

Towards a realtime Twitter analysis during (flood) crises for operational (flood) crisis management

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The Internet operates at near light speed, which makes the information sharing process through social media near real-time. Moreover, communication messages that are shared on social media are (mostly) publicly available, which makes the communication process between users highly dynamic. Recent crises have shown that social media are being used extensively to share information and opinions. Such information is potentially valuable to crisis managers, because they can use the information to update their perceptions of the crisis status (i.e., their 'situational awareness'), their operational response to the crises and their crisis communication with partner organizations, media and citizens. However, during crises the amount of information (i.e., number of messages)

that is shared on social media is huge. Collecting, filtering and understanding the information real-time is therefore highly challenging. The current paper discusses the current use of and expectations about social media among crisis managers in the Netherlands. In addition, we analyze the use of Twitter by the public, media and authorities during a recent storm event using a monitoring and analysis tool that is currently being developed. The analysis focuses on various aspects of the communication process. For instance, we identify the questions that are being raised by citizens as the incident progresses and the answers that are being provided by their fellow citizens, the media, and the authorities. Implications for (flood) crisis management and communication are being discussed.