



## Social Media and the NRC: What We're Doing, Why We're Doing it and What Else We Might Do



U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of Public Affairs

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## Why is the NRC using social media?

- Everyone else is doing it!
- It's new and fun and different!



No, really:

- It's a new communication tool that augments our traditional tools
- It meets Open Government mandates
- It may reach new audiences
- It's vital for crisis communication

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## The NRC Blog



- Created to meet needs for public interaction as required by Open Government and to create a new avenue for dialogue with the public
- Bloggers come from all offices and speak "first person" and plain language (most of the time)
- Went "live" on Jan. 31, 2011
- To date (April 2014):
  - 450 posts
  - 3,700 posted comments
  - 500,000+ views

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<http://public-blog.nrc-gateway.gov/>

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## NRC Blog Lessons Learned

- Needed an "Open Forum" for off-topic comments.
- Vast majority of comments meet the guidelines.
- Commenters engage each other, not just us.
- Criticism – a lot of criticism -- is part of the process.
- Far exceeded initial expectations for viewership.

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## NRC Blog Lessons Learned, Cont.

- Outstanding crisis communication tool to disseminate information in addition to releases.
- Clarify who you are talking to – we chose general public NOT informed audience (although they are viewers, it turns out).
- Write post about other social media i.e. YouTube to enhance synergy.
- Must check for comments multiple times a day (5-6 per work day)

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### Important Posts:

- Hurricane Sandy updates
- SONGs updates
- Ft. Calhoun updates
- North Anna earthquake updates
- Japan posts based on public feedback
- Explanations ranging from hardened vents to salps to behavioral observation program
- NRC Science 101

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### Future Steps:

- No changes anticipated – concept of diversified bloggers works great!
- Continuing to work to create new content and quick turnaround in responding to comments
- Ongoing need to communicate in plain language
- Expect some difficulty in getting content as “low hanging fruit” is gone
- Incorporating blog into COOP/crisis planning

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### Let's Chat:

- Chat was a live discussion platform for real-time dialogue between the public and NRC staff
- Six-month pilot launched in April 2013
- Held two a month, on a regular schedule, offered on high-interest topics such as hurricane preparedness, seismic studies and Fukushima lessons learned
- All Chats were archived

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### Let's Chat, cont.:

- Very resource-intensive – two or three public affairs staff; several experts; general counsel
- Required extensive pre-prep with the “experts” and preparation of “fun facts”
- Short text answers were necessary to keep up with questions and “fill the air,” but that proved inherently problematic. Users felt answers were a “brush off” because of brevity
- Now looking at a video version instead

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- Began using in August 2011
- Consistent graphic “look and feel” with blog and web
- The main Twitter account is an “announcement” vehicle managed by OPA. All press releases, blog posts and YouTube videos get a tweet
- To date: 1,400 tweets; 5000 followers
- Tweets driving traffic to the blog – we know because we see the spike after the tweet
- Consistent re-tweeting expands reach

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- Channel went live in September 2011 with videos related to 9/11
- Content includes pre-existing videos (edited); parts of Commission meetings; and new content
- 110 videos/audio clips posted with 55,000 views
- A resource-intensive, but important tool offering unique, visual content
- Must be 508 compliant
- “Three Minutes With” a useful vehicle

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- Photo sharing site replaces online photo gallery
- Went live in January 2012
- Photos from the home page link to Flickr; Flickr captions link to web or blog as appropriate
- Photos/graphics posted to date: 1800
- Views 1 million+

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## Facebook



- It's coming!
- Looking at a "medium engagement model between using it only as an announcement "bulletin board" and allowing a free-for-all
- Will fully "cross pollinate" with other social media – reposting tweets, parts of blogs, videos and photos, etc.
- Summer launch expected.

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## Social Media and Crisis Com

- Social media part of the Crisis Communication tool box
- Tested during exercises and small events (Hurricane Sandy)
- Blog comment feedback informs public affairs products
- Pre-prepared YouTube PSAs
- "Dark" Emergency Event Web page
- Rumor Page and social media monitoring

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## Next Steps/Challenges

- Continuing to create unique, interesting content and managing dialogue with workload and staffing restrictions
- Increasing internal understanding (and usage) of these tools
- Cross-pollination between Web, blog, YouTube and Twitter increase "traffic"
- Continue to tout sites during meetings and other occasions via marketing materials
- Measuring success with metrics

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