

**Webinar:** San Francisco Neighborhood Emergency Response Team uses Twitter to Save Lives

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Good afternoon everyone, and thank you for joining the “San Francisco Neighborhood Emergency Response Team uses Twitter to Save Lives” Webinar. My name is Zola and before we begin I have a couple of brief technical considerations to share with you. First, for all general attendees just using your computer speakers for the audio, please turn the volume up on your computer speakers. Next, to reduce any background noise, I ask that the presenters, or anyone calling in, please mute your computer speakers and ensure your phone is on mute when you are not speaking. All participants are free to type a question or comment in the Q&A pod any time throughout the webinar. We will address them following the presentation. Without further ado, I would like to turn it over to Tyler Krska to get us started. Tyler?

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Thank you Zola. Good afternoon everyone and thank you for joining us today. I am Tyler Krska from FEMA's Individual and Community Division and I am the National CERT and Citizen Corps program lead. Today, we will be talk about using twitter and social media to help your programs and also save lives. To get our discussion started, we have two experts to talk about their experiences and expertise and can I get the next slide?

First we have Anietie Ekanem, he is the CEO and Chief Solutions Guru from Social Niche Guru, Inc., and we also have Brooke Rogers, a freelance Digital Content Producer for San Francisco NERT.

Following their presentation today we will also have a facilitated question and answer session so below this pod you will see the questions pod where if you have questions you can type your question and we will revisit that later after the presentation. So let's get started. Anietie, Brooke, please go ahead.

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Great, thank you, Tyler. Hello. Welcome everyone. We are very excited to share this program that we have launched. It is a pilot program that we started about three years ago and of course we have done many tweaks throughout the process of this. We are very excited to share how we are using Twitter as a communication tool and to really take advantage of this new technology and incorporate it into our CERT program.

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Great, and my name is Anietie Ekanem. I am the Key Solutions Officer of SocialNicheGuru.com and also the Creator of Resilient365.org where we are combining our efforts around technology and communities to make communities more resilient. I wanted to start off by first thanking Lt. Erica Arteseros. She heads

NERT here in the City of San Francisco. She allowed Brooke and myself to really run with this program. And get it in front of many people throughout the Bay Area and also I want to thank Suu-Va from the California Disaster Corps. I'm sorry, CaliforniaVolunteers for agreeing to have us on here. One of the first things I want to tackle -- NERT in San Francisco, which is Neighborhood Emergency Response Team, is part of the CERT program. We just happen to call ourselves neighborhoods instead of communities. We are all one in the same. Things that we learn here in San Francisco are applied everywhere and things that you learn everywhere get to be applied here.

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Just to tell you a little bit about my background. I am Brooke Rogers and I am a former digital producer for ABC 7 News that is a local ABC affiliate in San Francisco and I worked at the station for 10 years. And so, in the Web Department, eight years ago I got in on the ground floor of how the news media went from one website to all these different social media platforms. And so I really got to see how the news media was gravitating towards twitter and using it to their advantage to report news and talk to witnesses at the scene and also I got to watch how people themselves were automatically reporting things and sharing their experiences there in the moment at the scene of all different kinds of emergencies. So that is where my background comes from.

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Great. I just wanted to take a moment to share what we will be learning today. First, we will be talking about why we are using this particular technology. Second, we are going to be focusing in on the etiquette or the policies that we believe are essential to put in place when communicating via social media in order to enhance and not detract from our programs. Most importantly, we are going to center in on the actual case studies -- what have we done as far as using twitter in emergency use. We will go over what that message flow actually looks like. We will talk specifically about how we use it at staging areas, what needs to happen at the battalion to make this most successful and then we will talk about everyday use. So our use case is really going to center around disasters and deployment during a disaster.

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Okay. Let's start with just what is twitter? In case you are not familiar. Twitter is an online social networking and microblogging service that lets users read, send and share messages that contain words, photos, video and website links. The whole challenge of Twitter is you have to have your messages fit into 140 characters where this comes from is -- that was the original size of a SMS text message back when we were first using telephones and SMS stands for Short Message Service. Therefore, it was trading these little bits of information. This is why we really like Twitter because if we are keeping the messages nice and short, it has a far better chance of getting through jammed networks than if you are sending long messages. And this is also kind of the advantage that I think Twitter has over Facebook and why we gravitated to

it. It is short bits of information where as we found that Facebook messages are often longer and even photos and videos there can take a lot longer to upload. But speed is the name of the game for us as rescuers and the faster we can have our emergency response -- the more effective we are going to be and the more people we are going to save in the process.

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I want to take a moment to explain the different styles of the social networks. So as Brooke said, we focus in on Twitter because it is shorter messages, more reliable and more speedy. In this example here is a fire extinguisher, I think we are pretty familiar with these. But if I were going to go to each social media network and described them, this is how I do it because each social network has a certain personality and style. Starting with Twitter, I am a fire extinguisher. If I were to go to Facebook it would -- you say I like a fire extinguisher and get a whole long story about the fire extinguisher itself and anything that sort of happens with it. If you were to take a look at Pinterest, which is a picture sharing site, you would get several pictures of really pretty fire extinguishers. Each social network has a particular style. As we grow our repertoire of social networks that we are working with we will adopt protocol that's in line with that network but right now we want to focus in on Twitter because it is short, reliable and speed.

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Alright, so let's dive into some real life examples of how Twitter had an effect on people's lives. One of the best examples we have taught from the beginning of our class is during Hurricane Sandy someone tweeted out if anybody with a portable generator can get to lower Manhattan contact @lizhenry she has a friend on a ventilator who needs your help.

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Here you have someone asking for help in an emergency and also this got retweeted nearly 3000 times by people. However, the reach of that and how many people possibly saw this message was so much larger than just about 3000. So therefore we know that a message like this can quickly spread and, as we know with CERT, it could be very well your next-door neighbor who is coming to your rescue and can have a faster response than the fire department especially in major emergencies where we know they will be overwhelmed with probably higher priority calls. Here is where we can have an effect on people based upon how many people are on Twitter and also the speed of these kinds of short messages that are very direct. Also Twitter has the advantage of being able to contact these people directly if they need more information. Okay, I am in lower Manhattan where exactly do I find you? You can find out that information very quickly.

So next, here we have real life examples that we have seen on Twitter and also TV news broadcast have shown off as well because immediately, like the example in the upper left corner of a recent major earthquake that happened in Italy, you can quickly

get the scope of the damage very fast by seeing for yourself through those photos how bad things really are. And also you can -- I know the Red Cross before and other agencies have shared information on where people can go for help and even people themselves just tweeting messages back and forth like this during the Louisiana floods.

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I wanted take just a little bit of time to talk to you about exactly how Twitter is being used. We used in all the scenarios. First, we are going to focus in on the emergency use at the staging area and battalion. When we talk about this it is specifically if a major event happens. How are we going to use social media if we have access to it? So we are taking a look at it both as a communication tool and information gathering tool. We will get into specific examples later. In addition, everyday use we use it for free advertising for our CERT programs, to keep people engaged and know about what is coming up and also to share helpful tips.

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This is a great example of what we are talking about when it comes to the use of Twitter in addition to all the other communication vehicles that we have. So, before, during, and after. During the preparation, there is training, sharing and CERT classes. During the response, there is CERT and NERT responders and, lastly of course, the recovery and the information sharing.

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We use Twitter in addition to everything else. So for us of course ACS/Ham radios -- we need you. We love you. I am a Ham radio operator myself. If we have cell phones available and the network is up we are going to use Twitter because as Brooke has illustrated it has been used in several disasters. It allows you to get rich information very quickly. If we don't have either one of those, we have our runners and last, if none of those are available, we will go back to smoke signals and cans with strings.

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That's right. There is definitely multiple forms of communication and actually just to reiterate what Anietie said we have been surprised to find that in certain disasters the Internet was working but maybe cell phones weren't. Therefore it is surprising to see what communications actually will hold up and are doing just fine in some major disasters. So you can't assume that the network may all go down. It may very well be a tool that we could turn to.

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And specifically for us, as Brooke and I were talking, what became very clear is that if it is available, the battalion chiefs, the fire department and others do want it used. So they just want to have the right protocol to actually get it integrated into their systems.

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Okay, I am going to talk on how we can really use Twitter to our advantage as community emergency responders and here many people nowadays have

smartphones. And they will take them wherever they go and they often share photos, video and information of what they are witnessing in real time. And many people nowadays just pull out their phone and start taking photos and video without even knowing why but they will often share those experiences that they are watching before them on social media or with their friends.

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So therefore at CERT, we would love to put an ear to the ground on this stream of information and listen and see what people are tweeting about. Therefore, the thought is that their information could really help us out because you will know maybe more information about the scene that you are walking into before you go and get there to respond with your CERT team. That is incredibly helpful if you see a bunch of smoke you want to make sure that you have the proper equipment to help you go through that if you need to. Also the biggest thing is you could have somebody running to your staging area saying there is a large fire -- well define large. What is that? Is that an entire building on fire, or a trashcan fire that a NERT can put out? You really get a good idea with a photo or video if people are able to send them to you or take a photo and come running up to you with that photo or video on their cell phone. That is still a great way to get information. Again, here you have a two way conversation, as well. You can ask the public for help directly. What is the status of the fire? What are you seeing now? They may be able to help you. Also, this whole idea is to really carve out the pathway for all forms of digital communication. Before in our CERT and NERT programs, we did not really have that. We only had the communication of Ham radios. But there is no picture or video with that or new ways of digital forms of communication so therefore we are just creating a pathway and this whole kind of system and the way we are teaching people to send short messages can work on text message, other smartphone apps, iPad or tablet apps, YouTube videos -- instant messaging, push alerts -- all this stuff. Therefore, we are just creating the pathway for that to come down the line.

Next, okay this is my favorite slide because of course I get the question -- What if the network goes down? Well, okay let's address all of these questions. What if the Twitter network goes down? What if we cannot connect to it? Or, what if the Twitter company, for some reason, no longer exists? Well, the answer is we will use the same concept on other forms of technology. We love the short messages in 120 to 140 characters. That has a far better chance of getting through. And cell phone apps, absolutely, they are coming up with many different ways, such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, even Slack and also there is many forms of technology also coming which are Bluetooth only communication, Wi-Fi only communication apps that we also may be able to rely on that only use Internet service and don't rely on cell phone service. So we also want to get through to people that are usually not reliant on just one cell phone tower. Okay? That is probably how it used to be over a decade ago

or two but nowadays there is so many more repeaters and cell phone networks are a lot stronger especially with the major companies like AT&T and Verizon and T-Mobile. They have invested millions of dollars into making a much stronger network. Also, as you can see with the picture, there are COWs, which are cell phone towers on wheels, that can be trucked in. Here we saw this example at the Super Bowl that we had in San Francisco. We had a bunch of these COWs come in because the cell phone companies did not want anybody to miss the opportunity to post a selfie, and of course advertise the Super Bowl. Therefore, we also see these COWs at Golden Gate Park in the middle of a rock concert or something because we quickly found out years ago, those cell phone networks do get jammed if you have massive crowds of people. So therefore if you have COWs rolling in, it is definitely going to help sustain your network and hold it up.

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So one thing that I would like to add there is, even if, again, we have nothing available to us, we always have our Ham radio operators. We always have our runners. This is to augment the system that we already have in place and regardless wherever you are, whether you have a substantial number of additional cell phone towers or not -- if you can get through please this is something you can use. It is interesting being in San Francisco with the Twitter office right here, we have the opportunity to sit in the offices and talk to them specifically about this. I was really surprised by the places that Twitter is, even if there is not a robust infrastructure. Don't just think, we need a lot of things here. You don't. But again, if your phone is available, if the network is available, this is just another tool you can use.

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Thank you, Anietie, for reiterating that. So physically, what do you need to get started if you want to have this Twitter system within your CERT program?

Here we have tech devices, either smartphone, iPad or tablet, or you can have a laptop or desktop setup at your Battalion station or even in your staging area if you are able to. You definitely need to focus on what is your energy source. You want to make sure that you bring charge cords specific for your cell phone that you are going to be using. I always bring extras because it helps in case other people need to charge up their cell phone. And, you want to think about extended batteries or solar cell devices and backup power, for example if my cell phone was going down then I would switch to my iPad and then charge the cell phone with the generator at the Battalion station. Now, also, you may want accessories such as ear phones if you are listening to audio through video. So you will want to focus on that to also get any bits of information -- what are people saying at the scene? Are there people screaming? It may be able to just give you more information. So, you want to be able to listen clearly. Also, the other thing is paper forms. A lot of people say this is all on Twitter -- how are you going to document this in the ICS system? And, the answer is we are taking those

tweets and we are putting them back on paper therefore creating a physical document to give to the Battalion chief and to have that documentation forever.

I definitely recommend testing your equipment at the drills and also make sure that you watch your data plan in case you are worried about that. And all of these Twitter messages sucking up any data that you may need.

Okay. So let's go on to CERT Twitter etiquette. In our classes, we don't just let people loose and say okay have at it. We definitely have protocols that we want people to follow to keep NERTs out of trouble. One of the biggest things is we want to keep our standards and keep our victim information private. We do not want to exploit that especially in a disaster. Here is what we teach NERTs. Absolutely do tweet helpful things for damage assessment. Here you can see a photo of a building on fire. You can see how large a quote, unquote large fire is. You can also see what hazards are around there before going in. A lot of our NERTs notice immediately power lines over this fire. So, is the scene safe before you go in? What we do not want on Twitter is photos of victims. Victims clearly seen or any gory stuff because we want to make sure that we protect the victims information and identity. And, we do not really see the need to tweet out pictures of dead people. What does it do to help us? Usually, as NERTs we can say one black, three red. We don't need photos of really gory stuff going around. Also really important -- something that a lot of people do not think about is we do not want to report police tactical locations or SWAT team locations because as we say in the news the bad guys could be watching also. You don't want to give someone the strategic location of where the police officers are. You don't want to put their lives in any risk as well.

So you definitely want to keep these kinds of things in mind and we have a way to deal with these kinds of photos. If for some reason a NERT or CERT person feels that finding a dead body at a certain address, is helpful to somebody. We encourage people to not put that anywhere near social media but a private email box that we also set up and to handle that with extreme caution and sensitivity.

Because anything you put out there on social media even on a small account -- once it is out there it is out there and you cannot take it back easily.

So you want to make sure that as you are tweeting your tweets during the drills, you want to make sure that you put warnings on each message so people do not think it is real. There are two methods of using Twitter to communicate to your team or person-to-person. Number one, use direct messages which can be private and two you can make the tweets public which also has great advantages for CERT teams . You just want to make sure that you have tons of warnings so that people do not think it is real.

Again another example of this, that we do, is we put it everywhere. We have it in the description of our individual Twitter accounts. We have a tweet that we can pin at the top of the account that says we are doing a practice right now. These are not real emergencies. And we encourage everybody that is tweeting to end every single tweet with the hashtag #NERTdrill. Again, it is very helpful to tweet out these warnings like every hour, as well. Just in case someone does not see what is going on, or go to your specific Twitter account, they can also see they are talking about something else that is going on.

And also during an emergency, here is where you need to switch to emergency mode. Before your Twitter account is really just in use for drill practice. Then when an emergency hits or you are activated you want to make sure that your CERTs know they are not the official PIO. Yes, they are trading information amongst themselves but people like the media need to treat it as just scanner traffic. It is not confirmed information. So therefore it is really helpful to point to the PIO and the official account that the media can contact or other people can contact directly and get official confirmed information or statements when they are ready to go out to the public.

So I highly recommend add this to your description say -- hey, please see the PIO for official information related to this disaster. And you can send this out as a tweet or a pin tweet as well.

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Great, so I want to get into the nuts and bolts. What we have done so far and how we have tested this. So overall, we have had five citywide drills over the past several years that we have been involved on the social media side. At each one of the drills, there are about 300 people who come. There are a number of Battalion stations with six through 14 staging areas, several drills going on at the same time. What we have done and what I think Brooke alluded to each battalion gets its own verified email address and each battalion also has an accompanying twitter account that has been verified.

We have also done a number of training classes and this is actually really important. We feel that people who are going to be in this role have to be trained to know exactly what has to be done, when it has to be done, and, as Brook so eloquently said, really understand the etiquette rules that we put into place and those are not only for people who are going to be sitting in the staging area but also people who will be taking in that information actually being just a few feet away from the chief at the Battalion station.

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This is how the San Francisco is set up. We -- if you take a look here, San Francisco has 10 battalions. Each one of the battalions can actually have several staging areas



within it. NERTs will be activated by our coordinator and or the Mayor and then we will self deploy to one of our staging areas. Here you see in the lower right just a blowup of Battalion area 4 and we have done a number of drills in this area that comprise the Marina District, Pacific Heights and other small neighborhoods and we will go through right now and show you exactly what we have done.

This is a great example. What we have had to do if there are multiple staging areas is go ahead and number the staging area so that we know which staging area is associated with which message sort of moving forward. We need to keep track of who we are tweeting with. These are certain volunteers we have already trained and walked through the drills. It's not the public. Just like Ham radios, we need to check in and check out with each person we are communicating with from the battalion station and the staging areas. Therefore, you do not leave anyone hanging. Every message we also respond with message received. So the way -- so what we have done to is sort of come up with a protocol very much like Ham radios. So at the planning section we'll communicate directly with the folks in the Battalion and send that initial message. Just like they do there, we do that also. So we will send an initial message from the staging area to the person who is working at the Battalion and that person at the Battalion will actually send a message received back to confirm that they have received it.

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Okay, I will go with the email accounts here. We have set up twitter accounts for each battalion station -- all 10 of them and therefore with every twitter account that you set up you have to have a corresponding email. So we found that this was also a great opportunity to have private email boxes for our CERT teams and fire department if needed and for you to be able to have a nice safe place for this stuff to be sent to and stored and also documented which of course we want to do. Here some people are starting to use Google Docs or Google Drive to document things. That is a great idea. We have not tested that yet. But the idea also here is they could have lower priority photos like a missing dog and a photo of that dog. That is great information but maybe you don't need that on day one. Here is a safe place where you can store that information and go back to it later if needed.

Also, as we were setting up our email accounts, we actually found somebody already took [SFFDB8@gmail.com](mailto:SFFDB8@gmail.com) so therefore we had to work around that and grabbed the other two email account addresses that we could so that Battalion eight can take their pick of which one they want. But, at least, have the same kind of idea go on here.

So next I will talk about ICS message flow. Here as you know within our staging areas, communications get sent to Ham radio operators that need to send up the message to the Battalion chief. So they say, okay fire response is needed for this scene

and therefore what we are doing with Twitter is we are just mirroring that communication pathway. So therefore if you have a Ham radio, great. They can take the message or if you have a Twitter person they can do the same job. Also the second phase of our program is having field teams communicate to the staging area and back and forth if they need equipment -- that may be so much faster than sending a runner back and forth between the teams. And therefore may be you can have a much faster response which is what you want. Field teams could also give photos back to staging of what they are dealing with -- how big of a scene has something turned into? Or are they done? Do they have the situation handled? Therefore this ICS flow is exactly in line with what we are doing already with Ham radio communication and also potentially taking it to another level as well.

So here also going through our steps. What we would do is during the drills we would go up to logistics and they would tell us if we grabbed a Twitter person -- they would tell us what they're Twitter handle is and their phone number and what is their ability with social media. How good are they or what can they do? Usually everyone we talk to can pickup the stuff pretty quickly. And we also have a quick reference sheet that people can look at and kind of get exactly how to send messages very fast. And therefore planning with requested Twitter person. Step three is people would fill out their log with their name, phone number and Twitter handle. This is just like checking in to the staging area and checking out later. And step four is really important. You have to send that first message to establish communications. We call that message, message zero. And also this is a great test for how long of a possible delay across the technology that there is. Yes, Twitter timestamps everything which is wonderful but when we send that message there potentially could be a two-minute or five-minute delay. That is why we have included a time within each message that we send. So here is an example of my message zero I am saying hey, @SFFDB1 this is message zero with the time I am sending it. This is Brooke in staging area five checking in. Ready to tweet out incidents here in the Marina District. Of course, this is a drill so I am putting #NERTdrill. Then on step five you want to be able to follow each other so you can establish a direct message communication and that is how you can also trade private message if you want to.

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So before we move on we have gotten to this point. I remember the very first drilled we would literally go to the different areas and ask very much like we might have to do in case of an actual emergency to see how people would respond and it was really great to see a number of people actually stepped up to the plate and become part of the Twitter team or social media team on the spot. Even if they don't have all of this in place -- but I hope you will -- going out and asking in the moment -- you have a lot of people that do -- we have found a lot of people who were able to step up.

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Okay. We had to teach our CERTs where to sit. We put them in planning -- because the first and most important stage we implemented was talking to the Battalion station. Therefore messages that have come to planning are already prioritized. Therefore you want to send those communications on that a Ham radio operator would be told to send out specifically for fire response. So therefore you want to send everything that you can. Now interesting note -- you want to make sure that you do not send duplicate messages to the Battalion unless you have something that accompanies a message. What we are doing with each of our messages is numbering them the same so that we can follow them. And when they come to the Battalion station they are numbered the same except if it is coming from Twitter we will put a T in front of the message to let them know exactly where it is coming from but each incident is matched step which will really help avoid a lot of confusion down the line.

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Great and I -- so this is the nuts and bolts of how we have sort of come up with the way in which we use Twitter to disseminate information. We call it SMT LCAN.

S stands for staging area. Each Battalion can have several staging areas. Each one of these staging areas can be sending out messages all the time. It's really important to know which staging area a message is connected with. Message number -- how are we actually sending out messages in a way to track so we have to put numbers associated with each of those messages. As told or shared with us, time is really important because we may not know how long the lag time is for a particular message. And we have actually experienced this several times. So something that actually went out at 10 AM did not get received until 10:30. And then, LCAN - location, condition, action, need, taken directly from one of our trainings. The fire department absolutely demands of us when we translate messages -- so these are very important to have as part of any one of our message.

So things to remember again use this format SMT LCAN. We've said it a number of times and I can't tell you how important it is -- sending out that message zero. And responding back so you now have a communications link. That is absolutely critical. We have done it as part of a public but we are moving DM so that message zero will be used as a way for you to follow one another where you can create a direct message link and have private conversations.

Of course, use 140 characters. We will actually give you an example of that it just a bit. And while there are acronyms when in doubt spell it out. Don't be worried about that. This actually tripped a few people up in some of our trainings. Do your best. It's an emergency. We understand that. Just try to keep it in that 140 character limit.

This is a great example. In the lower right-hand corner you can see here there is a church, that there is rubble. It could potentially be a steeple or some other part of the

church that collapsed. When we take a look at SMT LCAN , this is what we might put in. This is an example we took from one of our area's where the location we gave a particular street, 1345 Ocean Avenue, the condition -- the southernmost church steeple collapsed. The action -- the NERT team went in and were able to triage and there was one red, six yellow establish the treatment area and the need. We actually need from the Battalion the ability to transport the victims. This is what it will look like in a tweet.

So this is very important because understanding this and we actually have a number of messaging exercises. Where people can go back and forth and feel more comfortable translating this back. As you can see from staging area one, this is message one it comes and at 7:15 AM location again is 1345 Ocean Avenue at Granada. Condition -- the church steeple collapsed in the street and is blocking access to Granada trapping several people with injuries. A for action the CERT team was requested. They triaged the victims one red, six yellow, treatment area located at Ocean and Plymouth and the need again, transport for injured victims. Of course for the drill we always put #CERTdrill.

So we go from taking a look at what is actually happening. We translate it using SMT LCAN into a tweet and this tweet is sent to the Battalion station.

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I want to take just a quick moment to talk to the advantages and disadvantages of two types of communication -- public versus direct message. Again we use these both and we definitely have advantages. So the public message has the advantage of being searchable. That is great because as we will see -- just a little later -- if you have a person sitting in the Battalion and there is a role where the person is gathering information, being able to search for hashtags in some of these incidents will be actually really helpful for you. Now if -- when we are moving to DM -- we find that it is really good to have a private conversation wherever possible so it is much more secure, much more private. It is easy to go back and forth between the two individuals but the drawback is if we are using additional tools like TweetDeck etc. it makes a little more difficult to search.

Brooke, would you like to talk about these examples?

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Yes. Okay. Here is a public tweet to the left and what it looks like. And one of our CERT volunteers put this out in a wonderful layout. She did MT and then LCAN right down the line so it was easy to read. If you want to do it this way, you totally can instead of smashing everything together. And if you hit enter/return it will not take up more character space either. So we are able to do it this way. And also really important here is an example of how the Battalion is answering back. Okay. @NaturalUnit message received at this time #NERTdrill. Then on the other side we

have DM and here is what it looks like. Person is checking in. Okay message zero received. Here is the first message. Okay message one received. This looks a lot more like a text message back and forth which a lot of people are used to looking at and used to reading. So therefore it is really easy to see the back-and-forth. And however the drawback is -- if you want to put this on something like TweetDeck you can't search for the content in those DM's. You can only do it on the public one. So it has its drawbacks but either way you want to do it to your team or for your team -- whichever way you guys feel more comfortable with -- it definitely can be played out either way.

Next we will take a quick look at how you send a public message versus a DM. That's really important for our CERT team members. You need to know when something is going public or when it will be private and of course if anybody goofs this is why we do not encourage to put any potential private information of victims anywhere near this. So if you do want to put a public message out there it is up at the top with the quill and that is how you begin a public message. If you want to do a private message on your phone, this is what it looks like. Go down to the message button.

And next. Here is a closer look at an example of a direct message back and forth and then of course an example of a check out. You definitely want to tell somebody if you are walking away and grabbing a sandwich. And the Battalion chief wants to know that in case they are trying to send out messages and you are not responding. This is why a check-in/checkout is very important just like you would do the same with a Ham radio operator who checks in and check out as well. And again you can see some of our messages here and they are real. Sometimes they are a little more casual. Here one of our volunteers says messages number two and three are still being circulated between operations and planning. Will it be confusing if I go through with message four? And this is how it is written out as well. MTLCAN Same kind of deal.

Now -- one more time just to reiterate this. Any private information or things you do not want near social media at all just remove all the confusion between public versus DM ways to tweet it out, just totally send it in that email and of course know that sending things via email may take a while. May take a long time but those are also for your lower priority situations anyway. So you need to make sure that you have your rules in place and that all of your CERT know them because we don't want any unsuitable images circulating around on social media because anybody can pick them up.

Alright, inside the Battalion station. Let me explain what you are looking at. In the upper left-hand corner, you have the Battalion chief making decisions on where he wants to send the truck and prioritizing what he is going to -- where he is going to send the top response to. You have a scribe and you have someone sitting below that

which I would give my paper messages to. And then, on the other side of the desk, you have three people from the ACS team taking in messages via Ham radio communications. Obviously, we are not replacing ACS. This is just in addition to. This is really important why message numbers need to match and also if it comes from Twitter put a T in front of it or something so the scribe or Battalion chief knows to come back to a Twitter person as opposed to a ACS person. Here are the Battalion stations for most of our drills. It is a truck that comes out. It is kind of tight space. Where I have been sitting is actually on the other little room across from this main room here and that is where I found it was much quieter to listen to audio if needed and also for space where I can focus and write down the messages and tweets when they come in.

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And this is great also. I can say from my experience, one of the very first times I actually sat in the Battalion myself and handed the messages over to the chiefs at the time he literally looked at me and said do I need to know anything else? No that is why I am here. Great give me the information.

What we do as part of the social media team is bring this new information. It is very much appreciated -- being well trained and being able to deliver that information in a concise manner using SMT LCAN is absolutely crucial.

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Hold on. Just another thing to add to that. One Battalion chief stopped me and said oh my gosh can you put these Twitter messages on the big screens in the back? And I thought okay, we have not done that but sure that is an easy way for a Battalion chief to see the photos if we hook up our computers to the television screens in the back. That is another option as well especially now since we have stressed the importance of all that information that could come through a photo or video.

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Absolutely and right now while we are going through the process of writing things down and we get into that in a little bit more. Any message that comes from the staging area into the Battalion gets translated, written down, so that the chief can have it. We have also been asked can we just print these out for them? So we will be experimenting with that also but we really felt that it would be important to mirror exactly what the Ham radio process is and ensure that all these things are written down in order to have that in the future.

Next slide. Now you are the person in the Battalion you are sitting in that space. And I just want to go through this step that one has to go through. So first -- go and check in with logistics. Let them know your Twitter handle, phone number, ability. Because you are trusted, you will probably be one of the few who will be let into the Battalion station. Because step two you have a special training. Step three you fill out the log with your name, phone, Twitter handle. You head to the Battalion station and check

in. You log into the Battalion Twitter account. You received that first message and then you respond to that message zero and then you follow each other so you can establish the direct message connection. Great, so now you are actually sitting in the spot. You have now established that connection. You will start transcribing the tweets that come into you meaning that you will write them down to create a paper trail. You will be sending that information over to the Battalion chief and they will make the assessments that they need. Also for every message that comes in, you always have to reply back. We wanted to build in that two-way communication to ensure that the folks who are at the staging area get a confirmation about what they have sent out was actually received.

Great. This is just another example of that. So the response -- to the person -- staging area, message number, and then it is received and the time that it was received. Again, this why a confirmation is always important. Yes, social media is great but again we do not know if there is a lag associated with any given message and we want to build into our process a way for us to verify that something has gone through.

The other thing that I did not add earlier but if you are the person in the Battalion and you are sent video or images just like Brooke eluded to -- yes if we can connected directly to the monitor that is great. I have been told - show them to me like in the moment if it is really relevant. You have a lot more information than some other people may have and it is up to the Battalion chief to make the call. I want him or her to have all the information that he can.

And then here is the actual form that we fill out. As you can see at the very top it says that it is from a Twitter person. If you notice, under the message text it says T-S2 M2 -- meaning this is a message from Twitter from staging area 2 and it is message number 2. If you notice going down, we still subscribe to the SMTLCAN mode just to make sure everything is very clear as we are communicating this out and as the scribe is putting this up on the board having the T in front of the message just makes it very clear this is coming from Twitter and they know exactly where to go. We implemented this because there were a few times messages were coming in and the Battalion chief actually had some more questions and doing this just cut down on any confusion on whether it is the ACS folks or us over on the social media side.

Brooke, could you talk about the second job that's potentially available?

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Yes. So if you have more people, it is a wonderful idea to get that second person job number two which is looking outside of your CERT team . Here is where you can go to something like [twitter.com/search /advanced](https://twitter.com/search/advanced) and you can do an advanced Twitter search. That is where you can search anything coming from the public and you will see hashtags spring up in the moments amongst conversations. So some people may

use #quake, some people may use #earthquake or #sfquake. Another one popped up recently was #NZquake for the New Zealand quake. It seems like you have to follow what people are talking about and therefore kind of follow and see all the other potential conversations that come up with that hastag. Also you can narrow things down to a specific location into a Geo search in your area. For us under places we would put San Francisco just to narrow the noise down a lot to just get what messages are coming from this San Francisco area. And then step two is write down what you find on a form and put it in the Battalion Chiefs inbox. And it is very helpful of course you need to document everything and if you can copy that tweet and put it on a word document just to have a visual of it and more proof that this was really sent by somebody then that is even more helpful as well and maybe an additional step that you want to do. Unfortunately there are some jokesters out there that want to try to trick you or the media. So this is where I find this incredibly helpful to have CERTs on the front lines because you can debunk these rumors really fast and this is actually a photo that went through and was circulating around Hurricane Sandy. No there were not any sharks that large swimming around the subway system. Therefore if you have a NERT responding to that scene they can verify very quickly if that is true or not. Also sometimes you have to use your instinct and say really? Are sharks that large going to be swimming around in just a few inches of water? This is where you have to take a step back and pause. Also what is wonderful and helpful on Twitter is a lot of people will debunk those rumors or fake photos that have already been traded around very quick which is wonderful. And also it is a very big sign if the media does not picked it up specifically. Then they have already -- the media goes to great lengths to try to vet this information. If something also -- you are not 100% sure if it is real or not -- this is where you can ask the person who is putting it out there directly -- can you send me another photo of an update? Or what are you seeing at the scene exactly where are you? Calling the on the carpet may make someone say I was just kidding and fess up really quickly. Hopefully with more information you will be able to vet if it is real or not. So just watch out for that. It is a possibility that could happen in a disaster. Next here are some tools that will make it a lot easier for you to sort through the huge stream of information coming from the public. So here is one tool I love to use which is TweetDeck and you can go through Twitter to find it. And here you can have different columns for each thing that you want to do. So if anybody is tweeting @SFFDB1 then I can see it coming up on the first column. If I want to hone in on anyone else tweeting, I can do that. I have an example of that here. If you are doing a public search you may want to put in different hashtags for each one of those columns like #sfquake vs. #quake vs. #earthquake. And you will get different tweets mixed in. See what is popular in the moment and something like this will absolutely help you get to watch everything at once and photos and video will come up within the stream and you can have as many columns as you want. I know on mine I currently have 20 different columns. These kinds of things can definitely help you. Like I said before if



you have a direct message that you are going back and forth between the Battalion and staging area you cannot search within that DM. It will not come up on here so therefore this is a huge advantage to the public tweet with the hashtags. This is where it would be much easier and faster to see the whole line of communication in this format.

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Also there are other tools that are available like Hootsuite and in the Q&A if you want to learn more about those, let us know and maybe we could do something around another webinar for that.

We talked about Twitter etiquette. We have talked about Twitter at the staging areas. We talked about Twitter at the Battalion all from the frame of this is what we have actually done over several drills. We wanted to shift focus just a little bit to nonemergency use of the Twitter. Here are some examples of us be able to literally tweet out pictures of some of some of our education that we do at different street fairs. It has been really great. This can help spark interest in other CERT volunteers to get more involved to get them interested in other drills or share with their own family. And it sort of makes the CERT program a lot more personable. And here is a photo of a list of items you can put in an earthquake kit. It was tweeted out by the fire department's main account and shared with the public and individuals can go ahead and retweet that.

And if you go to [sfdnert.org](http://sfdnert.org) you will find the document that will outline the reminder tips as well as a sheet of acronyms and abbreviations as well as an empty 140 character Twitter box sheet. We were able to upload those to the file today also we want you to know they are available for you on public domain.

And with that I wanted to thank you all for being part of this call today. And please here is some of our information -- my Twitter account is @SFNERT and Brooks account is @BrookesBanter. There is the email address if you just want to give us some questions or feedback and let's open up for questions and answers.

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That was a great presentation. I really want to thank you both for all the information you gave. I know I am going to have to go back and look at the slides again because there was a ton of information. I really appreciate it. Before we jump to the Q&A, I want to say we did see a couple questions asking about the slide deck and the recording for this webinar and you can pull the slide deck from the file pod on the bottom middle right. You can get the slide show and the CERT conference package as well. You can grab those there. And the recording we will be publishing -- it usually takes us a little time to get the transcript together but this will be available publicly for everyone else to listen to. So -- our first question is -- I will let Anietie and Brooke handle this one. More modalities of communication, not necessarily better, risk

overload, confusion and conflicting information etc. -- are you recommending the all of the above approach to communicate or rather triaging communication modalities?

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So let me go ahead and at least take the first part of this. There are so many social media outlets out there and available. I think one of the reasons why we started with Twitter and we are actually taking a go slow feeling here -- is because there is always going to be a new technology out there that people are going to use and for us we really wanted to focus in on what would be the most reliable, what would be the fastest, and what would be the easiest to learn first and foremost. So if we're going to layer on, we will have to layer on slowly building on some of the learnings that we already have and that is why you have seen a lot of things around for example the way in which we communicate. We had this particular format SMTLCAN because we really want to make sure that if a message goes out the person on the other end of the message will confirm that it will get received and things like that. So these things are really important and so we have taken a sort of go slow mentality. Having said that and Brooke can speak more to this -- there are other things that are coming down the pipe that we are evaluating as far as reach and the ability to get better information. It is a go slow but I think we will be incorporating those things.

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Also to go back to the bread and butter of the system -- the real nuts and bolts of it is to come up with this whole pathway for digital communication. So right now we are focused on Twitter and we are starting there to take this concept and carry it. Twitter is also an area where there are millions of people on it and familiar with it. It is really fast and easy to pickup and start using. And so we are going to start there. We have carried this pathway for digital communications and yes -- this can be modified in a year or two years when more forms of communication to come out. So we are not necessarily prioritizing one technology over the other. We just absolutely wanted to carve out an initial pathway in order to carry photos and video -- any kind through our system first.

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Great. Thank you. Another question we have -- how does the social media person in the Battalion truck decide when or if a NERT message is important enough to be given to the chief?

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We have had arguments about this or great discussions anyway. So the way that it works -- planning determines that message that needs to be sent out. It gets sent out. If you are the person in the Battalion taking those messages down, it is your job to relay them at that point. One thing you could do you could ask them right away to give you additional information but if it is sent from the staging area, I'm going to trust the people in planning to make the right decision and I will be passing that on. So that is that person. Now the other person that Brooke described which was the information gathering person -- that is a little bit more leeway because they are searching the

Internet and trying to figure out what is going on. So as Brooke said -- and I will let her talk more about this -- it has to meet the etiquette rules. Rules of common sense. We still use the SMTLCAN modality. Can we verify this? Is it verifiable? Etc. That second job the info gathering job has a little more leeway but the person in the Battalion to transfer those tweets directly from staging you can send them directly to the chief because I need to be able to trust planning to do their job.

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Also this is why we stress that we want the Twitter person for both jobs here and in the Battalion station. We want that person to be kind of a super user and someone who is well practice at the drills. So that therefore you know you are the filter. You're not going to pass on every missing dog photo because it will really slow down communications and fast emergency response for people. You need to know to filter those out and put those to the side in an email box or whatever and what is your priority? Planning has already done the work for you and if you need to go back and forth and get updates to figure out if CERT has responded to the scene -- does it really still need fire response? Hopefully, planning has done a lot of that work for you. We are relying on that heavily but that person in the Battalion needs to be a trusted super user and be very familiar with how the inner workings of a Battalion station already are. You have a lot of major incidents coming in and winding up on the board. And therefore it is the Battalion Chiefs call to send the trucks wherever he or she wants to and prioritize it that way.

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Awesome. Thank you. I did see another question asking to repeat where the PowerPoint was. If you look at the very bottom middle, there is a pod titled files if you look just to the right of where you type in questions, you'll see it. There's the CERT Conference Twitter Resources document and also the slide show for this presentation. You can grab those there. Our next question is actually going to be a follow-up to the first question. More modalities is not the question as much as avenues with target groups and alternatives in the event of a modality failure, is it not?

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Okay. That is a great question. The way I take a look at it -- we use Twitter right now and for all the reasons that I stated. I actually did a presentation at a youth academy and I thought I was going to get them really engage with Twitter and they would really love it. Literally, all around the room everyone was saying -- what is Twitter? That is something my dad uses, I think. So while we are here using it and thinking it is the best thing since sliced bread for emergency response. When it comes to modalities and audiences -- one of the things that I have on my list to take a look at is some of the other things like Snap Chat that youth use versus Twitter. So, yes, there is something to be said about modalities by specific audiences. Because some audiences may not know the ones that we are pushing right now. But we are still slowly and surely going to get there.

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Agreed. Also I think the second job of the Twitter person in the Battalion station -- absolutely they should be looking at things like Instagram and I seeing what hashtags there are being used or maybe sometimes just a general Google search sometimes with hashtags. Now we are incorporating Facebook and Instagram and Twitter so they are incorporating lots of social media venues that also use hashtags across the board to join in on the conversation. So yes -- absolutely. You should have your eyes and ears out there and open. And as a super user of social media, it is very helpful to you if on all these different platforms, you cast as wide a net as you can and get to know these people in your community and get to know their accounts and who is a big person that posts on Instagram in San Francisco because that is going to broaden your horizons and your message stream coming in on that platform. So it is important to continuously try to grow your potential audience because that is going to be helpful to you in an emergency. You don't want to just wait until the emergency hits and then you try to expand your ear to the ground. You want to build your network beforehand.

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Next question is instead of transposing to a handwritten form -- can we route a Tweet to a printer or have you guys developed any other way other than handwriting it?

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I think we mentioned -- that is literally the next thing we are taking a look at. I think the reason why we started with handwriting it is we simply wanting to go through the process and really understanding and getting the process down in case we did not have access to a printer at the Battalion or it wasn't working. But yes that is our next step. Taking a look at how we can potentially connect our device to a printer and actually just print them out without having to go back and rewrite.

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Now also another form of documentation that I recently just read this past week was that you can have your direct messages automatically sent to an email box so that is potentially another form of keeping records of who is saying what to each other. So therefore anybody sending a DM you can have it automatically set up to send a copy of those messages over to your corresponding email account as well. So that may be another helpful tip. Also I just always like copy and paste right onto a Word document if needed. You get all the information right there. Take screen grabs if needed. Absolutely all of those tools if they are accessible to you in the moment will definitely help you in documentation.

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There is an issue about priority right? There are two jobs there is the Twitter person and the Info Gatherer. If you are the Twitter person and, we have done this in drills, you get inundated with all the tweets from the staging area. You actually go through these really quickly. To be able to write them down quickly and potentially have a scribe that can help you do that is actually pretty critical and this whole idea to be able to have a printer because of a potential avalanche of information coming in from the staging areas is also a really great idea. So those things are definitely available and

because you are going to be -- we have dealt with this when it gets going and you get in the flow there is a lot of information to process from the staging area and you must be able to do that in the most effective way you can in the moment to get it to the Battalion chief for them to make the decision they need to make.

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Thanks. Another question can you please define COWS ?

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I will take this one. COWS is Cell on Wheels and what that is, is a cell phone company can truck in their own self-contained trucks to set up a cell phone tower. They can run on their own backup generators -- all that kind of stuff and so therefore you can truck in this COW to a specific location and help really boost up that cell network right where it is at. So that is what COWS is.

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Great. Next question -- Is San Francisco the only site that uses Twitter there are other areas that do where are they? Can you give information about how people could find out or find other CERT or other emergency or disaster Twitter accounts?

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So -- I don't know too many other CERT programs that are using Twitter as part of the emergency response right now. Now having said that, I know that it is used in different locations worldwide. And I can get back to you on that. I do not have specific examples right now.

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Again I agree. I have not heard of anyone using Twitter in the same capacity that we are as a communication tool amongst ourselves. But I have heard of other agencies absolutely putting that ear to the ground on what people are tweeting about and things like that. So yes, there is definitely other entities that are using it for that second job in the Battalion station which is searching for the public tweets or messages on Facebook or Instagram and other forms. So that you can tell where the most damage is potentially because a lot of that stuff rises to the top or it is very heavily retweeted. A lot of the worst damage in the city or what not because people gravitate towards shocking photos or the media tweets that out a lot or shares it. So therefore I do know a lot of other agencies that do use it in the search function which is great. But using as a tool -- not that I know of.

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Info gathering absolutely and I think emergency agencies are doing a lot around that right now.

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Great. Next question what is the Twitter feed for Battalion eight? I noticed that you had a different email.

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On Twitter we have @SFFDB8 but the corresponding email that would have been SFFDB8 was taken by someone. So therefore, we grabbed two other alternatives and

we just added SFFDBAT8gmail.com and Battalion, full word. That is the only difference between Battalion 8 and the rest of the stations.

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I think was great that Brooke was able to snag those. These things happen, right? And we have to make allowances for it. So that is exactly what was done.

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Great. Next question -- I've recently been made aware of the app called fire chat that operates even if cellular networks are down because it is peer to peer using Bluetooth and local Wi-Fi. Is that something either of you are familiar with or could recommend?

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Yes. I will jump in. I was actually turned onto that app by another fellow CERT rescuer and she made me download it in the moment and I was like oh my gosh this is great technology. Sure. It is wonderful if we do not have to rely on any cell phone network. Especially if we have different carriers or it doesn't work for some reason. I also love the emerging technologies that are using this kind of same idea to carry a network from cell to cell, or excuse me from device to device using Wi-Fi kind of technology and Bluetooth. So I love that. I love seeing where that is going. There are multiple things I have seen on Kick Starter that are starting up for people backpacking in the woods and stuff like that. If you can still connect and carry a text message through, that is a wonderful idea especially when you have spotty cell phone service in between mountains or hills. That absolutely can affect your network strength. So yes, I have used it. I downloaded it. We just have not played with it enough within our drills. We are trying to get Twitter up and running first.

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And in addition that is one of the reasons why I put together Resilience365.org because we want to take a look at things like mesh networks. We want to take a look at things like Internet over Ham radio as backups to some of the things that we have been talking about. So for me if you are using this app let us know. We might even experiment. We have a citywide drill coming up on April 22. We might even see if we can include some portion of this as part of that drill and if there is ever a follow-up we may be able to come back and give people an update.

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Alright, great. Next question -- there is a PIO for the San Jose Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service and it looks at they want to know if they can share these PowerPoint slides with the group?

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Sure. Absolutely. This idea -- the whole point of it is to take these ideas and incorporate them for your program and what works best for you and whatever region you are in or for whatever agency you are in because the whole idea is if you can speed up these communications and make them really clear and easy to understand in a text form, photo or video then hopefully that will help you in your emergency

response and the speed of it. So absolutely. More people that can benefit hopefully the more lives we can save and have an impact on. Go for it.

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In addition please go ahead and direct message me or follow me or connect with me at SFNERT because I would love to create a network of those who really want to play with technologies in their CERT teams. I'm here for that. That is what I love doing as well as Brooke. So please reach out.

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Next question. So should be Twitter be the primary or secondary source for information with the Ham communications?

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For us, right now, like I said we have invested in Ham and the whole idea -- this is just another modality or another way to do things. I know that I have actually been in certain spots where I got the message and the Ham radio person didn't. At the end of the day, it will come down to what works and what does not. But always, as far as I am concerned, Hams are always going to be part of our response. They always need to be. I am a Ham myself. I love it. And this will be layered on top. At the end of the day, it is whatever works. In addition -- let's be clear about where we are in the 21st century. These things are going on every day. We need to be able to take advantage of them. Sitting back and having all this information around us and not being able to cipher it into our emergency response -- at some point will come back to affect us. So that is why I like doing this. I like incorporating it in. I would rather have my Battalion chiefs say no we already got the information if they are ever asked by the media. We are already incorporating this in to help them be even more cutting edge as they are taking a look at their response. It is important to be able to take advantage of this. This is layered it on top of everything that we have already done and we will continue to do. At the end of the day, it just comes down to what works and what doesn't in a particular situation.

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I think we are going to wrap up the Q&A session. We are getting close to the time limit but I want to thank everyone who participated. I apologize if we did not get to your question. Please feel free to let us know if you need a follow-up. I want to thank our two speakers Anietie and Brooke. You were both wonderful presenters and we were very happy to have you here.

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Thank you for this opportunity.

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Absolutely.

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Our pleasure. Now I am going to turn it back over to Zola. We will have a short pole at the end of this so please -- Zola.

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Thank you for joining everyone. We had great audience participation, but we would like to know what you think and want to get your feedback. We ask that you please take a minute or so to complete the short questions on the screen before you disconnect. Thank you again and enjoy the rest of your day!

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[Event concluded ]