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DomPrep Journal

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BREAKING NEWS

GETTING IT RIGHT


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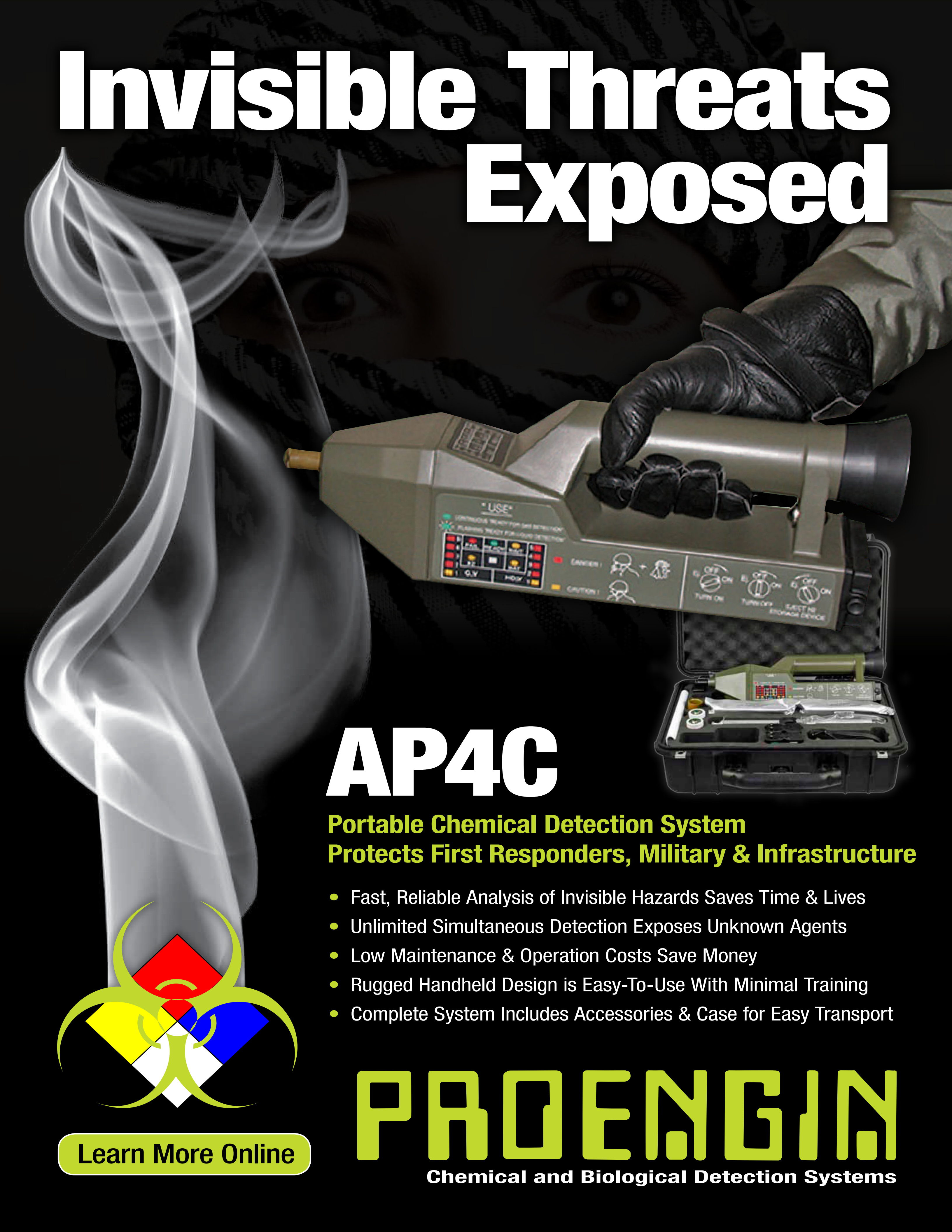
About the Cover: Breaking news comes from many different sources (both traditional and social media). Closing the gaps between accurate details of the incident with the released public news reports is an ongoing challenge for public information officers and media outlets. However, they both share the same goal of "getting it right." (Source: ©iStockphoto/teekid)



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Breaking News & Getting It Right

By Thomas J. Lockwood & Catherine L. Feinman

Establishing mutual trust between opposing groups in a time-sensitive environment can be a huge challenge. Trust and communication gaps exist between news media and public information officers. It is important to understand the different operational procedures, the roles and responsibilities, and the effects that each stakeholder has during a large-scale incident.

On 19 January 2016, DomPrep hosted a roundtable discussion with information-sharing subject matter experts from various disciplines to address the trust and communication gaps between news media and public information officers (PIOs) during incidents of nationwide interest. Being able to get information out fast, but accurately, is a primary goal for both groups. This article summarizes the January discussion and provides key takeaways that are addressed in other articles within this "Breaking News" edition of the DomPrep Journal.

Information Flow

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS) establish roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders during an incident. However, as a significant incident materializes, the influx of national media representatives can add extra challenges, especially considering that local media are already reporting from the affected area. At such times, the "span of control explodes," said Connor Scott, deputy mayor of Baltimore City. He suggested that integrating news media into the NIMS process or creating an ICS for media could help facilitate the process.

As an event begins to unfold, the information flow – its content and sources – is critical. Each stakeholder plays a unique role in crisis communication. For social media, Emily Allen, digital engagement coordinator for the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), explained how researching geolocation and hashtags could help determine the validity of the information by determining whether these reports are originating from the scene of the incident or a remote location. Similarly, journalists must be able to rapidly verify images and messages before publication release.

The balance between validated information and breaking news can be difficult. However, what the PIOs know and what they can discuss do not always coincide. PIOs and reporters many times share the same role, but may not be able to tell the same story. Making matters worse, the absence or delay of validated information often creates inaccurate reporting. Daniel Hetlage, who is the deputy director of the Media Division's Office of Public Affairs at U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, stated that, "Although pre-established relationships are good, due to the numbers of media in one's portfolio, one-on-one relationships are not always possible. Many call themselves media, but may just have a blog or Twitter account with a small number of followers, so I tend to triage information sources and respond to those with the greatest impact where possible. That doesn't necessarily mean the largest outlet, as local media are in a story for the long haul, while networks quickly move on to the next big story." Of course, some senior PIOs prefer the comfort of having relationships with particular news media, but he warns that, "There should be a healthy friction between media and PIOs knowing that there will be times when our goals are at odds."

Subject Matter Experts – Spokespersons & Analysts

Subject matter experts (SMEs) serve different purposes: some are good for context and some for the incident. Anthony S. Mangeri, director of strategic relations for fire services and emergency management and faculty member of American Public University System, pointed out that, "An SME may not be *the right* SME." On one hand, people at the state or federal level may not know the details of local policies but, on the other, local agencies may not have the training to go in front of the camera. Each agency and journalist must find the right SME for each incident. When a local story becomes national or international news, the context and other aspects of the incident may not be understood. In such cases, SMEs can create guidance to share with the media.

According to Col. Cedric Leighton, USAF (Ret.) and chairman of Cedric Leighton Associates LLC, even within the analyst community, the roles are different. Analysts are not part of the operational command and should not be. Rather, they provide their views of the event, but are not official spokespersons for any agency. Contractual arrangements can define what the analyst is entitled to do. Since the media pays some analysts, it is important to carefully consider what they are being asked. For example, when covering the Paris attacks in November 2015 for CNN, Leighton was an expert on terrorism. Additionally, CNN benefited from the fact that he was also an expert on France, but that is somewhat unusual, as most analysts cover only one or two areas deeply. When engaged in a crisis, spokespersons represent agencies and analysts work for media outlets or private organizations such as think tanks.

Agencies like the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) address complicated issues that have a lot of uncertainty. "If we don't say it first, someone else will say it for us," said William Hall, HHS's deputy assistant secretary for public affairs. Thus, HHS disseminates basic information as quickly as possible and relies on experts across the agencies for additional information. HHS also funds and works with individuals in universities and research centers that have a lot of knowledge.

Politics, Speed & Story

Political agendas, perspectives, as well as the pace and speed for consumption of critical information have replaced the traditional "news cycle" with a 24/7 environment. This

environment is dominated by SMEs, "breaking news," individual perspectives, and agendas. Leighton explained that there are two types of SMEs, those with and those without an agenda. When people drive agendas, they may push for reporters or PIOs to tell a story that is not true. Representatives from both groups need to be prepared to deal with this scenario. From the PIO view, PIO Edward McDonough of MEMA shared how his agency partners with media to help them make good decisions, especially considering that the mainstream media reports reach more people than social media pushed by agency PIOs.

In addition, five objective stories would be five different stories because people bring their own lives to the report. "Impartiality does not mean everyone will tell the same story," said McDonough. When dealing with life safety issues, though, it can be difficult to stay ahead of the media, as they are often in analysis mode while agencies are still in response mode. For example, before the end of the first night of civil unrest in Baltimore in June 2015, media and SMEs were already analyzing what time the mayor notified the governor. Such information "clutter" makes it harder to address the situation and maintain effective relationships.

On the media side, JJ Green, national security correspondent at WTOP, and Robert Stallworth, Law Enforcement Education Coordinator at American Military University and traffic anchor/reporter for WTOP-FM, acknowledged that sometimes there is impatience to get the story out and this issue needs to be addressed. Even journalists who have the highest intentions can get a bad reputation, "Agendas and politics are fine, but not for a reporter while covering an event. Objective journalists don't have a side," Green said. Journalists have an important job to do, but the facts can get lost when they do not take the time to verify their sources and information.

Although there needs to be a relationship between media and PIOs, they should not have a partnership. Journalists must remain impartial when advising the public. PIOs can feel pressure on both sides – from their agencies and the media – to quickly post information, but this can lead to errors. Anna Rose, PIO for the United States Park Police, expressed concern about accountability as she balances maintaining media relationships despite being often misquoted. She further addressed the importance of being able to say, "We are working to get the requested information for you and will get back to you at ___ time, or as soon as we can."

During a crisis, journalists want information immediately, but PIOs may need to release information on a different timeline. There is only one chance to send the right public message, so ensuring the information is accurate should be the priority. The Federal Bureau of Investigtion's management of the San Bernardino, California, shooting was raised as an example of information flow in a chaotic situation being deliberately slowed to ensure accuracy, consistency, and confidence to communities immediately impacted.

Scott agreed that accuracy is the top priority, but suggested that PIOs need to increase the speed of information sharing and media response to better meet the expectations of their communities, which drive news media to provide information. With the dominance of the 24-hour news cycle, roundtable participants supported the idea and need for PIOs to have basic information pre-scripted before an incident occurs. This might include worksheets and forms with specific information that can be quickly added and check-off lists to increase speed and enhance coordination between stakeholders.

"The balance between validated information and breaking news can be difficult. However, what the PIOs know and what they can discuss do not always coincide."

McDonough added that minor factual errors (honest mistakes) could be survived when they are corrected as soon as possible. However, if errors are made with small events, they are likely to occur for big incidents, so it is important to correct them immediately. Nobody wants to make mistakes, but they inevitably happen. How agencies and journalists manage them is the key. One suggestion is for agencies to record their own interviews to ensure accuracy if they are misquoted in news reports. With the 24-hour news cycle, there are plenty of opportunities to correct mistakes and clarify misconceptions.

Images Matter

Images play a huge role in crisis communication because one image can set the agenda. As such, PIOs should build relationships with videographers and photographers as well as journalists. Like all photojournalists, Peter Roof, director of photography at Alt Gobo MediaWorks LLC, has to be able to see the news, "We want to be safe, but we want to see something." However, in some cases, PIOs try to control the message by expanding perimeters and selectively placing reporters at remote locations. One reason for this is a matter of trust – trust in where the information goes and how it is managed.

Unfortunately, even when 99 percent of journalists are trying to do a good job, the other 1 percent makes it harder for everyone. Images may tell a great story, but they are not always put into the right context. To avoid this pitfall, Hetlage makes sure that his agency's cameras are also on scene to avoid sensationalism.

Gripping news stories provide great "infotainment," but do not help agencies get accurate messaging to the public. For example at HHS, Hall noted that, although the evacuation of two workers who contracted Ebola in Africa was extremely controlled, the disease was more difficult to contract than it was portrayed in pictures and videos. In order to calm public fear, images must match the message. However, he also noted the propensity for media and social media to tell the public to be scared, but they do not acknowledge that sometimes fear is okay and expected. Managing that fear happens by checking information and learning more about the facts.

Managing Relationships

Careful consideration must be made when balancing the type of incident with the type of media presentation needed. Green shared his fundamentals about relationships, which he described as the "Three Rs: relationships, respect, and right." He suggested that PIOs could build stronger relationships with the media by: reducing leaks; going through a vetting process; increasing outreach and education; avoiding those without good intentions; treating each journalist as an individual; recognizing that the cameraperson is just as important as the reporter; and simply doing the right thing.

To build strong relationships, reporters and PIOs also need to understand the workplace pressures that each experiences. When there are lulls in breaking news stories, the routine becomes news. These times are opportunities to help educate the media to understand the bigger picture. Speed with accuracy and responding to all media whether there is an answer or not builds trust. "Don't leave them hanging; everybody deserves a response, even if to say you don't yet have any information," said Hetlage.

Although journalists and other media representatives may not have the time to participate in multidiscipline trainings, they should be invited to the table. In addition to building relationships, Local Emergency Planning Committees provide an excellent venue to help media gain insight and understanding of the challenges and key issues, which include response strategies, responder perspectives, as well as planning and response concerns.

McDonough stated that MEMA has had a good experience by embedding news representatives into its emergency operations center. Having the opportunity to engage with a reputable reporter is worth the effort, so reporters should not be dismissed. Burning bridges on either side has consequences, so it is important to train and educate PIOs and journalists to work together during a crisis. The "gotcha game" – even once – can affect future relationships.

In This Issue

In this issue of the *DomPrep Journal*, the key takeaways from the January discussion are elaborated. Rose emphasizes that time pressures are no excuse for sharing unreliable information to the public during a crisis. Scott shares his experience with the Baltimore civil unrest, where news stories clashed with reality. According to Jennifer First and J. Brian Houston, program manager and co-director at the University of Missouri's Disaster and Community Crisis Center (dcc.missouri.edu), this can be especially traumatizing to children and youths who may perceive disasters they see on the news differently than adults.

Dawn Thomas, associate director of CNA's Safety and Security division, discusses the life and safety consequences that can occur when critical information and data are breached. This is especially important when digital humanitarians are assisting crisis responders via electronic routes as described by Hannah Zitner, who is a journalist, editor-in-chief of the Ontario Association of Emergency Management website, and a volunteer for Humanity Road. Cyber is also used to help agencies like Allen's (MEMA) to validate social media posts using hashtags and geolocation information.

Leighton then explains the differences between the types of experts used to analyze crises. In times of crisis, public information strategies must consider the type of incident that needs to be addressed as well as the target audience, using strategies like the ones shared by Mangeri. Rounding out the issue is a message from Team You Can Act (Cohort XIII group of Harvard's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative) that can save lives if the message is delivered effectively and actions are taken before the next active shooter incident.

A special thank you goes to all the contributors at the roundtable and in this issue.

Thomas J. Lockwood (pictured) is a former member of U.S. Department of Homeland Security's senior leadership team and served three of its secretaries in key leadership roles. He supported the White House cybersecurity coordinator in efforts to secure online transactions as lead coordinator and core team member for development of the U.S. National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace, which was signed by the president. He served as the DHS director for the National Capital Region, the homeland security advisor and deputy director of homeland security for the State of Maryland, and the executive deputy commissioner for homeland security and emergencies for the State of New York. He has experience both in the public and private sectors – including the transportation, chemical, pharmaceutical, and food sectors. He served as leader and team member of design-build teams, including major defense systems, industrial facilities and processes, safety and reliability systems, systems integration, and net-centric systems. He was a Brookings Institution fellow; a graduate of the Harvard Business School and chairman of his class; and past president of the Navy's Association of Scientists and Engineers.

Catherine L. Feinman joined Team DomPrep in January 2010. As the editor-in-chief, she works with writers and other contributors to build and create new content. With more than 25 years experience in publishing, she previously served as journal production manager for Bellwether Publishing Ltd. She also serves as an emergency medical technician, firefighter, board member of Ready Chesapeake, and member of the Media Advisory Panel of EMP SIG (InfraGard National Members Alliance).

Accuracy & Trust in Information Dissemination

By Anna Rose

Time pressures during emergencies are not an excuse to release inaccurate information to the public. Regular communication and engagement with media sources help facilitate the flow of reliable information. Relationships built on mutual trust and respect between news reporters and public affairs officers ensure timely and accurate public reporting during a crisis.

The art of public information seems quite simple, but is actually a nuanced field with a litany of challenges. Crafting the right message, making sure the media gets the message right, and then handling the public's reaction are all key elements of successful public affairs operations. The media's task is to get the right information quickly and report it accurately. Perhaps one of the foremost challenges in public information is that bridge between the two – the trust that reporting will be accurate and express the message that the public information officers are trying to convey. From the very beginning, the relationships cultivated with media contacts are the foundation of success, or not, in public affairs.

A practice that has proven to be advantageous in working with the media is to answer calls, texts, tweets, and emails whenever possible. By building this regular rapport, reporters would know when to expect a response from public information officers. The law enforcement world relies on the media to help convey critical public safety messages. By being available to media contacts, these contacts would be more willing to assist public information officers when needed. This results in mutually beneficial and trusting relationships.

Fact Checking

To ensure accuracy, the public information officer or trusted colleague must read everything the media publishes with his or her name or agency's name attached. The only way to verify that a message is being published accurately is to read it. When a mistake or an inaccuracy is identified, it is essential to address it. Perhaps a reporter is interpreting incorrectly, or it could be that he or she is taking liberties with others' words – there are many explanations. In any case, it is up to the public information officer to demand accuracy.

"Although there is immense pressure to push messages out for public consumption, it is critical to not ignore the elemental purpose of a public information officer – to communicate."

It is difficult to trust a reporter who continually makes errors, deliberately or not. When communicating with new reporters or those that are not yet trusted contacts, have them repeat back the information provided. This practice ensures that the words and statements were understood, and it helps mitigate the chance of an error. This has proven to be beneficial on more than one occasion for the United States Park Police.

Although there is immense pressure to push messages out for public consumption, it is critical to not ignore the elemental purpose of a public information officer – to communicate. Public Affairs offices and the media have a codependent relationship. Lay the groundwork for success by cultivating and fostering good relationships, always being available, and demanding accuracy. The time for building relationships is always – not during a crisis. A relationship built on mutual trust and respect results in accurate and timely reporting.

Sergeant Anna Rose is the public information officer (PIO) for the United States Park Police. After patrolling the National Mall and the George Washington Memorial Parkway, she served in the horse-mounted patrol for four years, the last of which was in Great Falls, Virginia. She was then promoted to patrol sergeant on the Baltimore Washington Parkway before being selected as the PIO in July 2015. She is looking forward to launching the USPP's social media platform and developing strong community ties.

When a City Is Burning – Or Not

By Connor Scott

In early 2015, the entire city of Baltimore was overrun with rioters and the city was set ablaze. At least that is what the world saw on news reports. As devastating as the civil unrest was to a relatively small portion of the city, the situation was exacerbated by reports of "citywide" chaos and destruction.

When a local emergency manager is handling a disaster, support and resources can come pouring in from across the country from other local governments, states, and federal agencies, as well as from private, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations. Although massive in scale, such an influx of resources is not overwhelming; the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and other tried-and-tested plans and procedures make it relatively easy to manage massive amounts of resources during an emergency. The Incident Command System has several principals and tools that ensure that no one person is overwhelmed with responsibilities or by communication challenges.

Shaking hands and building relationships prior to an incident is hugely important, but it is not mandatory. Emergency plans at all levels have set the roles and responsibilities of each partner coming in to assist – so the position filled is more important than the person filling it. For example, if a local emergency manager has not previously had the opportunity to meet the federal coordinating officer assigned to an incident in his or her jurisdiction, no big deal. His or her capabilities and what he or she will be doing to respond to the disaster are already delineated in emergency plans, and any lack of a pre-existing relationship does not affect the officer's ability to help.

The Media Gap

However, there seems to be gap in how the media – one of the biggest partners – responds to emergencies and how it integrates with the incident management systems that are in place. When disaster strikes, the media presence multiplies dramatically, with dozens or even hundreds of media outlets arriving to cover the incident. This rapid expansion of the media presence presents a massive challenge for public information officers who begin to receive an endless stream of phone calls, e-mails, text messages, and social media posts from news outlets. Those who have managed an incident of national significance would recall their cell phone batteries draining rapidly while questions and interview requests pour in. Many times requests come from very unexpected sources – a public information officer may find themselves asking, "How did Anderson Cooper get my personal cell number?"

When civil unrest and rioting broke out in Baltimore, Maryland, following the death of Freddie Gray, the media presence was staggering. The Joint Information Center and public information officers struggled to keep up with requests, monitor media activity, and release timely information to the public. In many ways, the media did an excellent job of covering the incidents but, as in many cases, the media coverage resulted in a challenging “Catch 22”: The image on the screen defines the disaster, but the cameras always show the most heavily impacted location – so the worst-case scenario becomes the leading image. Certainly, some damage was widespread throughout Baltimore, but the heavy damage was concentrated in one location in one neighborhood in West Baltimore, and that single location was the main image on television screens across the world.

The unintended effect of this was the promulgation of a public belief that the entire city was burning. Not only was the major damage concentrated in one area, but city agencies worked tirelessly throughout the night to assess damage, collect debris, and unblock roads. Because of their efforts, the city was open for business the next morning. However, because of the images portrayed on television, dozens of volunteers, community members, and even celebrities and professional athletes spontaneously showed up the next morning with shovels and brooms ready to help clean and remove the debris that, unbeknownst to them, was long gone.

“At a minimum, the news community should evaluate how it responds to major incidents and determine if there are ways to improve how it deploys and interacts with the impacted responders.”

Of course, the Joint Information Center needs to do a better job of leveraging the media to get messages out and paint a more accurate picture of what is happening. However, the way the media expands does not make it easy for the response system to coordinate with reporters. None of the Incident Command System tools – such as a liaison officer or span-of-control – are utilized to keep the numerous media partners manageable. Because of the nature of the work, media professionals do not spend a long time in one position, and their focus has to be on producing content; not on the things that emergency managers live and breathe – training, planning, and incorporating lessons learned into future responses. This makes it difficult for emergency managers and public information officers to develop lasting relationships and train media professionals as they do with other partners. Attempting to build those relationships ahead of time is even more important without a system like NIMS to seamlessly integrate the media response to disaster.

The Need for a Media Response Framework

A possible solution might include the media incorporating a “National Media Response Framework” or a system like NIMS. At a minimum, the news community should evaluate how it responds to major incidents and determine if there are ways to improve how it deploys and interacts with the impacted responders. An improved system that gets out better information quickly should be in everyone’s best interest.

Emergency managers clearly need to do what they can to engage with media partners as much as possible, and make sure to maximize the limited time they may spend together in the preparedness phase. Without a formal response system, relationship building becomes much more important. If it is not possible to coordinate with the media ahead of time, emergency managers must do more to prepare for the media impact, and ensure that the Joint Information Center is prepared to deal with news reports ramping up. If not already in place, public information officers should consider mutual aid agreements with others who are not impacted and can come to help. The modern Joint Information Center needs more people and more technological solutions to deal with the numerous and diverse demands placed on it. The impact of social media as an information tool and intelligence source is only beginning to be understood, and Joint Information Center planners must stay ahead of the curve as new technologies and capabilities are developed.

Photo by Douglas Walton, Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (2015)

As the emergency management profession continues to work toward mastery of disaster response, emergency managers always have the opportunity to evaluate themselves and their partners in order to improve the preparedness and response systems. Coordination with the media is just one piece of many, but it is absolutely crucial to success and worth the time and effort to enhance systems and help the communities served. The news media wants to get the story right, and emergency managers must take every opportunity to put them in a position to be successful.

Connor Scott is the assistant deputy mayor of operations for the City of Baltimore, Maryland. Prior to joining the Mayor's Office he served in the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management as the deputy director and public information officer. He has earned numerous emergency management certifications, including the Certified Emergency Manager (CEM®) credential, and has managed hundreds of local emergencies and several federally declared disasters. He began his career as a firefighter in the Philadelphia area where he served for ten years and eventually earned the rank of lieutenant. He holds a Masters of Public Administration from Villanova University where he was inducted into the Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration, and he is a member of the DomPrep Advisory Committee.

Big News About Cyberthreats

By Dawn Thomas

The emergency services sector faces many daily challenges that are exacerbated when data breaches and cyber attacks occur. Addressing public concern for incidents with life and safety consequences is one of the greatest challenges that public information officers must be prepared to manage as the number and frequency of cyberthreats continue to rise.

In a world of social media and 24/7 news coverage, those in emergency preparedness fields have worked hard to better integrate public information and warning with emergency services. These efforts have paid off. For the past four years (2012–2015), the public information and warning core capability (1 of 32 core capabilities under the National Preparedness Goal) has ranked as one of the top nine capabilities for which states feel they are most prepared. However, during these same years, the cybersecurity core capability – which includes preventing, detecting, and responding to attacks – has ranked last. Providing public information and warning during the response to a cyber incident is an ongoing challenge for public information officers (PIOs) in the emergency services sector.

Cyber Incidents Threaten the Emergency Services Sector

The emergency services sector (ESS) comprises the fields of: law enforcement; fire and emergency services; emergency medical services (EMS); emergency management; public works; and public safety communications and coordination, including fusion centers. As noted in the 2015 Emergency Services Sector-Specific Plan, the ESS has become increasingly dependent on cyber assets, systems, and disciplines. Although this reliance has resulted in improved operations, it is also associated with new risks. Whether cyber incidents are caused by natural occurrences (such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornadoes), accidents (such as hazardous materials spills), failures of systems or structural technology (such as electric grid failures), or the intentional actions of an adversary (terrorist attacks), cybersecurity incidents are increasing not only in number, but also in the cost of impact.

As cyber incidents affect various sectors across the United States – including retail, banking, and academia – the stakes are raised when incidents directly affect those who are supposed to protect U.S. citizens (such as government institutions) or take down relied upon services (such as 9-1-1 systems, power, medical equipment/hospitals). Two types of cyber incidents are likely to affect the ESS (and the constituencies they serve) the most: (a) data breaches; and (b) cyber incidents with life and safety consequences.

Data Breaches

Data breaches have become commonplace in the private sector. Financial, gaming, travel, telecommunications, and energy companies have all experienced losses of millions of records that include large amounts of personally identifiable information. As revealed in 2015, the government is not immune to data breaches and, in some cases, is a particularly attractive target for adversaries. In the past 10 years, several government sites experienced data breaches of more than 100,000 records, including Medicaid, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Internal Revenue Service, and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Likewise, members of the ESS have experienced data breaches of their own personnel and their constituencies. For example, according to the Information Is Beautiful website, in 2011, one group of hackers published 2,719 social security numbers, 8,214 passwords, and 48,182 street addresses from more than 70 different U.S. law enforcement agencies. The ESS also dealt with breaches of patient information through ambulance services in: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Yuma, Arizona; and Morrow County, Ohio.

Cyber Incidents With Life & Safety Consequences

In addition to data breaches that cause loss of personally identifiable information, cyber incidents also affect the physical world and have life and safety consequences. For example, computer-aided dispatch services (such as 9-1-1) can be interrupted, services that run trains or airplanes can go down, and surveillance systems can be jammed or blocked. For each of these types of incidents, direct consequences would threaten public safety and the wellbeing of specific individuals. For example, a series of technological incidents caused widespread blackouts in summer 2003, leading to at least 11 deaths. In addition, major U.S. cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Austin, Chicago, and Seattle have experienced failures of their 9-1-1 systems in the past five years that have been linked to loss of life and less-optimal patient outcomes.

"In 2011, one group of hackers published 2,719 social security numbers, 8,214 passwords, and 48,182 street addresses from more than 70 different U.S. law enforcement agencies."

Cyber Incidents Become Public

As cyber incidents become commonplace, the chance that information about the incident would reach the public has become almost a certainty. As noted in the first exercise of the 2012 National Level Exercise series, senior decision-makers acknowledged that information about the cyber incident and resulting vulnerabilities would be leaked, and called for a strong public information campaign. In a December 2015 fusion center cybersecurity exercise, one ESS participant stated that cyber incidents are released to the public almost immediately, and that the chances of keeping a cyber story out of the public realm was "slim to none."

Although early release of information is, in large part, the reality of social media and 24/7 news coverage, there are other, more complex reasons for the early promulgation of news regarding cyber incidents. The first relates to the size, scope, and targets of recent data breaches. From the U.S. Office of Personnel Management to big-box stores such as Target, national-level organizations have experienced breaches that involve huge numbers of the public. The media reports have been full of stories about the loss of millions of credit card numbers and other personally identifiable information, socializing the public for continued news and attention on cyber incidents.

The second reason is the rise of "hacktivism." Gone are the days when teenagers hacked into government websites just to see if they could do it. Instead, activists are combining political beliefs with their hacking skills and are using the hack as a protest, or as a demonstration of either their own capabilities or some technical, political, or social flaw in the subject of their hack. Perpetrating the hack is only part of the equation; people have to hear about and/or see it to fulfill the purpose. For this, 24/7 news cycles and social media are the perfect mediums for hacktivists to communicate and share information about cyber incidents they caused or support. For example, the hacktivist group "Anonymous" has become extremely newsworthy for their cyber activity in support of the Arab Spring and against Islamic State group, and for taking down large corporate websites, such as MasterCard, Visa, and PayPal.

Finally, increased public awareness can be attributed to the rise of the use of "ransomware," in which criminals take control of a person's or company's data until the victim pays a ransom. The Federal Bureau of Investigation recently warned that this type of attack is on the rise. From April 2014 through June 2015, victims of the most popular ransomware reported losses totaling more than $18 million. As in any ransom scheme, victims must be informed of the crime in order for perpetrators to be paid, which increases the number of people who are aware of the attack. In addition, the monetary value of the losses has moved this type of crime into mainstream media.

The Challenges for Public Information Officers

There are serious consequences to not providing accurate, timely information to the public in response to both data breaches and cyber incidents with physical effects. For a business, a breakdown in public relations might be a loss of confidence that affects revenue. As documented in the 2012 Emergency Services Sector Cyber Risk Assessment, these consequences can have greater implications for ESS, including a lack of public confidence and trust in emergency response and services, and possibly even confusion or panic.

Despite the importance, there are few resources to support crisis communications in response to a cyber incident. What does exist seems to focus almost exclusively on a private sector model of notifying those who have had personally identifiable information stolen. However, when the target is local, state, or federal government, it raises concern about how to use public communications in a way that ensures that the public maintains a trust in government agencies, in the water they drink, in the trains they ride, and in the power they use.

In planning for cyber incidents that affect the ESS, PIOs are forced to face several challenges, including:

- *Responding without the benefit of a playbook* – Many jurisdictions do not have a response plan for cyber incidents, or they have a plan that fails to include strategies for disseminating information to the public. Similarly, even jurisdictions with strong public communications plans do not have annexes or sections that deal specifically with cyber incident response.
- *Being uncertain about when to make information public* – Although training and experience have led many ESS PIOs to believe in early notification, many in the

private sector maintain that it is critical to wait to inform victims of a breach until the cyber investigation takes a more definite shape. However, the tipping point for sharing information with ESS members or constituencies remains unclear. While those in the ESS might be loath to alert the public without solutions in hand, those affected (either directly or indirectly) are likely to know something is occurring long before solutions are even a possibility.

- *Recognizing the reality that physical effects will be seen and felt* – If a cyber incident (whether natural, technical, or human-caused) turns utilities off, crashes a train, or brings 9-1-1 or emergency medical records systems offline, the public would notice. The story would be in the news long before it is even clear that it was a cyber incident, and PIOs would have to act quickly to get ahead of the story.
- *Providing the right level of detail* – By the very nature of many cyber incidents, describing what happened leads to a technical discussion. The challenge of the PIO is to provide information that is technical enough to accurately describe what happened, but not so technical that the average citizen cannot understand it.
- *Balancing information sharing with ongoing investigations and protection efforts* – Explaining what occurred without exposing weaknesses in critical infrastructure is challenging. PIOs must work closely with law enforcement/ cyber investigation units to find a level of detail that: (a) is informational, yet does not provide too much awareness to copycats who might want to exploit the situation; and (b) does not interfere with ongoing investigations.
- *Identifying (and providing the right information for) different stakeholder groups* – Although informing victims of the breach is largely regulated by states (47 states have enacted legislation about notification of security breaches that involve personally identifiable information), informing the public of a breach is not regulated and not well understood. This is especially an issue in the ESS, which is responsible not only for actual public safety, but also for maintaining the promise of public safety. Related questions include:
  - Is there a right time to inform the public that the police department has been breached, or that EMS data (even if perpetrators have not taken avail of it) has been made public?
  - Would the content of the message to the public differ from the message provided to inform victims?
- *Balancing the communication between providing information and causing fear* – Human-caused cyber incidents are likely to require different communications than those that are due to natural or technological issues. Those directly affected by the attack as well as those within the (unaffected) public might have a sense that the threat is ongoing, could escalate, and is specifically targeting Americans. As a result, PIOs must understand and account for the fear factor that might accompany a targeted attack on the ESS.

Public Information Officers Need to Prepare

PIOs from the ESS face a great number of challenges when it comes to responding to a cyber incident. There are not many resources to support efforts, but there are actionable items that PIOs and ESS members can do now to prepare themselves and their communities for cyber incidents:

- *Document procedures* – Ensure that jurisdictions have a cyber annex to emergency operations plans. Cyber annexes should include crisis communications plans; likewise, crisis communication plans should include cyber annexes. In all cases, plans should address how law enforcement officers, information technology (IT) professionals, and PIOs coordinate response activities during a cyber incident.
- *Develop toolkits for cyber incident response* – Define common types of attacks and technical terms, pre-script press releases on common topics, and develop contact lists for any subject matter experts that may be required.
- *Conduct multidiscipline, multijurisdictional exercises* – Ensure that cybersecurity exercises bring together IT experts, cyber investigators, emergency managers, hospital staff, decision-makers, and PIOs. Design exercises (and set up the room) in a way that brings representatives from each discipline and jurisdiction together to work through the different stages of a cyber incident response.
- *Do not stop at response; plan for recovery efforts* – Recovery depends on restoring trust, and restoring trust relies heavily on getting the message out to the public about what happened, what actions were taken to fix the situation, and how things will improve in the future. Even when citizens do not need to take any specific actions, staying informed during the incident might help rebuild trust during recovery phases. Continued communication throughout a recovery period may support the return to status quo, ensuring that the public maintains confidence in the ESS.

Going Forward: A Growing Number of Cyber Concerns

Experts agree that cyber incidents of all types will occur more often and with higher consequences. Society’s growing reliance on technology will continue to place members of the ESS and their constituencies at risk for data breaches and for cyber incidents with impacts that threaten life, safety, and infrastructure across the United States. In order to maintain trust and order, PIOs in the emergency services sector need to develop strategies for providing the public with timely, accurate information. Although PIOs face multiple challenges in doing so, developing strong communications plans (both for those directly affected, as well as for the general public) would support response activities and pave the way for a more complete recovery.

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Digital Humanitarians

By Hannah Zitner

When the deadliest and most destructive storm of 2012 came pummeling through the Northeast – decimating homes, cutting power, downing communications, and ultimately killing close to 120 people on U.S. soil – states of emergencies were declared in nine states. The Federal Emergency Management Agency as well as state, tribal, and local responders had their work cut out in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.

Although traditional emergency managers and first responders were quick to get boots on the ground, another group of disaster responders were called into action. Digital humanitarians from around the globe provided online support with the response. Using Internet connections and computers or smartphones, they monitored social media, contributed to situational reports, provided maps, performed analyses, and helped coordinate the flow of information.

Humanitarian-to-Humanitarian Model

Humanity Road is a volunteer-driven digital humanitarian organization that helped sift through the flood of disaster data that came pouring through as Superstorm Sandy tore apart the shores in the Northeast. The information volunteers collected provided valuable and actionable situational awareness information for local, state, and federal partners, including the Maryland State Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the New York City Mayor's office. Humanity Road is just one example of a breed of humanitarian organizations whose function is not to deliver aid themselves, but to help other humanitarian organizations in their operations.

"Humanitarian-to-humanitarian" (H2H), named after the business-to-business (B2B) model, is the term coined to describe humanitarian organizations that provide products and services to other humanitarian organizations. Areas of expertise within H2H organizations include, but are not limited to: gathering social media situational awareness, mapping, providing analytics, facilitating communication capabilities, and offering statistical support and translation services. Though these organizations are not entirely new, their growth has been rapid and roles increasingly crucial.

"We act as a bridge between traditional organizations on the ground, such as the UN [United Nations], MSF [Doctors Without Borders], and the Red Cross," said Executive Director Tyler Radford of Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) in a phone interview on 9 February 2016. HOT is an organization that creates – or rather coordinates the creation, production, and distribution of – free, open source maps of crisis-affected areas. "The maps serve as a starting point for other humanitarian organizations during responses and not an end product in themselves," said Radford. HOT volunteers provide an invaluable resource to humanitarian and emergency response agencies by mapping vulnerable or still unmapped areas before, during, and after disasters hit.

Innovative Practices

Though technology is a common element in many H2H organizations, it is not a defining feature. Innovation and collaboration are the necessary parts of the equation and at the root of many operations. Likened to the startups in the technology world, this new brand of humanitarian organization has to be agile and responsive to the changing landscape of the humanitarian system.

Wendy Harman, who has contributed to a long list of innovative emergency management initiatives and currently serves as a 2016 Presidential Innovation Fellow, stressed the importance of innovation in the humanitarian sector while noting the irony behind the business of doing good. "The greatest opportunity in humanitarian work emerges from continually trying to put yourself out of business," said the former Red Cross director of social strategy in an email dated 9 February 2016. "To continue operating as we always have in the face of knowing that technology has uncovered incredible opportunities to be more inclusive, collaborative, fast, efficient, and impactful than we could have imagined 10 years ago, is bonkers."

Luckily, emergency managers in the United States are passing Harman's "bonkers test" and are working to solve some of the system's most daunting problems. In 2015, FEMA launched the Tech Corps program to resolve critical challenges experienced during federally declared disasters through innovative applications of technology. In June 2015, Cisco Systems, Google, Humanity Road, Information Technology Disaster Resource Center, Intel, Joint Communications Task Force, and Microsoft signed a memorandum of understanding with FEMA. Then, in December 2015, FEMA hosted the Public-Private Partnership Conference and tabletop exercise in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Though innovation occupies a large piece of the H2H puzzle (and the informal network takes its naming inspiration from the business world), humanitarian principles, saving lives, and collaboration are still at the heart of the organizations involved.

Collaborative Alliances

With collaboration at the core of the H2H modus operandi, leveraging partnerships is crucial to the model and being promoted in both domestic and international circles. In early February 2016, key members of the informal H2H network met in Geneva, Switzerland, for the Humanitarian Networks and Partnership Week and will meet again in May at the first ever World Humanitarian Summit, where humanitarian organizations, governments, disaster-affected people, and the private sector will discuss innovative solutions to the complex problems the humanitarian system faces.

Domestically, several informal alliances have formed, and FEMA continues to focus on a whole community approach while formalizing various networks and partnerships. Acknowledging fiscal realities can sometimes get in the way of best practices, Humanity Road President Christine Thompson sees collaboration as one solution to budgetary woes. "To ease shrinking budgets, the emergency management industry is focusing more and more on leveraging partnerships," said Thompson in a phone conversation on 13 February 2016, adding that one key to preparedness is pre-established communication plans among stakeholders.

Leveraging the various strengths of each individual organization and sharing the brunt of the generic tasks allows organizations to focus on their specialized contributions. Working outside the traditional humanitarian and emergency response systems offers opportunities for organizations to be agile and innovative, but there are limits to being small and specialized too – with diminished capacities for administrative tasks (such as grant writing and creating business models), smaller organizations can suffer. Collaborations, partnerships, and networks allow each organization to remain specialized and ultimately deliver better products and services.

Harman, who advocates for inter-organizational collaboration as well as community-centered collaboration, described the role collaboration can play in domestic emergency management: "The golden ticket is developing a common understanding about where and how to most efficiently use scarce resources."

"Personnel must know how this awareness applies to their departments, how it could allow them to respond to an actual or perceived public health emergency, and how it would help them to change course as the situation evolves."

Not only are H2H organizations collaborating with one another, they are also collaborating with armies of volunteers scattered around the world. In the wake of disasters, people want to help. Whether sending virtual thoughts and prayers, changing a profile picture out of solidarity, or actively contributing to the response, the collective desire to help exists. "Unlocking the skills and goods in local and digital communities removes the notion that we have limited resources," said Harman. "The options for meeting needs become much more abundant when we recognize and figure out how to seamlessly collaborate and deploy them."

Assessing which organizations – digital, volunteer-driven, or otherwise – are available to collaborate with an organization ahead of time can save precious moments when disasters hit. For example, in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, Humanity Road, Standby Task Force, HOT, and a handful of other humanitarians collaborated to provide timely products and services to established aid agencies:

- Humanity Road volunteers filtered and analyzed 213,000 tweets that supported both AmeriCares and Nepalese-based nongovernment organization Kathmandu Living Labs.
- HOT volunteers provided maps to traditional response organization such as MSF;
- Translators Without Borders volunteers translated more than 500 terms into Nepali, Newari, and Hindi to help monitor messages from the affected population and relay other messages to search and rescue teams.
- Statistics Without Borders supported census analytics for mapping and provided statistical volunteers to assist in developing after-action surveys.

In the United States, the Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC) is an emergency response organization that relies on a collaborative approach to bring connectivity and communications to disaster-affected communities. ITDRC provides temporary workspaces, connectivity, and surge technology assets that enable first responders and humanitarian relief agencies to communicate and coordinate aid. "Though many ad-hoc partnerships are formed during an event, the organization strives to establish relationships in advance through VOAD [Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters] memberships and public-private-partnership initiatives," said Operations Director of ITDRC Joe Hillis in a 9 February 2016 phone interview.

ITDRC's collaboration with Team Rubicon, a nonprofit veteran-based disaster response organization that has a strong logistics section, is just one example of its pre-established partnerships. Both organizations leverage each other's strengths, skills, and resources to reduce duplication of efforts, enabling each to focus on their core competencies. "We'll tag along on their logistics efforts – if we have five volunteers, they have 100. So, if they focus on logistics, we can focus on our core mission, which is to deliver technology. Likewise, they rely on us for tech so they can free up their logistics operations," said Hillis. "It's a win-win for all organizations," he added.

Hannah Zitner is a journalist with a master's degree in disaster and emergency management. She writes about communication tools and technology used in emergency management and humanitarian operations. She's also the editor-in-chief of the Ontario Association of Emergency Management website and a volunteer for Humanity Road. You can find her at hzitner@yorku.ca or on Twitter @miss_hannahz.

Television Talking Heads & Disasters

By Cedric Leighton

Television coverage of a disaster portrays many people trying to explain what happened. For those who are charged with leading emergency response and disaster relief agencies, the diversity of media outlets and the different kinds of experts the press calls upon to help analyze cataclysmic events can be overwhelming.

The proliferation of 24-hour news channels and extensive local news coverage have put enormous pressure on the news organizations themselves as well as on the agencies charged with disaster response. For the media today, it is not enough to simply bring events as diverse as the Baltimore Riots, Hurricane Katrina, or the Paris Terror Attacks into homes. It is also important for news broadcasters of every kind to put these events into perspective for the viewing audience.

To do that, news programs are increasingly turning to experts to help deepen viewers' understanding of unfolding events. Leaders of responding law enforcement and disaster relief agencies must realize that they can also help shape events and the responses to them by having public affairs plans in place and by practicing public relations efforts before a disaster or other major event strikes. A knowledgeable, media-savvy spokesperson can help prevent panic within the general population and create an environment in which relief and law enforcement agencies can coordinate their efforts.

Official Spokespersons

Times have certainly changed for the news business. When television news was in its infancy, a reporter in a taped or filmed piece would describe the event. Such news reports might also show clips of the event's aftermath and interviews with victims of the disaster if they were willing to talk. Once local television news stations got their "live trucks" in the 1970s, they could actually go to the scene of a major event and broadcast what was happening live to local – and sometimes national – audiences via microwave and satellite technology. It was access to these and other technologies that helped fuel the 24-hour cable news revolution.

Today, news outlets rely on their reporters and anchors to break a story, but these journalists cannot operate in a vacuum. They have to rely on several kinds of experts to get the story out and to make that story relevant to the viewing public.

Most often, the media's hunt for specialized expertise leads to an official spokesperson. The good ones and the bad ones quickly become the "face" of the disaster response effort. These people are usually employed by a government agency to help disseminate information to the public. Agencies like the local sheriff or state police, Federal Bureau of Investigation, or Federal Emergency Management Agency use spokespersons to try to provide a coherent message, which can be crucial when there is a danger to the public. The spokesperson's job is also to provide critical information when key elected officials are unavailable or unwilling to speak to the press. A good spokesperson can shape the coverage of an event as well as the message the authorities want to convey. More importantly, though, the information they impart can help save lives.

The spokesperson should never be kept in the dark by the organization's leadership. Communication within the lead organization and between all responding entities must be as frictionless as possible. Today's well-organized disaster response efforts must have a well-understood command and control structure that is actually used. Then, as an integral part of the disaster response effort, the public affairs component becomes a critical element to the overall disaster relief plan. In fact, the spokesperson must help the organization's leadership decide what and when to reveal to the public.

Analysts & Other Subject Matter Experts

So, the role of the spokesperson is critical to the disaster response effort. A different, but also important voice that is often heard during breaking news coverage is that of the subject matter expert (SME), who can come from many different backgrounds. In a hurricane, the SME might be an expert from the National Hurricane Center or a similar agency. He or she is also probably a government official, but is not directly affiliated with state or local disaster relief agencies. This type of expert provides the scientific or meteorological context to the hurricane and may even help law enforcement and disaster relief agencies, as well as the public, better prepare for the impending storm.

> ***"Keeping the different roles of the spokesperson, the unpaid subject matter expert, and paid contributor or analyst in mind helps to streamline disaster response efforts and makes agencies better able to lead the people they are charged with protecting to safety."***

Another type of SME might be a scientist or a doctor who can explain the effects of a chemical spill or a medical emergency like Ebola or the Zika virus. A university or a hospital may employ these experts, who have in-depth knowledge of the event because they have studied or experienced similar disasters. It is that kind of knowledge that can prove invaluable to the viewing public. SMEs like these usually provide their analytical findings based on the latest scientific understanding of their subject areas.

Other SMEs come from think tanks or research centers. Depending on the subject, they may or may not have a political agenda, but their job is also to provide viewers with much-needed context in a developing situation.

Most SMEs are not paid by television networks for their expertise. There are, however, some experts who are retained by the news networks as paid contributors or analysts because their type of expertise is often sought after by audiences. These people are identified by the networks and undergo a stringent vetting process. Experts in law, law enforcement, terrorism, military, and medicine are among the types of contributors and analysts the networks hire to help provide unique insights into unfolding events.

Frequently, paid contributors are former high-ranking officials who held positions for many years in their areas of expertise. As such, they can help "peel back the onion" so people can better understand what is happening. But it should always be remembered that television contributors and analysts are not official spokespersons. Although they often have sources within government agencies, they generally should not be used to promulgate official government information unless that information is clearly identified as such.

Different Media Roles for Covering Events

During an unfolding critical event, information comes from many sources. Journalists are charged with breaking a story and providing some initial context, which is often shaped by official spokespersons. Further understanding is provided by SMEs, many of whom are independent of the government agencies responding to a disaster as well as the media covering it. On the other hand, paid contributors or analysts for news organizations provide an experiential context to ongoing coverage of major disasters.

All of these experts have a vital role to play in the coverage of unfolding events. However, SMEs should generally not be relied upon to serve as conduits for official information. The "good ones" reiterate what the spokesperson has said or amplify and make understandable what the government's actions are during a disaster response. Keeping the different roles of the spokesperson, the unpaid SME, and paid contributor or analyst in mind helps to streamline disaster response efforts and makes agencies better able to lead the people they are charged with protecting to safety.

Cedric Leighton is a CNN Military Analyst and a Retired U.S. Air Force Colonel. He helped CNN cover the terrorist attacks in Paris. The views expressed in this article are his own. Before his appointment at CNN, he appeared on numerous global television and radio networks, to include the BBC, CCTV (China), Al Jazeera, ARD (German TV), Bloomberg, CNBC, Fox News Channel, Fox Business Network, MSNBC, Sky News, and TRT (Turkish TV). He has been quoted in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Le Figaro, Correo Brasiliense, La Razon, C4ISR Magazine, and ADS Advance. He has also written for several publications, including The Hill and Leadership Excellence Magazine. A veteran of 26 years as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Air Force, he supported key combat operations in the Middle East and at U.S. Special Operations Command, witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall, and served on the Air Staff and the Joint Staff at the Pentagon. His awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Bronze Star, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, seven Meritorious Service Medals, and the Humanitarian Service Medal. He was a distinguished graduate of the U.S. Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps. He graduated magna cum laude from Cornell University and holds a master's degree in International Studies from Angelo State University.

Saving Lives With Hashtags & Geolocation

By Emily Allen

Devastating incidents have occurred as long as humans have been on Earth. However, the way in which people respond to them has changed dramatically with the introduction of modern technology. Cries for help may be hidden in hashtags and geolocation, so filtering social media can be critical for response efforts.

A devastating tornado affects a community and its surrounding areas. While the disaster unfolds, people start sharing information, showing pictures, and streaming videos of the incident on social media. With information rapidly appearing, many posts describe the scene before first responders arrive. The disaster is already the number one nationwide trending topic as response efforts are just getting underway.

The Problem: Identifying Incident-Specific Posts

During a disaster, it is difficult to filter social media and organize the vast information, especially considering that anyone can have a social media account and can post anything at any time, even false or irrelevant information about a disaster. According to a 2014 infographic, people post on social media when they need help and often expect that help to arrive within 60 minutes after the post is sent. As such, filtering the abundant social media and focusing on the location of a post is a necessary process during a disaster.

> ***"According to a 2014 infographic, people post on social media when they need help and often expect that help to arrive within 60 minutes after the post is sent."***

In order to formulate a common operating picture, emergency managers should use filters to find posts relevant to the incident. Social media posts filtered by hashtags alone are gathered from around the world, but those filtered by location dismiss irrelevant posts that are not incident specific. In order to create a common operating picture and provide accurate situational awareness, social media posts should be filtered by both location and hashtags.

The Solution: Geolocation & Filtering Tools

Some geolocation tools are built into common social media platforms. For example, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow users to activate their mobile location and, once the users post on social media, their location can be viewed. Various social media filtering tools currently exist or are being created to assist in the geolocation process for disaster incidents. These social media management or monitoring tools can be used to filter social

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media within specific geographic areas and topics by gathering data from users who have activated their mobile location; however, not everyone takes the extra step to post location. Such tools help users to organize and filter data based on hashtags, keywords, and geolocation coordinates. Some platforms require users to research and find coordinates for a location in order to find related social media posts. Other platforms have users click and draw around an area on a map and, as a result, the user can see all the social media posts at the scene of an incident.

Photographs that accompany many social media posts also should be verified. Some tools allow users to search an image to determine where that image has been shared previously. This helps the user to identify whether the image is an original picture of the incident or a false representation. If a photograph has been altered, the image search can help the user locate the original picture and its related content.

Live streaming coverage platforms – such as Periscope and Facebook Live – make video streaming from almost anywhere possible using mobile phones. Emergency management teams can leverage this information to see what is happening live at the scene, which assists in decision making during a disaster. Additionally, this provides first responders with information regarding the location of individuals in relation to the disaster area.

Understanding how to filter by location and, at the same time, filter by hashtags and keywords assists in creating a common operating picture. Using tools to verify images found in posts increases the quality of situational awareness. Collecting live streaming information provides emergency management staff with real-time coverage that may not be highlighted by traditional media. Social media outlets have become essential tools for emergency personnel and can be used in many ways to enhance the response to a disaster area.

Emily Allen is the digital engagement coordinator at the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). She creates and updates social media content, graphic, audio, and visual designs, and develops outreach campaigns found in MEMA's social media accounts. She also produces and edits videos for the agency. Before joining MEMA, she served as communication specialist for the City of Platteville, Wisconsin. She also worked for the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) as social media producer/broadcasting coordinator for the Minnesota Timberwolves and Lynx in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She graduated in 2010 from Loras College with a degree in media studies.

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Helping Children & Youths Cope With Disaster Media Coverage

By Jennifer First & J. Brian Houston

In Missouri, researchers are helping adults learn how children and youths perceive disaster media coverage in order to better cope with the abundance of information and images that surround them following a significant incident. Coping strategies and resources addressing media coverage must be tailored to the individual needs and developmental level of each child or youth.

Media outlets serve important roles before, during, and after natural or human-caused disasters – such as tornados, hurricanes, terrorist attacks, and mass shootings – by providing disaster warnings (when available), describing what is happening during the event, and keeping the public informed about response and recovery efforts. However, viewing disaster media coverage may also have a negative impact on individuals, especially children and youths. Moreover, a disaster covered in the media does not have to occur close to child's home to be upsetting for the young person. Media coverage of major disasters like the Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting, the 2011 Joplin tornado, or the 9/11 terrorist attacks can upset children and youths residing far from the events.

For example, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma reported in a national survey that children who watched extensive media coverage of the attacks were reported to have more stress symptoms than those who watched less coverage. Additional studies have also confirmed that children's exposure to media coverage of disasters can disrupt their mental and behavioral health, and can impede students' abilities to concentrate and learn in classroom settings. Commonly reported negative effects from exposure to disaster media coverage include: anger, fear, worry, sadness, difficulty concentrating, increased attachment to caregivers, and sleep difficulties.

Media Exposure & Coping Strategies

Children and youths may be exposed to disaster media coverage through a variety of different media formats. Although television and online sources may be the most common, children and youths may also hear about disasters on the radio or read about disasters in newspapers or magazines. Therefore, adults should consider children's exposure to disaster media coverage from all media sources (see Table 1).

Though the details of disasters may be different, in general, the news media often depict the most sensational aspects (e.g., death, injury, destruction) and frequently include emotion-

Table 1. Disaster Media Sources

Traditional Media	New Media	Social Media
Television stations and news programs Newspapers Magazines Radio stations and news programs	Websites for traditional media Online only news and media websites: Huffington Post, Politico, Buzzfeed Blogs Podcasts	Social network platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Snapchat, Google+, Reddit Video platforms: YouTube, Vine Photo sites: Instragram, Flickr

stirring images and videos (e.g., burning buildings, overturned cars, destroyed structures). Children or youths' understanding of disaster media coverage may vary depending on their developmental levels and maturity. Disaster media coverage may be more frightening for younger children who may not understand what is happening. For example, preschoolers may not comprehend that replays of a burning building on television are actually videos of a single burning building shown repeatedly, and they may instead interpret the videos to be different or numerous buildings on fire.

Elementary-age children may also have difficulty understanding where disasters are taking place (i.e., how close the disaster is to their homes) and may overestimate the threat of the events to themselves and their family. After watching media coverage of a tornado that occurs in a different state than the state in which a child lives, for instance, an elementary-age child might fear that the same tornado will affect him or her personally, or affect his or her family or friends. Disaster media coverage may also affect adolescents. Older youths may have a better understanding of the events and can, in turn, become concerned with fairness and justice related to the events.

Sometimes disasters and related media coverage occur when children and youths are at school. Thus, schools should develop policies addressing whether students are allowed to view media coverage of these events while at school. Likewise, it is important for parents and adults who work with children (e.g., teachers, childcare professionals) to be informed about the impacts of disaster media coverage and to be equipped with strategies to help children and youths cope. Following are a few key strategies and resources for helping children and youths cope with media coverage of disasters:

- *Listen to concerns* – It is important to listen to the concerns of children and youths. Avoid lecturing or burdening young people with information, and instead allow their concerns to lead and guide the direction and depth of the conversations. Then try to determine the sources of fear or anxiety (if any), validate their feelings, and emphasize safety.
- *Assist in understanding what has happened* – If there are any misconceptions about the disaster, answer basic questions with age-appropriate information. Discuss the nature of the media and news coverage and explain how disaster media coverage tends to focus on the most sensational aspects of a disaster and then shows those parts over and over. Avoid blaming an entire group of people for the actions of a single person or a group of individuals (e.g., religious or ethnic groups, individuals with mental illness).
- *Foster healthy coping skills* – Reinforce healthy coping skills that children or youths may already be using or may want to use. For example, volunteering to help disaster victims and helping in the local community are ways that children and youths can regain a sense of control. Adults can also remind children that there are lots of good things happening in the world that may not be covered in the news, and that there are many good people trying to help others affected by the disaster (e.g., first responders, medical, volunteers).

Resources for Adults & Children

The Disaster and Community Crisis Center (DCC) has created resources designed to reduce distress related to disaster media coverage by fostering adaptive functioning in children and youths. These resources include:

- *Disaster Media Intervention (DMI): Helping Students Cope With Disaster Media Coverage – A Guide for Teachers and School Staff*: The Disaster Media Intervention (DMI) is designed to help students cope with disaster media coverage. DMI equips teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators, and other school staff to facilitate conversations with students about disaster media coverage, whether the events occur locally or far away.

- *Helping Youth Cope With Media Coverage of Disaster: A Fact Sheet and Video for Parents*: This fact sheet and video provide an overview of how disaster media coverage may affect children, and suggest strategies that parents can use to address these effects.
- *Helping Youth Cope With Media Coverage of Disaster: A Fact Sheet and Video for Teachers*: This fact sheet and video provide an overview of how media coverage of disasters may affect students and suggest strategies that teachers and school staff can use to help students cope with disaster media coverage.

"Preschoolers may not comprehend that replays of a burning building on television are actually videos of a single burning building shown repeatedly, and they may instead interpret the videos to be different or numerous buildings on fire."

- *Building Resilience With Hunter and Eve*: This animated series features a young fox (Hunter) and owl (Eve) who together learn how to be resilient and cope with challenges. Each episode of this series focuses on one important skill – for example, staying safe, keeping calm, solving problems – and provides clear steps toward achieving the skill. Child and youth worksheets are available for each episode in the series. The worksheets include activities that reinforce the steps presented in each video. Discussion starters are also provided, which provide questions for children and youths to think and talk about before and after watching each episode. Discussion starters can be used by parents, teachers, or school staff with individual children or with groups.

In summary, disaster media coverage may negatively affect children and youths, thus it is important for adults to be equipped to respond and help them cope.

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Active Shooters & Public Access Bleeding Control Kits

By Team You Can Act

Harvard's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI) plays a key role in bringing together thought leaders and professionals to address complex challenges and enhance the nation's preparedness efforts. One NPLI meta-leadership project contributed to a new nationwide campaign that empowers bystanders to act and potentially save lives when someone is critically injured by an active shooter.

In January 2016, Birch Barron, senior policy analyst with the University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security, introduced DomPrep readers to a vital new tool in active shooter survival: the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed Initiative. Team You Can Act is a group of alums from Cohort XIII of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative that played (and continues to play) a roll in Stop the Bleed, including conducting a September 2015 pilot test of a public access bleeding control program that was featured in the White House's announcement of the new initiative. That pilot study allowed for the groundtruthing of different aspects of such a program, and the final report serves as a good kickoff point for any organization considering improving survivability in public spaces through the adoption of public access bleeding control principles.

Many unknowns exist when it comes to the active shooter problem. For instance, there is no standard profile for an active shooter. However, among the knowns are the facts that some of these incidents can be prevented and can be survived. Prevention is complex, and involves the use of: threat assessment; intelligence management; coordination with local law enforcement and fusion centers; use of workplace violence assessment teams and behavioral intervention teams; physical security; employee screening; and good human resources policies. Survivability requires adoption of proactive policies, such as Run. Hide. Fight® or ALICE (Alert-Lockdown-Inform-Counter-Evacuate), and making hemorrhage control a real option for people "in the scene."

As part of Harvard's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI), the team coalesced in April 2015 around the belief that a practical hemorrhage control strategy would involve the development and deployment of public access bleeding control kits in public areas. Richard Serino, former deputy administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and current NPLI distinguished fellow, overheard the group's initial discussions regarding how the team would implement its ideas as an NPLI initiative. He approached the group and said, "When they ask you who your faculty advisor is, it's me!" Serino was already involved in early discussions regarding what would eventually become the Stop the Bleed Initiative. He stated that the team's idea of a simple, but well-researched, implementation strategy would serve to advance the nationwide plan, and he immediately put the team members in contact with the leadership of the healthcare and government coalitions behind Stop the Bleed.

The subsequent research was conducted in close consultation with representatives of the Hartford Consensus and the White House's Stop the Bleed working group, but the team was hesitant to conduct its pilot study before the White House's October 2015 national announcement of the Stop the Bleed program. However, in July 2015, the working group asked the NPLI team to proceed with its pilot *before* the initial rollout of the national program. That allowed for discussion of the test in the October forum, and an initiative rollout that already included some successful implementation.

From left to right: James Mynatt, Eric DiNoto, Stacy Peerbolte, John Snider, Richard Serino, Stephen Ahern, and Steve Maloney.

The pilot test was implemented three weeks before the White House's rollout of the Stop the Bleed program, and involved the deployment of a bleeding control station during a full-scale active shooter exercise at Charlotte Douglas International Airport. Some of the lessons learned are as follows:

- Bleeding control kits may be placed in existing automated external defibrillator (AED) cabinets. The biggest cost would be new signage.
- The contents of the kits should be determined through consultation with appropriate medical directors.
- Web-based guidance, reached via a smart phone, may be an effective just-in-time training technique.

Active shooter preparedness research continues to be very active. Based on recent research, the team is already leaning toward recommending additional items, such as occlusive dressings being included as part of the standard contents in any public access bleeding control kit. For additional information, please refer to the paper or contact one of the team members.

Team You Can Act is the NPLI Cohort XIII group whose goal is to develop tools for the public that can bring some of them out of the metaphorical "basement" during an active shooter incident. The team focuses primarily on research and development involving empowering the public to control severe bleeding, concepts inspired by existing public access Automated External Defibrillator (AED) programs. The following team members contributed to this article: Stephen Ahern, deputy superintendent at the Cambridge Police Department; Eric DiNoto, director of the National Guard's Homeland Security Institute; Steve Maloney, preparedness and response specialist at the Federal Reserve Board; James Mynatt, airport operations manager at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport; Dr. Stacy Peerbolte, assistant director for preparedness and response at the U.S. Department of the Interior; and John Snider, deputy chief of the Arlington County Fire Department.

Strategies for Public Information in Times of Crisis

By Anthony S. Mangeri

Providing information to the public in times of crisis is so critical to disaster operations that it is included as one of the five major components of the National Incident Management System. Mass media is one of many tools available to help public information officers disseminate essential information and convey risks to the public before, during, and after a disaster.

It is no longer enough to simply hold press conferences and issue press releases. PIOs must also be able to collect, assess, and share verified information with the public and the media via press briefings, website management, and social media coordination. As such, PIOs must develop procedures and protocols for the release of warnings, incident notifications, public communications, and other critical information through a defined combination of networks used by the emergency operations center.

Reaching the Entire Community

Notifications to all stakeholders in the community, to nongovernmental organizations, and to the private sector are made through defined mechanisms specified in emergency operations and incident action plans. Such planning includes how various agencies would work together to manage information flow and to coordinate PIO roles for each key stakeholder, with each stakeholder signing the plans to ensure agreement for future cooperation. Like emergency operations, planning for the effective management and dissemination of information begins long before an incident or event occurs.

> ***"In order for emergency management agencies to coordinate with media outlets, they must be able to: share and distribute accurate and validated information in a timely manner; understand news media objectives; and develop mutually beneficial working relationships before and during any incident."***

In times of crisis, PIOs need to create strategic plans to collect, verify, and disseminate information to the community to warn the public of the crisis and to direct evacuation and other protective measures. Before any incident, there is a role for the PIO to assist with outreach activities such as programs designed to educate the public about local threats and hazards, and potential mitigation techniques. In addition, a PIO could develop outreach materials that promote family or business preparedness and mitigation strategies that are targeted to the community based on the community makeup to include various cultures and languages, and to aid people with special needs.

The PIO must be sure to maintain the capability to communicate valuable information about evacuation, sheltering, and other important disaster response and recovery information to the entire community, including individuals with special needs. Individuals with special needs include those with cognitive and functional needs, as well as language barriers. PIOs should have materials translated into languages commonly found within the community. Preparedness information as well as information released to the community should be provided in multiple formats such as braille and large print.

Organization & Training

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers general information and guidance for PIOs. Anyone that has responsibility for the collection, verification, and dissemination of information should review FEMA's Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (FEMA-517, 2007).

The FEMA-517 guidance document provides a suggested organizational structure for the PIO staff involved in a large-scale incident. Figure 1 identifies the essential elements for managing and distributing information in times of crisis. The recommended structure identifies the four functions of information gathering, information dissemination, operations support, and liaison activities. While Figure 1 is for large-scale incidents, Figure 2 is identified as more likely in an initial response.

The most important takeaway from these recommended organizational charts is that one person serving as the PIO is not sufficient for managing media and public requests for information. The demand for verified information requires the PIO to have a strategic plan

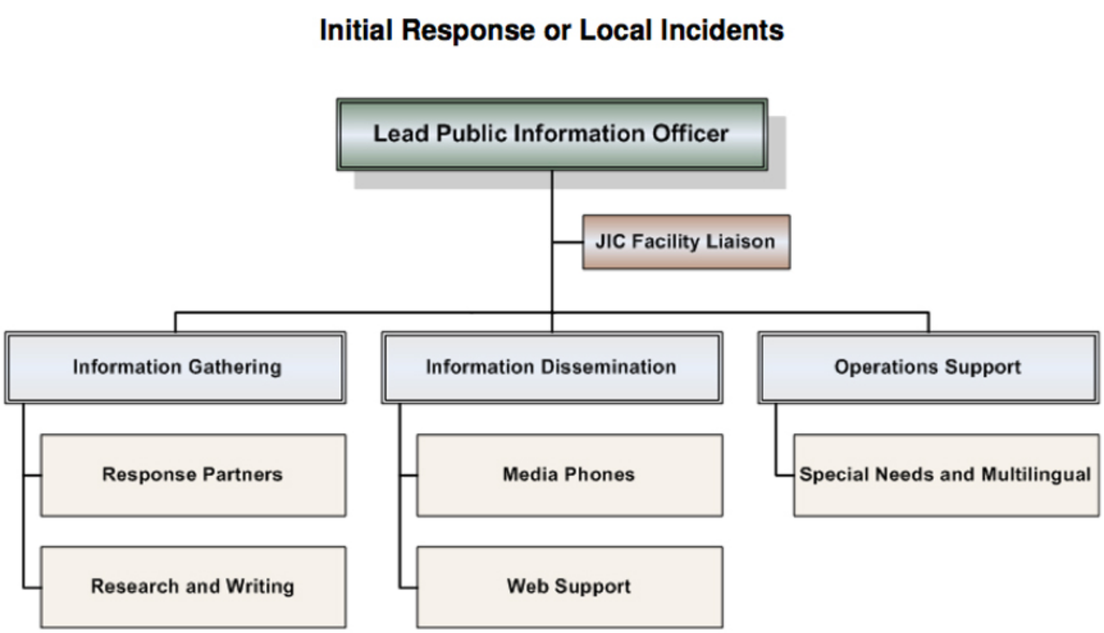

Figure 1. Sample Joint Information Center (JIC) Organizations and Functions for Large-Scale Incidents (*Source:* FEMA-517, 2007).

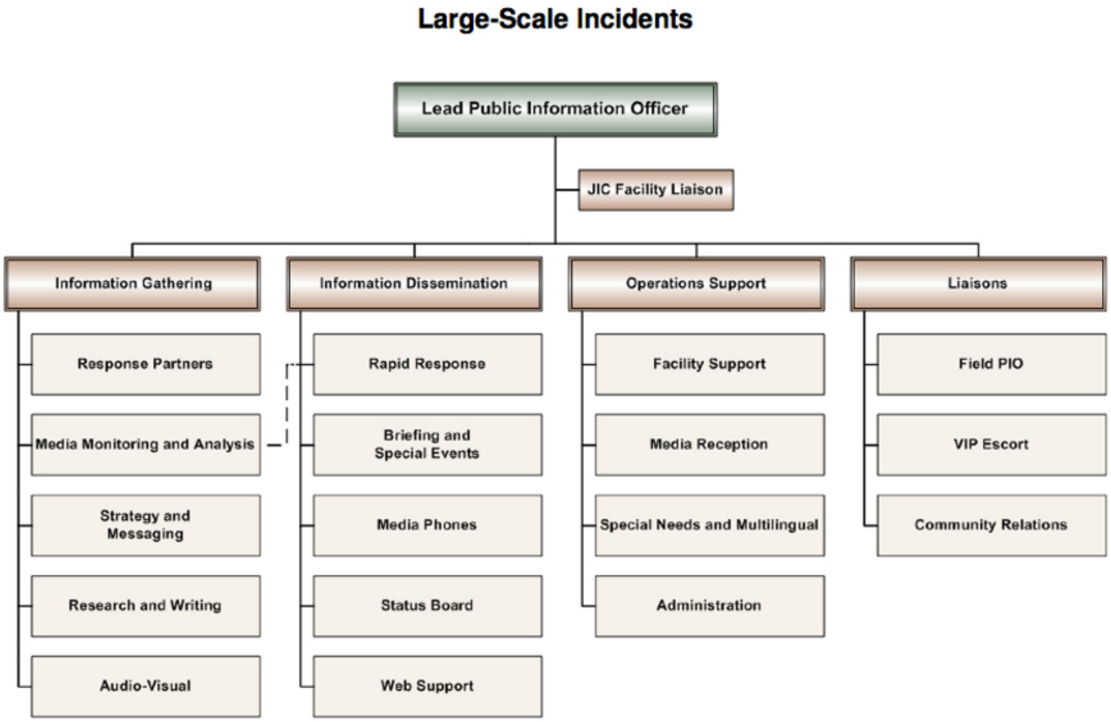

Figure 2. Sample Joint Information Center (JIC) Organizations and Functions for Initial response (*Source:* FEMA-517, 2007).

and an adequate staffing level to manage such requests to ensure that all involved have a common operating picture and understand expectations during an incident. In other words, everyone should have the same information about the incident so that all stakeholders – public and private – can make informed decisions based on the community's needs and available resources.

In addition to a thorough knowledge of communications principals, FEMA recommends that all PIOs complete Incident Command System training at the 100, 200, and 300 levels. PIOs and their teams should also be versed in the National Incident Management System, which is offered by FEMA (IS-700A) for those needing to learn the basics of this national standard. All these courses are found online via the Emergency Management Institute.

Establishing Media Contacts

The PIO's role is to coordinate with the on-scene commander and the emergency manager to gather and verify information. The PIO should send the first press release within the first hour of the incident, thus providing needed information for the public to understand the threat, the size, and the scope of the incident, as well as general information on actions being taken.

In order for emergency management agencies to coordinate with media outlets, they must be able to: share and distribute accurate and validated information in a timely manner;

understand news media objectives; and develop mutually beneficial working relationships before and during any incident. By collaborating with mass media, PIOs can create strategy plans to manage media and community information needs before incidents to help provide guidance on preparedness, create risk-reduction strategies, and secure the reputation of the emergency management organization.

Building a working relationship with local media proves helpful in times of crisis. Emergency management offices may wish to have a workshop for local mass media to provide general information on emergency management principals and concepts. This provides the PIO an opportunity to answer questions about how information should be disseminated during an incident or planned event. This also helps reporters to understand the background information necessary for accurate reporting and to have an understanding of roles and responsibilities during an incident response.

However, not all reporters are found in mass media. Today's Internet has provided opportunities for many to become bloggers, either for fun or profit. PIO staff now needs to work with bloggers that focus on community issues and events. It is the job of the PIO to keep media and the community aware of preparedness/awareness campaigns, projects, and initiatives. It is best not to wait for a crisis to meet local reporters for the first time.

The PIO is a valuable part of a community's emergency management team. The information provided by the PIO sets the tone of the response and recovery story and may provide critical information to save lives and protect those in harm's way.

Anthony S. Mangeri, MPA, CPM, CEM, is the director of strategic relations for fire services and emergency management and is on the faculty of the American Public University System. He has more than 30 years of experience in emergency management and public safety. During the terrorist attacks of 9/11, he served as operations chief at the New Jersey Emergency Operations Center, coordinating that state's response to the passenger-aircraft crashes into the World Trade Center. He has been a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician for more than 25 years. He earned the rank of assistant chief-safety officer, serving as the fire department's health and safety officer for three years. He earned a Master of Public Administration from Rutgers University and is a Certified Public Manager. He also sits on the ASIS Fire & Life Safety Council. In addition, he has completed a Fellowship in Public Health Leadership Initiative for Emergency Response sponsored by the Center for Public Health Preparedness.