

Comparative Review of Social Media Analysis Tools for Preparedness

Terms of Reference

Background

New communication, information and networking technologies are rapidly being adopted by all segments of societies. A range of social media platforms are enabling people to communicate, connect and inform one another around the clock and across continents. Over the last several years, the humanitarian sector has made important progress in leveraging these technologies to better inform and serve vulnerable populations before, during and after disaster events. However, much remains to be learned about how such technologies can help to increase the impact of humanitarian work.

Given the increasing adaptation of communication and information technologies worldwide, it is essential for the humanitarian sector to learn how to best integrate these technologies into their work. There are already many examples where social media has successfully been leveraged to disseminate preparedness, early warning, and disaster assistance information.¹ As with any type of technology, it is essential to understand the limitations for the application and use of these communication and information technologies.

The Global Disaster Preparedness Center (GDPC) is a joint venture between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the American Red Cross with the aim to expand and enhance disaster preparedness (DP) capacities of the global Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) network through a service oriented, demand-driven approach. The GDPC focuses on three areas of services, knowledge management, technical assistance and research, which complement and support relevant efforts being under taken by national societies. Throughout the RCRC network there is a growing demand to gain a deeper understanding on how new communication and information technologies, including social media, can be leveraged to enhance service delivery to and strengthen resilience among vulnerable populations worldwide.

Purpose

In collaboration with other partners, the GDPC seeks to build out the current knowledge and awareness within the global Red Cross network on how the information exchange and communication on social media platforms can be better integrated into the work of the Red Cross. Beyond looking at the access to information and communication within networks, it is a key interest to better understand how the GDPC and other actors within the Red Cross Red Crescent can leverage information from social media channels to assess and display interests in preparedness topics and disaster related events on different

¹The IFRC World Disaster Report 2013 “Focus on technology and the future of humanitarian intervention” gives many examples on how technology, including social media and other information/communication technologies, are used in the humanitarian sector. <https://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/134658/WDR%202013%20complete.pdf>

timelines and identify trends in humanitarian work. Ultimately, it is envisioned that such information will allow the RCRC network to have greater awareness of the diverse needs and interests on the ground and adapt programming and communication strategies to enable vulnerable communities to better prepare for and cope with disasters.

Objectives

The GDPC currently uses social media analysis to follow conversations around established terms related to key topic areas like disaster preparedness. It is of interest to learn more about the functionality and capabilities of different social media analysis tools with the aim to conduct more robust information analysis that is able to draw in information from sources worldwide while reflecting different timelines and geographical differences. In addition, it is of interest to display the information in diverse ways, i.e. on different websites. The GDPC is aware of different tools but is interested to benefit from a more comprehensive analysis of available commercial and open source tools.

Scope of Work

In undertaking the research, the following components are of interests in the context of the broader project

- Where relevant, interviews and/or focus group discussions (in person, by phone, or online) with RCRC actors and other humanitarian practitioners to explore the use of social media analysis tools for disaster work. It is of interest to examine how such tools are informing and have the potential to change the way humanitarian practitioners work. This aims at expanding the use of social media analysis tools beyond the creation of situational awareness to influencing decision making.
- Development of specific use cases that illustrate the potential uses of social media analysis tools in different scenarios, i.e. no- or low-cost solutions for resource restrained situations. These cases will be used as illustrative examples to build out the guidance on tool selection criteria and recommendations for potential tools.
- A comparative review of tools for social media analysis in the context of Red Cross Red Crescent work looking at aspects such as extensibility, multi-language support, trend analysis capabilities, cross-platform analysis, and affordability.

The research will produce the following outputs:

- Recommendations on the possible uses of social media analysis for the GDPC and other RCRC actors, based on the comparative analysis of different tools and a good understanding of humanitarian and risk reduction work.
- Guidance on the requirements that need to be considered when choosing analytic tools for disaster preparedness work.
- Specific recommendations on potential tools (and partnering strategies) for the GDPC and other RCRC actors to acquire or access a broad range of features and opportunities for social media analysis.

Deliverables & Timeline

Anticipated start date: mid-February 2015

Anticipated overall timeframe for research project: mid-February – June 1, 2015

Phase 1 – Initiation and Project Design		
Deliverables	Content	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplan and Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of milestones and budget (Templates will be provided) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 days after grant award
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief outline of use cases • Outline of interview guidelines • Methodology for analysis • Envisioned outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 weeks after grant award
Phase 2 – Implementation		
Deliverables	Content	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term progress report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary findings • Anticipated project modifications (Template will be provided) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 weeks after project mid-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term financial report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Template will be provided) 	
Phase 3 – Project Close-out		
Deliverables	Content	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final research findings and recommendations for incorporating knowledge in project activities • Recommendations for future research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due June 1, 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final financial report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Template will be provided) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 days after project termination

Requirements of applicants

1. Expertise in big data and social media research.
2. Expertise in the application of social media communication tools for disaster related work, of particular interest is the application to preparedness work.
3. Experience with qualitative and quantitative research design.
4. Familiarity with work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent global network and knowledge of the international humanitarian relief sector.

Selection Process

To apply, please fill out the provided proposal template. The document should not exceed 15 – 20 pages, excluding attachments. The proposal will be evaluated considering the above requirements and should include the following:

- Demonstrated understanding of the terms of reference including an applied research design
- High level workplan for the implementation and coordination of research activities.
- Information on capabilities and experiences of managing partners.
- Short bios of the key personnel involved in the research project with information on past research experiences as applicable to the project.
- Concise budget broken down by activities and timeline.

Budget

The maximum budget allocated for this project will not exceed USD 50,000 including all costs for implementation, outreach and travel.

Payment Terms

Payments are all-inclusive. The American Red Cross will make an initial disbursement to Grantee of 70% of the budget. The final disbursement of 30% of the budget will occur upon the approval through the GDPC of the Phase 3 deliverables.

Deadline for submission: January 22, 2015

Please send complete proposals to gdpc@redcross.org, specifying 'Comparative Review of Social Media Analysis Tools for Preparedness, [Institution], [Date]' in the subject line. **Only complete submissions will be considered.**