Commanding Influence: Social Media Command Centers Create Influence and Trust in a Crisis Situation

Karen Freberg
Assistant Professor, University of Louisville
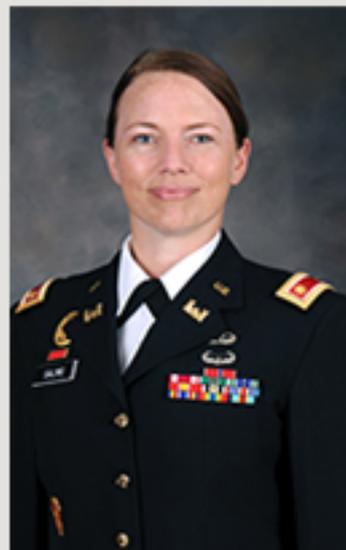
Kristin Saling
Assistant Professor, United States Military Academy

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COMMANDING INFLUENCE:
SOCIAL MEDIA COMMAND CENTERS CREATE INFLUENCE AND TRUST IN A CRISIS SITUATION

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Researchers

- **Major Kristin Saling, M.S.**
  - Department of Systems Engineering
  - United States Military Academy
    - @kcsaling
- **Karen Freberg, Ph.D.**
  - Department of Communication
  - University of Louisville
    - @kfreberg

Introduction

- The integration of crisis communication practices with social media is one of the fastest growing areas of practice & research in the 21st century.

- Emerging media technologies & social media channels introduces new challenges for crisis communicators such as unconfirmed information, false rumors, cyber attacks, rise of prominent social influencers & bypassing traditional gatekeepers through these various social media platforms.

2013: Agencies as Media Outlets

2013: Crises emerging 24/7/365

Crisis Communications & Emerging Technologies

- Crisis communicators & their emerging media team must anticipate the communication needs & expectations that come with a crisis event offline & online across multiple platforms (computer, tablet, and smartphone).

- Social media & social media command centers provide the pinnacle of *networked communication and dialogue, relationship management* & *information & dissemination* in digital & mobile environment.

Gatorade Social Media Command Center

University of Oregon "Quack Cave"

Dreamforce Social Media Command Center

Others with Social Media Command Centers
- American Red Cross
- Dell
- MLB
- Presidential Campaigns (2012)
- Edelman Digital
- Super Bowl

Justification for Research Study

- As social media command centers continue to emerge, the vital functions & requirements they must meet haven't been fully defined.

What must a social media command center do to meet all the needs of the crisis communication team in order to engage conversations, monitor & listen during a crisis situation?

Research Questions

- This research study asks:
  - 1) What is the overall function(s) that we want the social media command center to perform?
  - 2) What criteria will we use to decide whether or not the command center has met the function(s)?

Method

- Through analysis of data, utilization of human factors analysis & systems engineering & integration of qualitative & quantitative value modeling techniques.

- A set of best practices & propose a baseline model for what comprises an effective social media command center, from personnel to dashboard, to be used in a crisis situation.

Stages of a Crisis

Potential Crisis

Crisis Identified

Level/Type of Crisis

- What type?
- Who is affected?
- Who will make the decisions?
- Who is responsible for fixing it?

Crisis Action Plan Identified

Strategy
Team Lead
Stakeholders

- What is the end goal of the strategy?
- How will we measure effectiveness?

Crisis Action Plan Enacted

Communicate

Mitigate

- Who is collecting information from those affected?
- Who is capturing lessons learned for policy adjustment?

☐ First we must examine the stages of a crisis and crisis communication

☐ What questions are being asked & answered at each stage?

Functional Analysis

Answers to these questions are all **functions** of the **social media command center:**

- What type of crisis?
- Who is affected?
- Who will make the decisions?
- Who is responsible for fixing it?
- What is the end goal of the strategy?
- How will we measure effectiveness?
- Who is collecting information from those affected?
- Who is capturing lessons learned for policy adjustment?

- ☐ Identify a crisis via social media
- ☐ Identify parties affected
- ☐ Communicate with key decision makers
- ☐ Communicate with key responders
- ☐ Communicate critical information with affected parties
- ☐ Collect critical information from affected parties
- ☐ Transform data into new policy
- ☐ Monitor the landscape

A New Functional Hierarchy
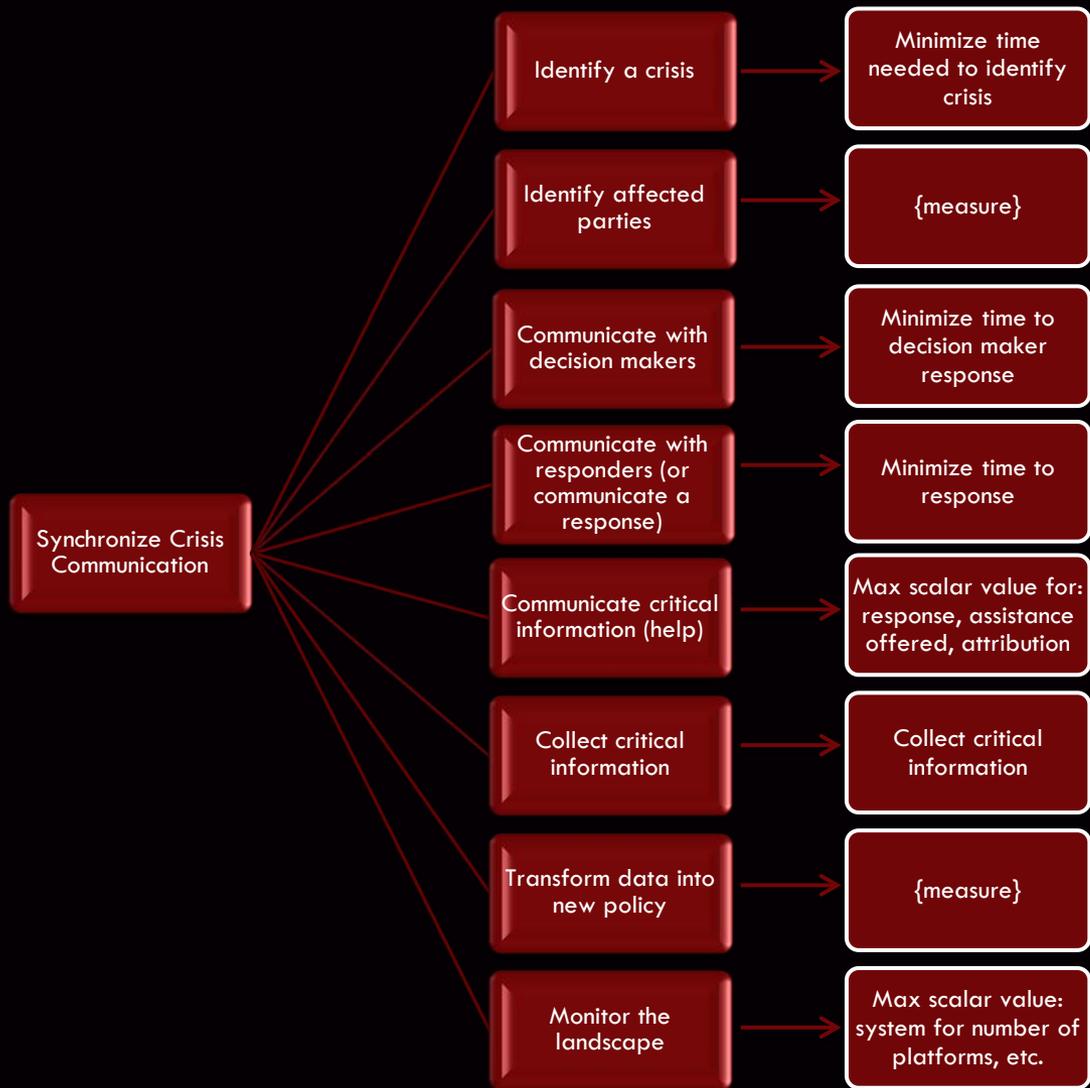
- Each function is matched to an objective that helps create a measure of effectiveness

- Scale items from both practitioner & academic literature on social media command centers & crisis communications best practices

Quantitative Value Modeling

Identify a crisis	→	Minimize time needed to identify crisis	→	Value Measure

- Value measures can be either discrete scales or value curves

- They are used to provide measurable metrics that can be used to rank alternatives, or set screening criteria for success/failure of solutions

Quantitative Value Modeling

- New items from previous research focusing on value model approach with crisis messages (Freberg, Saling, Vidollof, & Eosco, in press)

- Scale items will be calculated from 1-10 based on scale items established in both practitioner & academic literature in crisis communications & emerging media

- **Communicate real-time information**
  - Construction of real-time dissemination trees from users to followers (Liben-Nowell & Kleinberg, 2008).
  - Deliver message strategies to audiences on the organization's behalf in the crisis (Robertson, 2012)
  - Information to be disseminated quickly in an honest & transparent manner is a primary focus for crisis communicators (Horsley & Barker, 2002).
  - Identifying "public editors" – influencers who will be correcting misinformation or rumors (Sutton, 2010).

Quantitative Value Modeling

- **Monitor the landscape (physical & informational)**
  - View of social media as a credible news source of information (Castillo et al., 2011).
  - Mentions of geo location, key words and visualizations (Scharl et al., 2012).
  - Frequency of news terms or hashtags (Castillo et al, 2011).
  - Facilitate conversations on local and global scales (Sutton, 2010).
  - Frequency of types of media being shared (traditional media, updates, blogs, etc) (Castillo et al, 2011).
  - Understanding the users who are participating or following company (ex. age, followers, friends, URL, sentiment score of conversations, mentions) (Castillo et al., 2011).
  - Pictures (captions, sentence level, document level) (Scharl et al., 2012).
  - Understanding the patterns of group formation online (Sutton, 2010).

Best Practices & Implications

- The communications "hub"
- Identity of a crisis
- Identify echelons of decision makers
- Inform the team leads
- Empower employees
- The crisis "playbook"
- Adaptable "learning" policies
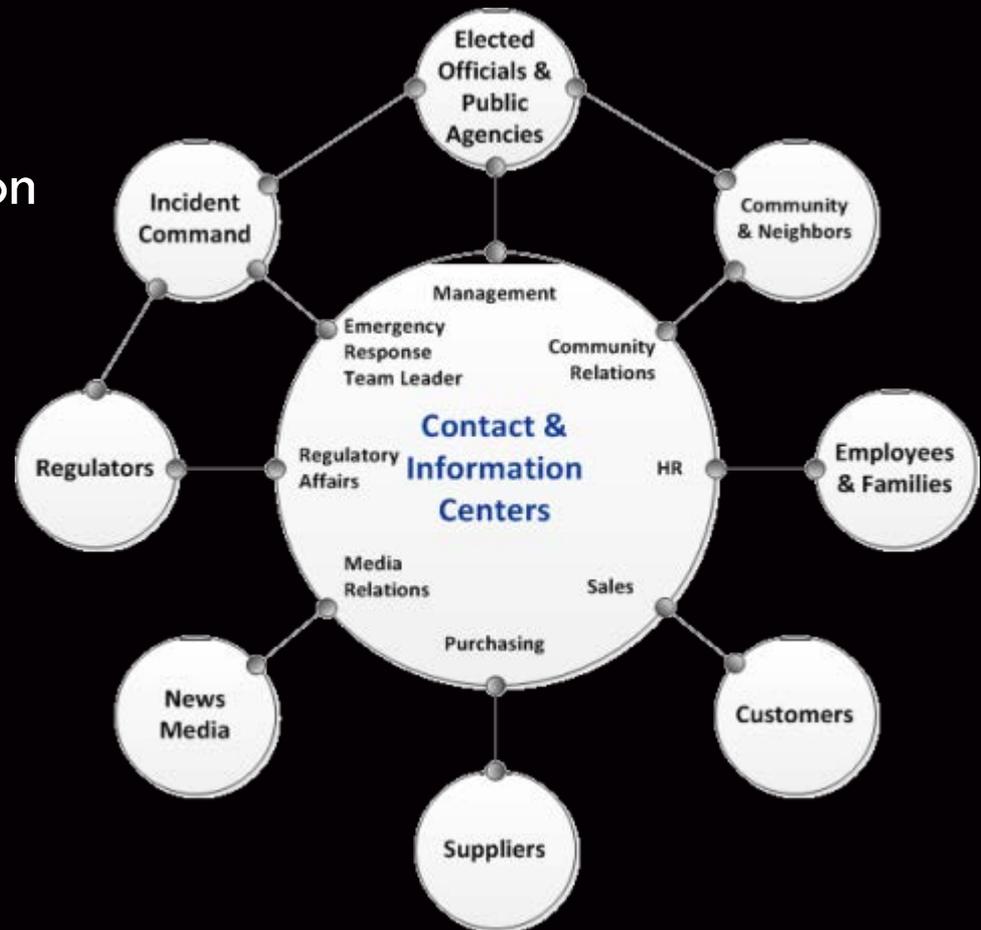
Best Practices and Implications

- Command center is the hub for online dialogue, but the **triggering point for offline and online action**.

- Engage with people about conversations, issues & challenges – but also consider additional factors such as text & picture placement, leadership awareness, etc.

- Involve **internal and external voices and influencers** to be part of the conversation before, during & after a crisis.

- Connect with these individuals & look beyond what they are saying, but how they are saying these points.

Best Practices & Implications

- Realizing what the data means and how it can be interpreted – **rise of transdisciplinary** research & social media command teams.

- Social media command centers act as the essential managing tool for an organization, corporation, or business entity to be **their own media outlet** in various situations, even crises.

- Understanding one message strategy may not fit all audiences for all crisis situations or social media platforms.

- Adapting "**learning**" practices instead of best practices to evolve along with the technology for crisis communications. Train & educate all members (lower to senior management) about software & procedures.

What Should Be in YOUR Crisis Playbook?

- Potential scenarios & issues emerging from various crisis situations.
- Evolved database of influencers based on characteristics, key words, conversations, situations & categorizations of audiences based on level of activity (passive, active, inactive, early warning signs).
- Detection measures for early warning signs & procedures emerging online.
- Learning lessons & sustainable planning for content marketing (becoming own media outlet)
- Sustainable lesson practices to continue education in emerging technologies.
- Message strategies fitting both audiences & situations / additional factors / etc .
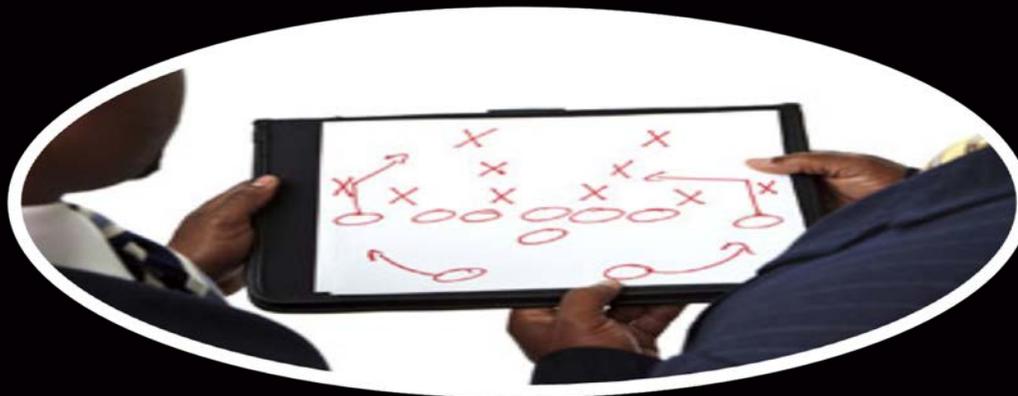
Summary

- Social Media Command Centers are quite popular at the moment and emerging across industries such as corporations, non-profits, sports & universities.

- Understanding & translating data into action steps & information will be the key for these programs to be successful.

- Crisis communicators have to not only be able to view the data being collected, but comprehend the implications, lessons & opportunities from a theoretical & applied perspective.

Resources

- Castillo, C., Mendoza., M., & Poblete, B. (2011). Information credibility on Twitter. WWW 2011, March 28–April 1, 2011, Hyderabad, India. 675-684.

- Lerman, K., & Ghosh, R. (2010). Information contagion: An empirical study of the spread of news on Digg and Twitter social networks. Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence. 1-10.

- Scharl, A., Hubmann-Haidvogel, A., Weichselbraun, A., Wohlgenannt, G., Lang, H-P., & Sabou, M. (2012). Extraction and interactive exploration of knowledge from aggregated news and social media content. Proceedings from EICS'12, June 25–26, 2012, Copenhagen, Denmark, 163-168.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Major Kristin Saling
Email: Kristin.Saling@usma.edu

@kcsaling

Karen Freberg, Ph.D.
Email: karen.freberg@louisville.edu

@kfreberg