Framing #crisis perceptions through user-generated content:
An exploratory case study examining the crisis message frames in the Mexican blogger Marcia
Macias crisis

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the Mexican blogger Marcia Macias crisis

Abstract

New emerging media such as mobile applications and social media have allowed
users the opportunity to interact and engage in dialogue with others while sharing
information (both textual and visual) in their respective digital communities.Social media is
about "people" (Marken, 2007), and the technology not only provides means for establishing
and maintaining relationships, but also allows users to create their own content to share with
others in the online community (user-generated content; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas,
2009).

The personalized access to information and real-time focused approach in connecting
with the human social and digital network of individuals and information hasgiven journalists
the ability to frame their crisis messages specifically towards the intended
audiences.Journalists have used these third party sources (ex. Citizen journalists) as a
resource in reporting "eye witness" accounts from various social media platforms like
Twitter (Laricy, Avery, Sweetser, & Howes, 2009). These emerging technological and
communication tools have allowed people to feel they have more control over the crisis as
well as more connection to the community (Shklovski, Burke, Kiesler, & Kraut, 2010).

Mexico is currently experiencing a chaos-driven society combatting multiple battles
and violence with the drug cartel in real life and in the digital world. While journalists and
Mexican citizens are using social media to share updates and safety information with each

other, the drug cartels are implementing these new technologies to initiate intimidation

techniques to raise fear and bring the terror of violence to individuals directly to their

computeror mobile devices ("Mexican drug cartels' new target: Bloggers," October 13,

2011). According to the Committee to   Protect Journalists (CPJ), there have been 59

journalists who have been murdered in Mexico since 1992, and about half (25) were killed

due to their occupation ("Mexican newspaper editor Marcia Macias found decapitated,"

September 25, 2011).

This work-in-progress exploratory case study will focus on the analysis of the crisis

framing messages coming out from US newspapers and blogs, Mexican newspapers and

blogs, and US/Mexico Twitter accounts.Six initial themes emerged when looking at the

coverage of the murder of Mexican blogger and journalist Marcia Macias in September 2011

includes the following: 1) blame towards "social media" and its role in the murder 2)

Reliance of social media (Twitter in particular) for safety information in Mexico 3)

Inconsistency with conceptualization between traditional social media (blogs) versus social

media 4) Less blame placed on using social media itself – sometimes placed on the

government for creating this environment, other times on the killers themselves; 5) A need

for restoration of journalist's ability to report to the news without fear both in traditional and

social media outlets and 6) Crisis messages from drug cartel involves the use of intimidation,

propaganda and fear presented both in textual and visual formats shared through social

media.Professional implications, best practices involving citizen journalism with social

media and future research ideas in this area will be discussed.

Key terms: crisis communications, new media, citizen journalists, crisis fram

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