



Mass Communication Week at Texas State University

## CRISIS COVERAGE: FORT HOOD

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A panel of four journalists, both professional and student, discussed what goes into crisis coverage today in Old Main.

Debbie Hiott (alumna), editor for the Austin American-Statesman; Jackie Stone, social media correspondent for the Austin American-Statesman; Kelsey Bradshaw for the Texas State University Star Newspaper and Jordan Gass-Poore for KTSW radio all discussed and answered questions over covering crises like the Fort Hood shooting that occurred November 5, 2013.

Hiott started off by discussing what occurs when breaking news first enters the newsroom. The first person to be informed of the news is the social media correspondent. This is so that the public can be informed. Once that occurs everything and everyone goes into motion.

"Accuracy is a huge priority to the Statesman," Hiott said. Accuracy is a big deal to readers due to the proximity and to the Statesman being a local newspaper.

Stone followed up by adding that as a journalist you want the stories that everyone is chasing but you also want to give basic information to inform the public.

"The Fort Hood shooting was a catalyst for the star being more active on twitter," Bradshaw said. The coverage that the star provided helped them to gain a lot of followers. They also became more present on social media as a whole.

Relevance is very important to followers of the news. People are not going to care unless they can relate and connect to the story.

Gass-Poore said that covering the Fort Hood shooting for KTSW showed her that when there is breaking news, "there is no plan, you just go."

Another important aspect to remember is that breaking news can happen anywhere and at anytime. As a journalist you must always be prepared. Smartphones are one of the most useful tools to have when covering a crisis. Always have an extra charge for every device you carry and keep a notepad with you at all times.

It seemed that overall each panelist agreed that communication is key to crisis coverage. You must constantly be in contact with everyone on your team and most importantly you must be in contact with your editor.

*In crisis coverage you need a sense of urgency and a desire to get the story first, along with a calm head. #txstmcweek #TXST*

— Meghan M Fraser (@MeghanMichelle8) [October 23, 2014](#)

"Your best defense is a good offense" –@dhiott #txstmcweek #TXST #crisiscoverage

— Meghan M Fraser (@MeghanMichelle8) October 23, 2014

Crisis coverage – #forthood #txstmcweek #austinamericanstatesman @dhiott @kbrad5 @jgasspoore @holly\_wise

— Meghan M Fraser (@MeghanMichelle8) October 23, 2014

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