

Using Social Media in Multi-Agency/Full-Scale Exercises

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Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Objective**

Discuss the use of social media as a tool during the full-scale exercise Tremor-14 in Las Vegas, and to examine Lessons Learned as a path forward in using social media to disseminate Emergency Public Information (EPI) on a regular basis.



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- One Year Ago

Boston Marathon Bombing

Discussion at EMI-SIG in Chicago focused heavily on the role of social media in EPI.



Twitter was used not only for information – Boston Police used it as a tool to gather leads and track down suspects.



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Background**

June 2013- DOE participates in Active Shooter exercise with North Las Vegas Police

- First use of Initial Response Team for Emergency Public Information
- First use of mobile JIC response resources to interface with offsite agency
- Mock media elements facilitated using media liaison at Incident Command



All of these resulted in information gaps



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- **Issues**

- NLV PIO using Twitter to send messages from phone applications
- City and County using Twitter on WebEOC communicating information about joint resources
- City PIO emergency information process leans strongly on social media channels for notification
- Other NNSA issues (i.e. Y-12 nun incident) fueled social media rumors/not enough NNSA trained social media monitors to respond



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Solutions**

Incorporate social media into all aspects of EPI process.

- **Concerns**

- How do you disseminate quick, timely social media messages while ensuring appropriate reviews (Classification, Senior Federal Officials, etc.)
- How do you include NNSA HQ with no existing policy regarding coordination of social media messaging?
- Do you have the means to conduct social media adequately?



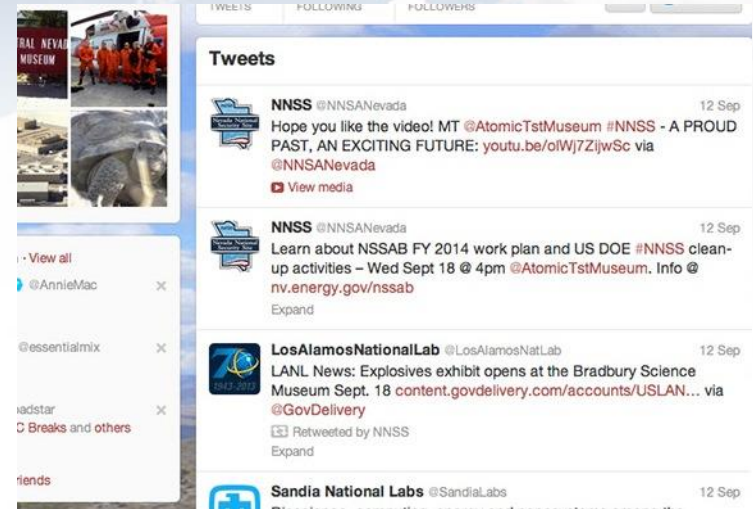
Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Existing**

NNSS already maintains Twitter/Facebook pages for social media

- 186 Twitter followers
- 1,613 Facebook “likes”

Can this provide means to communicate EPI during emergencies?



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **News Stations**

Most major news outlets have their own Twitter and Facebook pages.



How do you bridge the gap?



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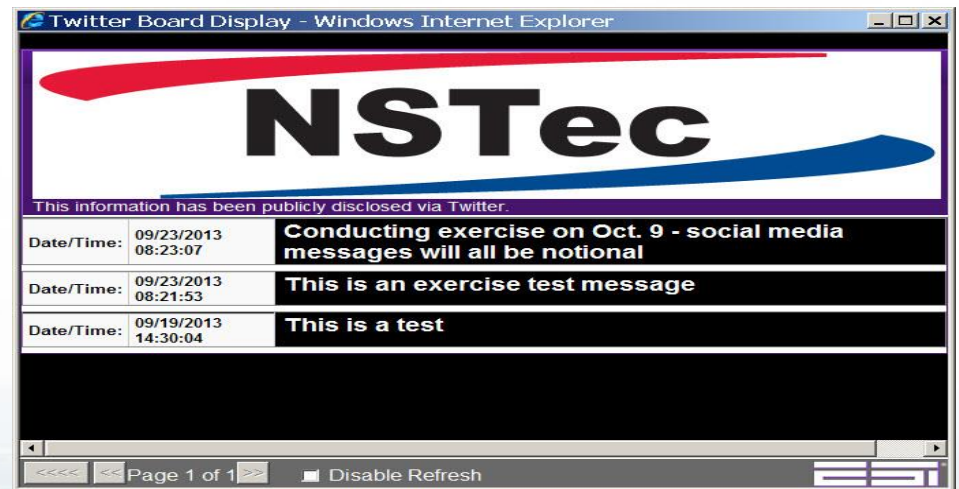
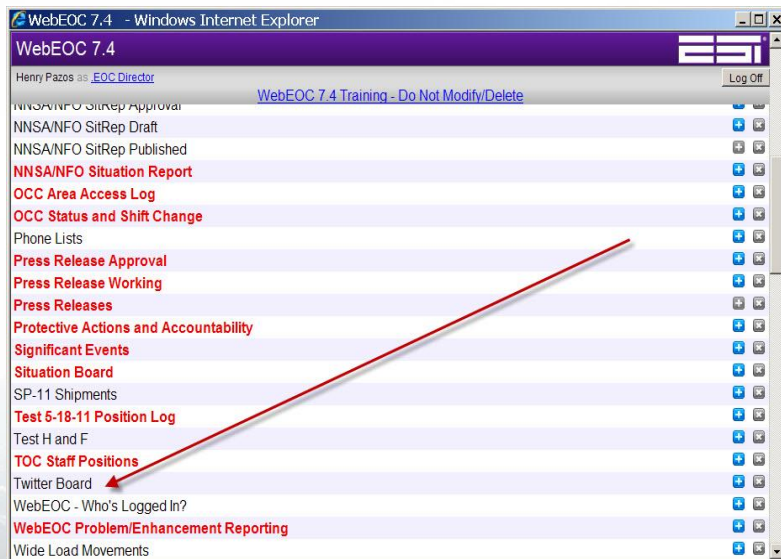
- **Introduce Social Media Writer in EOC**
 - Answers question of “timely”
 - Works with PAO to gather information in real-time as it comes from the field
 - Writes Tweets and other messages and coordinates approval with proper channels (Classification, EM)
 - Works with Media Monitors in the JIC to ensure responses to specific queries.



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Refine Information Process**

- Introduce “Twitter” board on WebEOC to assist with screening of messages before dissemination.



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- **Refine Information Process**

- Use verbal notices and WebEOC chat function to get approval/coordination with Classification and the JIC.

- During actual events, WebEOC is connected to outside Twitter page for immediate release upon approval.



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- **Reconfigure JIC to Support Social Media**



- Add more social media monitoring positions
- De-emphasize use of press releases
- Train news writers to coordinate messaging thru social media channels

- Trained social media monitors to be more adept in tracking and trending messages

- Give monitors authority to re-tweet approved information to correct inaccuracies.



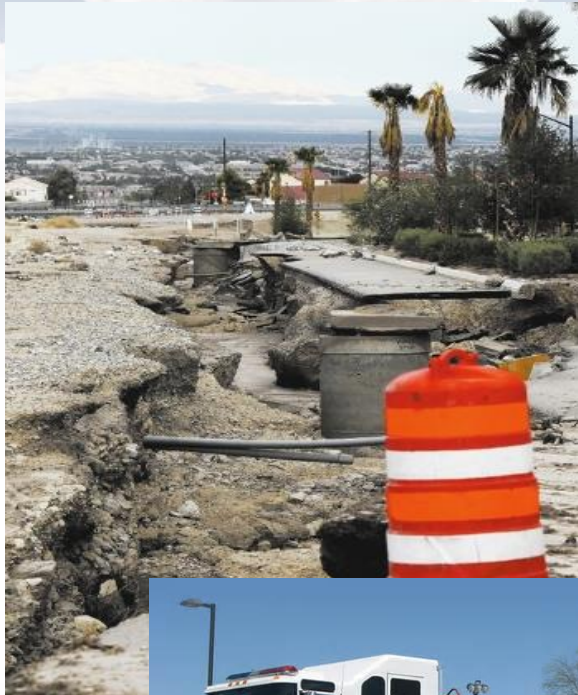
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- **Real-Life Scenario**

Recent flooding in Las Vegas

- Public Affairs IRT issues public and employee notifications regarding road/site closures
- Messages are distributed via phone call out, e-mail and social media.

But how do you practice?



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Exercises/Offsite Coordination**

Several times a year, the NNSS conducts Site and facility exercises, routinely involving offsite agencies that already use Twitter on a regular basis.

How can we exercise our EPI in a way that allows for adequate coordination of social media resources?



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Tremor-14 (April 23, 2014)**

NNSS-coordinated FSE involving multiple agencies to demonstrate the Emergency Response Organization's ability to mitigate a natural disaster.



More than 44 agencies involved:

- Clark County, Nye County, City of Las Vegas, State of Nevada, Las Vegas Fire/Rescue, Creech Air Force Base



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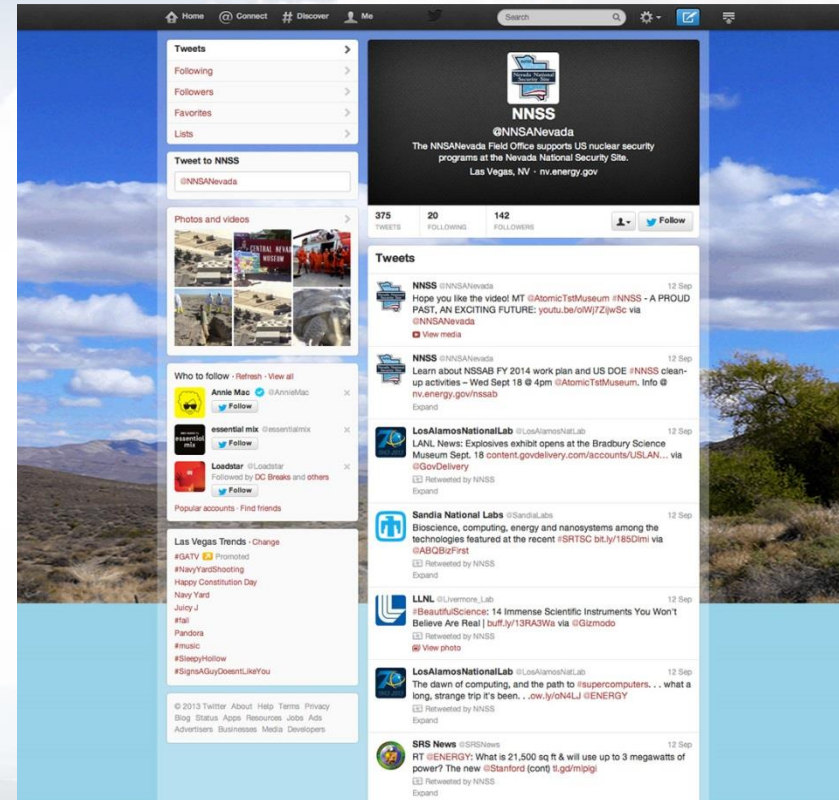
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- **Social Media – EPI**

Participating agencies

- Argonne National Lab
- Clark County
- City of Las Vegas
- North Las Vegas
- Nye County
- Centennial Hills Hospital



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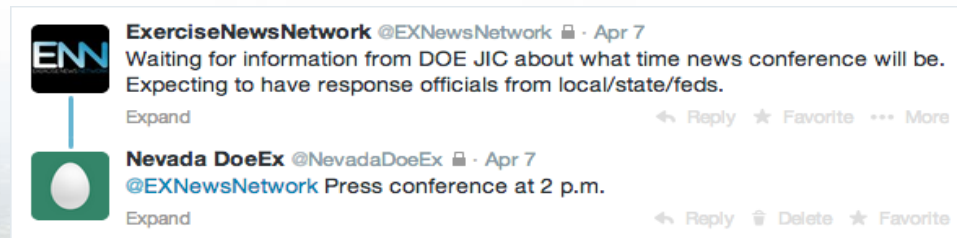
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- **Offsite Coordination**

Argonne creates bogus Twitter and Facebook pages

- Tightly controlled by placing filters on each page
- Only “Like” or “Friend” those playing in exercise
- Offsites also must use bogus logins or pages
- Mock media/public accounts used to generate SimCell

responses



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Exercise Play**

- Social media players in SimCell use scripted injects/real-time injects based on exercise play
- EOC writer uses hashtag #NNSSEVENT to specify “official” information
- Field “reporters” generate additional social media
- Observer accounts set up for non-players



Sally Simcell

April 10 at 9:22am · 🌐

Angela Bennett: Just heard that Oak Mtn Elem/Middle school students are evacuating and being relocated due to a serious automobile accident on Highway 119 just north of Oak Mountain Elementary School. All Oak Mountain Elementary and Oak Mountain Middle school students and staff are being relocated to other Oak Mountain schools.



Like · Comment · Share



Write a comment...



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **JIC Coordination**

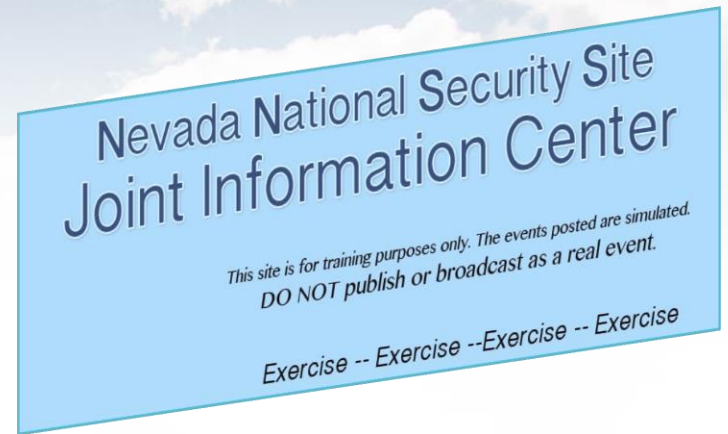
- Messaging coordinated through NNSS JIC
- City of Las Vegas, Nye County, Centennial Hills monitor/respond via e-mail and phone
- Clark County PIOs on-hand in JIC for more direct coordination



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Preliminary Challenges**

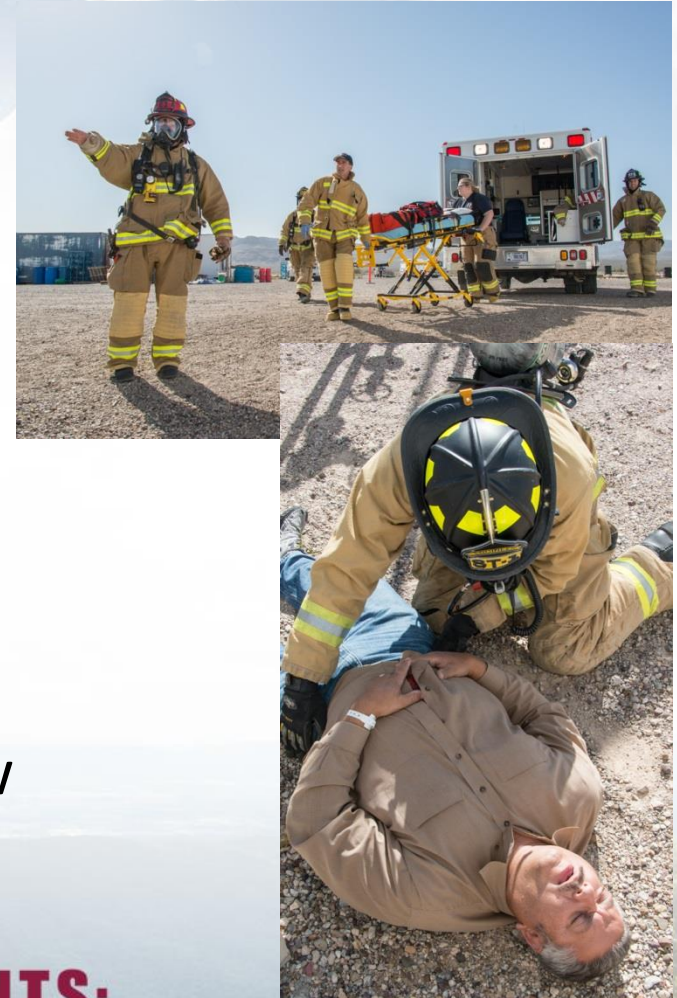
- Ensure ONLY exercise players get access
- Ensuring players understand social media sources and site limitations
- Additional training to ensure EOC social media writer and JIC news writers can work together
- Classification approval during busy exercise play.



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Results**

- Exercise considered major success; social media flow was timely, fairly accurate
- JIC staff more than adequately tracked information and reported inaccuracies
- EOC Writer/JIC writer together efficiently controlled information flow
- Mock media appreciated feeling of responsiveness

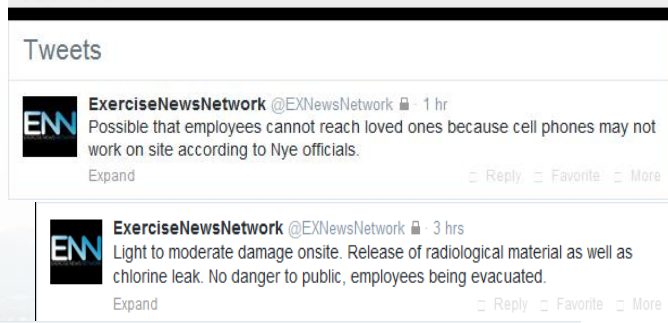
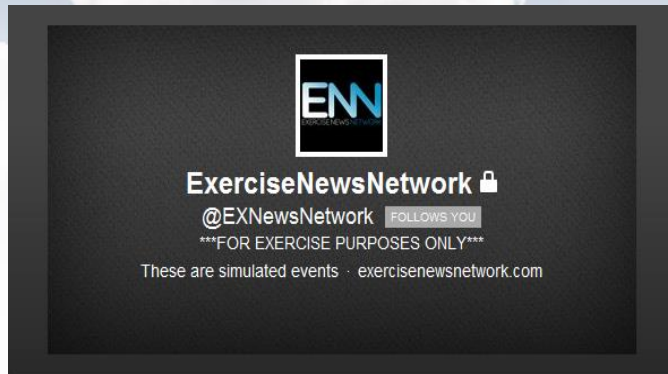


Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Lessons Learned**

- JIC staff did not “hide” behind social media, using it as reason not to interact; but, there were instances when the JIC did not appear to have the most current information...

ie. Government coordinator routinely had timelier and more accurate information than phone teams



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- **Lessons Learned**

- Without using press releases, method for compiling news items slightly more complicated
- News writers continuously updated current information but even with social media, the news was “old” almost as soon as the phone teams receive it
- Must find a better way to get immediate information updates to the media/public inquiry teams



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Lessons Learned**

- Questions about “quality” vs. “quantity”
- JIC must continuously assess usefulness and understandability of messages; not just volume
- Twitter used more than Facebook – JIC Managers should think about strengths and weaknesses of each application and develop a strategy for posting



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Lessons Learned**

- Offsite agencies felt Twitter coordination across agencies fueled additional responses
- Some locations had lost phones, computers (simulated) during earthquake – how do you Tweet?
- As exercise wore on, social media coordination got tired; third party “Tweeting” resulted in errors

Must ensure only one or two writers have access



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **Conclusion**

Social media is not only a viable way to disseminate EPI, current media and public demands require it

- With some extra planning, social media can be exercised in a safe and productive manner
- Coordination with other agencies who use social media ensures NNSA sites are prepared
- Each Site's needs may be different, but the end results will be the same...



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- Social Media Aids in Getting the Most Current Information Out in the Most Timely Way Possible
- Social Media Allows for Quick Correction of Inaccuracies and Misinformation
- Social Media Can Assist with Operational Issues
- **Social Media is HERE and NOW!**



Social Media in Full-Scale Exercises

- **For More Information**

Contact Jeff Donaldson, NSTec Emergency Public Information Coordinator at 702-295-3348 or donaldjw@nv.doe.gov.



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