



**Using Social Media for Social Change and Digital  
Storytelling in Response to Natural Disasters.**  
*Sharing global triumphs and tragedies through the digital  
narrative.*

Presenters: Trina Chiasson, Tara L. Conley, and Joseph Perez – Media Make Change

**GOALS**

To show how new and social media have made social initiatives accessible to everyone. Through this workshop, participants will brainstorm social initiatives, develop their ideas in a group setting, create web content in the form of blogs, video, and pictures, and have the world participate in real time.

We hope those involved will walk away with a greater sense of their role in the worldwide digital narrative, and how we can all participate on a daily basis not just as spectators but as activists as well.

**BIO**

Media Make Change is a media justice organization that works to support and empower under-served communities through SNEW (SOCIAL + NEW) media technology, literacy, and advocacy. MMC operates using partnerships, collaborations, mentorships, project promotion, and digital media training workshops based on a holistic curriculum comprised of Concept & Design, Community Development, and Creative Expression.

**AUDIO/VISUAL NEEDS**

Projector  
Wireless or Ethernet Internet access

**SUMMARY**

Social media like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have changed the face of global communication. With so many people using social networks to communicate, connect, and find information, social media platforms have proven to be an invaluable tool for social activism and community change projects. New media tools like digital cameras and flip cams are being used widely to document and create meaningful advocacy projects. We will discuss the power of social and new media platforms and tools that can effectively be used to bring focus to natural disasters quickly and effectively. Participants will also get hands-on experience about planning social media projects and adding to the digital narrative to raise awareness about their causes. When more people have access to social and new media tools then more people also have the power to address global disasters and share the stories that need to be told.

## OUTLINE

### PART I. BACKGROUND – INSTRUCTIONAL SECTION, POWERPOINT (15 minutes)

- Warm up activity: Open forum to talk about current events and look up twitter feeds.
- Introductions & Definitions
- Social media: Interactive media generated by users and solely depends on user participation and contribution.

#### § Types:

- Social networking sites: (Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, \*Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.) allow global users to contact one another directly, and create a detailed digital identity. These services provide effective one-to-one communication tools, such as private messages or wall posts, but the group-oriented features often feel shallow and impersonal. \*Twitter is a special platform with its own methods of communication (RT, hashtags, etc) & internal social media platforms such as Twitpic, Twitvid.
  - News media repositories: (Digg, Reddit) lets groups share and discover content through collective intelligence. They provide a space for many-to-many conversation, but tend to aim at a global audience, since they rely on network effects to achieve a critical mass.
  - Personal media publishers: (YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, blogging platforms) make it easy for users to get their message to the world, and therefore focus on one-to-many communication.
  - *Blog/blogging* - A type of website maintained by an individual or group of individuals representing similar ideas that features regular commentary. Other functions of a blog include personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, webpages, and other media related to its topic. The ability of readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important aspect of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on art, photography, videos, music, and audio (podcasts). Microblogging is another type of blogging, featuring very short posts – e.g. Twitter. (Source: Wikipedia)
- § Types: Media Speaks, PlayCity, Wordpress, Blogger, Tumblr, Posterous. (Show examples on screen).
- Discussion Platforms: (Ning, PHPbb, YouthNoise, and niche community websites) facilitate communication by creating a space for groups to use. This makes it possible for niche communities to function, though they

do so with an element of isolation from the global community.

- New media
- Includes digital technology tools and methods like audio, video, and text publication that, when accessed, can be produced and instantly published on social networking sites, blog sites, podcasts, and video hosting sites, otherwise known as social media platforms.
- 'Snew media'
- A term coined by MEDIA MAKE CHANGE founder Tara L. Conley to refer to both social media and new media simultaneously while acknowledging their separate methods and purposes in the digital age.
- Digital narrative
- An audio, video, and/or written story told using digital media technology.
- Examples of digital narratives: Media Speaks (blog); Cine Institute (video: show 2 minute clip); A Region of Survivors (video: show 2 minute clip); This American Life (audio, podcast).
- How-To examples; creating & distributing a video, blog, podcast. --> The BNF Model (show a BNF video and explain the process of distributing via social networks, email lists, and blogs).
- '*Digital video storytelling*': A short, first person video-narrative created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images, and music or other sounds ([www.storycenter.org/](http://www.storycenter.org/)).
- § Elements: Video, moving/still images, music.
- § Tools: Video software, digital cameras/camcorders, flip cams.
- § Implications of digital video storytelling?
  - 'Objectivity through mass subjectivity'?
  - Selective recollection?
  - Open access to digital media might be dangerous when trying to protect an individual's or her/his community's privacy & identity.
- Why digital narratives?
- § Provides a means for anyone to tell a story without the filter of corporations or mainstream media.

**- 10 MINUTE BREAK -**

## **Part II: INTERACTIVE SESSION (50 minutes)**

- (5 minutes) - Introduce activity; explain goals and objectives; explain how MMC will promote the campaigns on our website, blog, and social networks.
- [Tara] Explain goals & objectives.
- [Joe & Trina] Explain how the campaigns will be promoted on the website and blogs.
- (5 minutes) - Activity #1: "Choose a Cause" - Break into groups
- Question: What news stories have you been reading that deal with natural disasters and/or ecological damage (hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, oil spills, etc.)?
- (25 minutes) - Activity #2 Vision & Mission Strategy [Distribute "Road Map" handout for groups to work on. The following questions will appear on the handout.]
- What is the name of our initiative?
- What is our vision and mission with this snew media campaign?
- How will we raise awareness and tell our stories using digital narratives and social media?

- Meaningful content – What perspectives, (words, images, video, sounds) are most meaningful to my audience in order to raise awareness about this particular natural disaster?
- Purpose – Why use social and new media to raise awareness and tell stories of natural disaster? How many people can I reach? What are some of the implications of using social & new media to raise awareness, especially as it concerns protecting the rights and identities of those being featured in the digital stories?
- Promotion – How should I promote my ideas and content using social networking and new media platforms? What is the most effective way? (Think about possible monetary costs associated with producing content using a digital camera, video-editing software, promoting ideas through blogs & Facebook, for instance. Also consider the amount of time you can commit).
- Management – How often should I update blog, Twitter page, etc? What information should I include?
- (15 minutes) - Activity #2 Presentations
- Groups will present the following information:
  - § Cause they are championing.
  - § Name of initiative.
  - § Vision and mission statement.
  - § Why initiative is necessary for post disaster recovery.
  - § List three ways group members will promote and manage initiative using social networks platforms and digital narratives. Include what types of social media platforms, personal media publishers, discussion forums, video documentaries, or other forms of new media you will use to promote your initiative.
- § Final remarks.

### **Part III: Q& A, WRAP UP, CLOSING REMARKS (15 minutes)**

- Closing remarks from Tara, Trina, and Joe.
- Post contact info on screen.
- Follow up with winning group after session.

### **END PRESENTATION**