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AESOP: Guidelines for effective communication between Critical infrastructure operators and the public during crisis situations

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IMPROVER Workshop
11th-12th May 2017, Ispra (IT)

Project overview

Sheffield and EMSC identify best practices for communication between critical infrastructure operators and the public during crisis situations;

Review of the literature on the use of traditional media and social media in emergency management and lessons learnt from 2 cases studies (floods in Portugal, Paris terrorist attacks)

Critical thematic analysis of 31 interviews with key stakeholders (e.g. community leaders, CI operators, journalists).

AESOP: Guidelines for effective communication between CIOs and members of the public

1. Analyse the information-seeking behaviour of local populations before deciding which media channels to deploy during disasters;
2. Engage key stakeholders in order to ensure message consistency across traditional and social media platforms;
3. Social media should be used to provide real-time updates to citizens about efforts to restore services;
4. Observe and adhere to context-specific regulatory frameworks for emergency management and resilience;
5. Post-disasters learning should be employed in order to aid future communication strategies.

Analyse the information-seeking behaviour of local populations before deciding which media channels to deploy during disasters

- CIOs should collect and analyse data about traditional and social media use at local, regional and national levels;
- CIOs should identify the communication channels that your target audience is able to access;
- CIOs should identify the platforms (traditional and social media) that your target audience uses on a regular basis;
- CIOs should review current communication strategies and information seeking behaviours of your audience on annual basis in order to meet changes and technological advancements.

Engage key stakeholders in order to ensure message consistency across traditional and social media platforms

- CIOs should engage with the emergency management organisations in your respective area;
- CIOs should engage with professional journalists and media channels to ensure consistency in information sharing;

Social media should be used to provide real-time updates to citizens about efforts to restore services

- CIOs should use social media to provide real-time updates to citizen about when services will be fully restored;
- CIOs should share content produced by emergency management organisations during crisis situations;
- CIOs should respond to queries via social media in a timely fashion (but not necessarily immediately) in order to build relationships with local communities;
- CIOs should redirect the communication toward emergency management organisations.

Observe and adhere to context-specific regulatory frameworks for emergency management and resilience

- CIOs should ensure that information provided during crisis situations is compliant with national frameworks governing emergency management organisations;
- CIOs should refer members of the public to appropriate agencies during disasters e.g. online and offline requests for assistance should be shared with police, fire and rescue services, and legal teams as appropriate;
- CIOs should ensure that information provided adhere to cybersecurity regulations.

Post-disaster learning should be employed in order to aid future communication strategies

- CIOs should create platforms and/or channels of communication where the public can provide a feedback about their services before, during and after a major incident;
- CIOs communication team should meet regularly to review existing protocols;
- CIOs should review lessons learnt from major incidents in conjunction with other operators and emergency management organisations.



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Thank you!

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