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Security and resilience — Emergency management — Guidelines for the use of social media in emergencies

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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ISO/DIS 22329

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Having effective communication among organizations and with the public are important aspects of emergency management. The emergence of social media, in addition to traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers, has provided more communication options and enhanced communication capability, but it has also made communication more challenging.

It is important that organizations recognize their potential benefits and risks inherent when using social media in their communication strategy, including crisis communication. Social media can improve situational awareness and communication capability and help citizens support each other during an emergency or crises. Social media can also spread incorrect information regarding an incident and the response to an incident. Organizations that have the capability to monitor and use social media can take advantage of the potential benefits and counteract the potential negative consequences that may arise from social media.

This document provides guidance on how social media can be integrated into communication in emergency management.

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Security and resilience — Emergency management — Guidelines for the use of social media in emergencies

1 Scope

This document specifies guidelines for the use of social media in emergency management.

This document is applicable for governmental as well as non-governmental organizations involved in emergency management and crisis communication. It provides guidance on how organizations and the public can use and interact through social media before, during and after an incident and how social media can support the work of emergency services.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 22300:2018, *Security and resilience — Vocabulary*

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3 Terms and definitions (standards.iteh.ai)

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 22300 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

social media

online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives with each other, transforming traditional one-to-many interactions into many-to-many interactions

3.2

volunteer

individual who offers support to an organization in order to help the organization reach its objective(s)

Note 1 to entry: Volunteers generally do not receive compensation or remuneration.

3.3

virtual volunteer

individual who offers remote support to an organization during an incident

Note 1 to entry: Virtual volunteers may include external experts, e.g. digital humanities, professional networks and virtual operation support teams.

3.4

affiliated volunteer

volunteer (3.2) who is affiliated to voluntary or professional organizations

3.5
virtual operation support team
VOST

personnel who provides virtual support to emergency management using *social media* (3.1)

3.6
traditional media
media such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television

3.7
metadata tag
keyword used in social media that is assigned to a piece of information to facilitate search, e.g. hashtag

3.8
incorrect information
information that is inaccurate

3.9
purposely misleading information
incorrect information that was distributed purposely or intentionally omitted information

4 Understanding social media

4.1 General

With increasing digitalization, a growing number of social media platforms and channels are available, and the selection and popularity of these are continually changing. Social media is available worldwide but access to some platforms and channels may be restricted in some countries. Some platforms and channels focus on exchanging text messages, others focus on sharing photographs or video and some permit the sharing of text, photos and video and many can include links to any content stored on the internet. There is a connection between social media and traditional media.

Traditional media may include information from social media and solicit input from social media users. People also share traditional media news articles on social media.

[Annex A](#) provides examples of social media channels, platforms and related tools.

The organization should:

- consider the role of social media in the context of its overall communications strategy including crisis communication and how its strategy is implemented in the organization; and
- understand that the extent to which information is shared depends on the application on which it was shared and the privacy settings of the user who shared the content

4.2 Utilizing social media

4.2.1 General

The exchange of information through social media will depend on the organization's communication strategy and whether the organization is operating before, during or after incidents or crises.

The organization should consider:

- how social media can improve the organization's capability to manage incidents and crises;
- how social media can reduce the organization's risks by considering risks that could potentially be affected by ineffective communication; and
- the organization's social media policies and procedures and determine if changes are required.

4.2.2 Implementation

The organization should:

- identify and obtain the appropriate tools necessary to implement the use of social media;
- supplement internal resources by external resources as required; and
- ensure that the resources are capable of performing their assigned responsibilities.

A natural progression for the use of social media is to monitor social media communications, then disseminate information to support emergency management objectives. This is then followed by interaction with social media users (public or private stakeholders) to answer questions and build trust with the social media audience.

The organization should conduct a regular review of social media as part of its overall continual improvement process.

4.2.3 Monitoring

4.2.3.1 Purpose

The organization should monitor the use of social media in order to:

- identify the social media platforms used by its audience;
- improve awareness of the environment in which it is operating;
- identify how it is perceived by the public and various stakeholders who may be impacted by its operations and risks;
- identify current and emerging issues, including issues that require a response;
- identify influential users of social media and metadata tags that may relate to the organization;
- understand how citizens or stakeholders are using social media related to the organization; and
- identify other emergency services or service providers with similar risks and/or emergency management messaging.

4.2.3.2 Span of monitoring

The organization should:

- monitor topics, groups or individuals relevant to its objectives;
- determine the appropriate geographic span of monitoring ranging from fairly narrow and restricted to one community to worldwide monitoring; and
- base the extent of the monitoring on the size, nature and impact of an incident.

4.2.3.3 The quality of information

The organization should assess the quality of information obtained from monitoring social media to ensure it is of high quality; and validate the information for accuracy and quality before using the information for prevention and preparedness, especially for improved situation awareness during response and recovery.

NOTE Factors affecting quality include where and when the information originated, who created it and for what reason. See [Annex B](#) for additional information.

The organization should monitor social media for information regarding the risks it presents to the public and various stakeholders, and specific incidents and comments regarding the capability or reputation of the organization.

The organization should:

- select appropriate digital tools for monitoring and analysing social media to improve monitoring efficiency and effectiveness;
- use key words and metadata tags appropriate for the information it wants to track can help with the monitoring process;
- include in its overall monitoring traditional media, and the organization's blogs and website on which readers can comment; and
- use social media to help correct inaccurate information or concerns identified on these platforms.

NOTE Additional information on understanding the use of social media during the different phases of emergency management is included in [Annex C](#). There are tools and services available that can monitor multiple networks and channels (See [Annex A](#)).

4.2.3.4 Monitoring during response and recovery

The amount or intensity of social media communication may be significantly greater during the response and recovery phases, with the response phase likely being the greatest as resource requirements may quickly exceed the resources available within the organization.

The organization should identify the external resources necessary to ensuring that adequate monitoring can be maintained. Additional resources may include emergency services, organizations with similar interests that are willing to help virtual operations support teams, and organizations that specialize in providing social media services.

4.2.4 Dissemination

The organization should provide ongoing information to public and various stakeholders.

Before an incident: transmitting messages transmitted that focus on preventing or preparing for emergencies and tips for effectively using social media during an incident; and

When an incident or crisis has occurred: transmitting information focusing primarily on responding to and recovering from a specific event. Keep an accurate record of the messages communicated, recording the platform, date, time, text, level of approval where applicable.

Typical messages to the public and various stakeholders can include information on:

- preferred or official methods for reporting an incident and consequences for not using these;
- the platforms and channels available for reporting incidents or receiving information about emergencies;
- potential hazards such as potential forest fires during dry spells;
- tests of the alert system, alert and expected actions to be taken such as self-preparedness, and avoidance of hazardous situations;
- where and when official updates will be posted; and
- which organizations are responding to the incident and the role of each.

NOTE For organizations performing a public warning function, ISO 22322, *Societal security — Emergency management — Guidelines for public warning* gives guidance on how to integrate public warning with social media and aid in timely decision-making to take place between the monitoring and dissemination.

4.2.5 Interaction

The organization should interact with social media users in a timely manner, as social media users expect a faster response to comments or questions posted online than from a request sent via e-mail. This enables the organization to build and maintain relationships and trust with the public, before, during and after an incident or a crisis.

The organization should interact with social media users by:

- answering questions about risks and how the public can prepare for, respond to incidents
- answering questions about how the public can assist (e.g. donation management, volunteering);
- requesting and gathering information to assess the public's level of preparedness, awareness of emergency procedures, willingness to help and ability to improve situational awareness;
- providing guidance for sharing relevant information;
- guiding the public on appropriate social media behaviour; and
- correcting misinformation by providing clarification.

5 Planning

5.1 General

The organization should:

- consider the implications of regulations, its own policies, opportunities and risks when planning its use of social media;
- develop social media objectives and strategy; and
- provide sufficient resources for implementation.

5.2 Regulations

The organization should consider regulatory implications when developing policies and procedures regarding the use of social media.

5.3 Policies

The organization should ensure its policies are adequate to support the use of social media.

5.4 Risks

The organization should:

- consider the risks of using, and not using social media to support emergency management;
- develop strategies and objectives to address these risks;
- minimize risk by providing adequate financial and trained human resources to develop and maintain capability to use social media, especially during an emergency or crisis situation;
- identify how social media information will be assessed and verified to ensure adequate quality for its intended use;
- develop procedures to prevent the posting of confidential or inappropriate information and how to address incorrect or purposely misleading information posted on social media; and