



“SITE SEEING” IN VIRTUAL SOCIAL SPACE: USES OF POSTS IN TIMES OF DISASTER

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ABSTRACT – The recurring global natural and environmental disasters that the entire world is experiencing have alarmed and prompted various sectors to take this matter seriously. Various sectors have revisited the traditional media channels of mass communication wherein content was generated from a central source and disseminated through different channels for people’s use and consumption. In recent years, social media and video sharing sites and other Web 2.0 platforms paved the way for more collaboration and interaction by allowing people to contribute and interact instead of just passively viewing news and content. This paper examined how the virtual social space, specifically Facebook and Twitter, were used during a week-long flooding in the various parts of the Philippines caused by Southwest Monsoon. An online archival analysis was done to understand its uses in times of disaster. Results revealed the following themes: for news and situation updates; for community support and assistance; for policy clarifications and environmental awareness; for uploading of photos and videos; venue for Filipino humor and character; and for product and services promotion. What used to be a medium for socialization has become a venue for people to share stories; experiences, news update, and provide essential information to those who are affected by natural disasters. The social networking sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, now serve as sites for people to participate on issues about natural disasters.

Keywords: social media, disaster, southwest monsoon



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