



# FEMA

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**Lessons Learned  
Information Sharing**  
[LLIS.gov](http://LLIS.gov)

## GOOD STORY

### Hurricane Sandy: Millions Turn to Twitter for Hurricane Sandy Information Sharing

*The LLIS.gov team identified several innovative Whole Community ideas and practices to support preparedness, response, and recovery following Hurricane Sandy.*

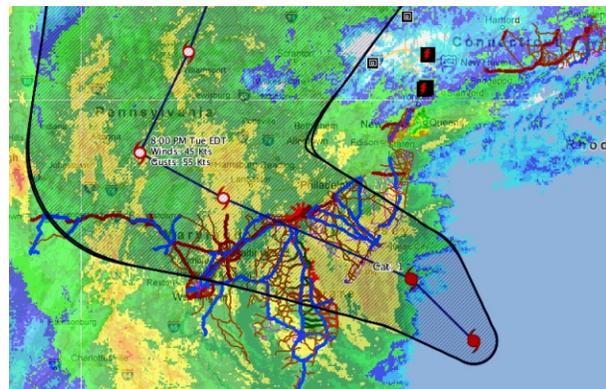
#### SUMMARY

Government agencies, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and the public used [Twitter](https://twitter.com) extensively before, during, and after Hurricane Sandy made landfall. The use of Twitter ensured that victims could access and share accurate and up-to-date preparedness, response, and recovery information and make informed choices.

#### DESCRIPTION

##### *Hurricane Sandy*

On Monday, October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy made landfall near Atlantic City, New Jersey, pushing a massive storm surge to shore and generating winds up to 75 miles per hour. The National Hurricane Center downgraded Sandy to a post-tropical cyclone shortly after landfall. Sandy caused storm surge, record flooding, and wind damage. Nine days after the storm, a large nor'easter caused massive snowfall undermining response operations in the disaster-impacted areas. As a result of these events, millions of people were left without power and hundreds were displaced along the East Coast.



**Hurricane Sandy's Approach  
(Source: NOAA)**

Federal, state, and local agencies used Twitter and other social media platforms extensively before, during, and after the storm to disseminate critical information to residents and the public. Information ranged from evacuation orders and shelter locations to maps featuring evacuation zones and road and rail closures. Many agencies also employed social media to engage in two-way communication with the public, responding to questions and clarifying statements.

#### *Twitter Usage*

Twitter is a real-time social networking and micro-blogging service that consists of many conversations. Users can follow an individual's or an organization's "tweets," or they can search for conversations on any topic. Tweets are limited to 140 characters, but can include links for photos, videos, and other conversations.

The Twitter site did not experience any network outages and remained active throughout the storm. As a result, many agencies and individual users turned to Twitter to issue evacuation advisories and orders, convey news and information, share photos and videos, and discuss recovery efforts. In many cases agencies also linked information to specific webpages or to videos and briefings uploaded on [YouTube](#). Finally, some agencies employed Twitter as a public warning system to disseminate general and local warnings as well as recovery and operating status information.

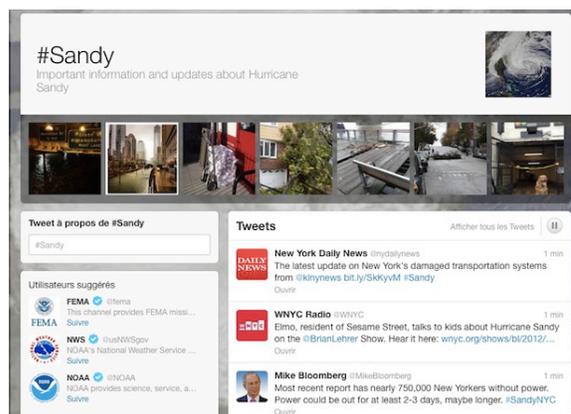
Some of the official Twitter accounts used during the storm included:

<a href="#">@NOAA</a>	<a href="#">@FEMA</a>
<a href="#">@NHC_Atlantic</a>	<a href="#">@femaespanol</a>
<a href="#">@readydotgov</a>	<a href="#">@craigatfema</a>
<a href="#">@RedCrossNorthNJ</a>	<a href="#">@redcrossny</a>
<a href="#">@NYGovCuomo</a>	<a href="#">@NYCMayorsOffice</a>
<a href="#">@NYCnotify</a>	<a href="#">@MikeBloomberg</a>

In the two weeks during and immediately following Sandy, more than 20 million Sandy-related tweets were sent. The largest share of information exchange involved news organizations and government sources offering information, individuals sharing eyewitness accounts, and users cross-sharing of information posted by other users.

Twitter responded to the surge of interest in Sandy-related searches by listing relevant emergency and local government accounts at <https://twitter.com/gov/sandy>. Twitter also created a dedicated [#Sandy](#) page where relevant and timely tweets and information were posted.

Although during the storm there were reports of several pranks, hoaxes, and misinformation shared via Twitter, the self-managing nature of Twitter allowed for the quick debunking of misinformation.



The Twitter #Sandy portal

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