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SOCIAL MEDIA & SPACE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE DISASTER CYCLE - HELP OR HINDRANCE?

Abstract

Social media is a new vehicle for interactive communication and user-generated content using an array of web- and mobile-based tools. As a result, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are widely used around the world for entertainment but there is growing interest in using them during and following natural or man-made disasters. Due to their ease of use and simplicity, social media platforms can provide efficient delivery of information that can give better situational awareness for emergency response.

Unfortunately, this great amount of information can sometimes be useless or even dangerous, since its reliability is often unclear and any uncertainties can result in chaos. Research is therefore needed on the technological, regulatory, and reliability aspects of social media use in emergency situations. This paper will present an overview of the use of social media during recent disaster events in an attempt to better understand the benefits and inherent risks. The use, or potential use, of crowd-sourcing to provide in-situ information for the validation of space-borne or aerial data will be investigated. Finally, technological and policy improvements that may be necessary to further incorporate social media into the disaster management cycle will be addressed.