feel that in their own way, they were able to take control of the situation they were in. By being able to tell their stories in their status and tweets, survivors were able to share their grief. All these roles that social media has played during the recent natural calamities in the Philippines show how it has revolutionized communications during natural disasters. Has social media ever helped you in time of great need? Share your story with us!

Chapter 7 : Media â€œ Mutual Aid Disaster Relief

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Chapter 8 : Social Media and Disaster Relief â€œ Old Town Crier

"It is a civilizational wake-up call. A powerful messageâ€œ"spoken in the language of fires, floods, droughts, and extinctionsâ€œ"telling us that we need an entirely new economic model and a new way of sharing this planet."

Chapter 9 : Shophity : Buy / Sell Disasters, Relief And The Media [Paperback] online. Shophity

The role of media in disaster management In the wake of sufferings caused by natural and man-made disasters in the last couple of decades, a new realisation is taking place in the contemporary world. There prevails a general comprehension to minimise the losses both to life and property to a maximum possible level through effective communication, utilising technology-based systems.