How to Use Social Media in VERT Activations

What is social media?

Social media is a website or application that is used to share information via virtual networks. These include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc.

How VERT can use social media for Virtual Reconnaissance?

Social media is used as one of many methods to communicate within a community in a timely manner. VERT encourages members to find information regarding disaster updates, utility shortages/outages, infrastructure damage, first response mobility, shelter locations, etc. using only credible social media accounts. VERT members should NEVER use information from personal social media accounts to contribute to reconnaissance work.
Who to follow during natural disasters and what to expect from them?

Government Agencies: These sources share updates on disasters, shelter locations, road/airport closures, contact information, and other helpful information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Agency</th>
<th>Social Media Accounts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)</td>
<td>Website: <a href="https://www.fema.gov">https://www.fema.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twitter account: <a href="https://twitter.com/fema">https://twitter.com/fema</a> or @fema</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YouTube account: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/FEMA">https://www.youtube.com/user/FEMA</a></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Instagram account: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/fema/">https://www.instagram.com/fema/</a> or @fema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twitter account: <a href="https://twitter.com/USGS">https://twitter.com/USGS</a> or @USGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YouTube account: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/usgs">https://www.youtube.com/user/usgs</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instagram account: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/usgs/">https://www.instagram.com/usgs/</a> or @usgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)</td>
<td>Website: <a href="https://www.noaa.gov/">https://www.noaa.gov/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twitter account: <a href="https://twitter.com/NOAA">https://twitter.com/NOAA</a> or @NOAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YouTube account: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/noaa">https://www.youtube.com/user/noaa</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instagram account: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/noaa/">https://www.instagram.com/noaa/</a> or @noaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Social media accounts for the following agencies and departments shall be found accordingly.
  - Local Emergency Management Agencies (state, county, city)
  - Local Department of Transportation (DOT) (state, city)
  - Local Department of Education/school districts
Utility Providers: These accounts are usually used to communicate with customers regarding areas of outages, resource restrictions, and updates regarding utility restoration.

- Water Resources Department
- Power Companies (electric, gas, etc.)

First Responders: Typical accounts operated by first response teams are used to communicate with the community, determine response priorities, and mobilizing response teams. These local agencies can be both state and city.

- Local Police Department
- Local Fire Department
- Local Hospital Facility

Relief Organizations: Information regarding shelter location, food and water availability, etc. are often shared from these accounts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relief Organization</th>
<th>Social Media Accounts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| American Red Cross        | Website: [https://www.redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) 
Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross) or @RedCross 
YouTube account: [https://www.youtube.com/user/AmRedCross](https://www.youtube.com/user/AmRedCross) 
Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/americanredcross](https://www.instagram.com/americanredcross) or @americanredcross |
**International Engineering Organizations**: These organizations typically post information with regards to post-disaster conditions and people going into the field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Social Media Accounts</th>
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</table>
| Build Change                           | Website: [https://www.buildchange.org/](https://www.buildchange.org/)  
  Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/buildchange](https://twitter.com/buildchange) or @BuildChange  
  YouTube account: [https://www.youtube.com/user/BuildChange](https://www.youtube.com/user/BuildChange)  
  Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/buildchangeintl](https://www.instagram.com/buildchangeintl) or @buildchangeintl |
| GeoHazards International                | Website: [https://www.geohaz.org/](https://www.geohaz.org/)  
  Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/geosafety](https://twitter.com/geosafety) or @geosafety  
  YouTube account: [https://www.youtube.com/user/GeoHazInternational](https://www.youtube.com/user/GeoHazInternational) |
| National Council of Structural Engineers Associations (NCSEA) | Website: [http://www.ncsea.com/](http://www.ncsea.com/)  
  Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/ncsea](https://twitter.com/ncsea) or @NCSEA |
| National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) | Website: [https://www.nist.gov/](https://www.nist.gov/)  
  Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/usnistgov](https://twitter.com/usnistgov) or @usnistgov  
  YouTube account: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCelItQpbih_hBrNSA5cRZyw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCelItQpbih_hBrNSA5cRZyw)  
  Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/usnistgov](https://www.instagram.com/usnistgov) or @usnistgov |
| National Home Education Research Institute/DesignSafe | Website: [https://www.nheri.org/](https://www.nheri.org/)  
  Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/nheri2010](https://twitter.com/nheri2010) or @nheri  
  YouTube account: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCMsEU-FmXaZfpLoSnZURVA/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCMsEU-FmXaZfpLoSnZURVA/featured) |
| National Science Foundation (NSF)/NHERI RAPID Center | Website: [https://www.nsf.gov/](https://www.nsf.gov/)  
  Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/NSF](https://twitter.com/NSF) or @NSF  
  YouTube account: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRuCgmzhczsm89jzPtN2Wuw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRuCgmzhczsm89jzPtN2Wuw)  
  Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/nsfgov](https://www.instagram.com/nsfgov) or @nsfgov |
| Dr. Lucy Jones                          | Website: [http://drlucyjones.com/](http://drlucyjones.com/)  
  Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/drlucyjones](https://twitter.com/drlucyjones) or @drlucyjones |
Accuracy Checklist provided by Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries

Social media can provide instant news faster than traditional news outlets or sources and can be a great wealth of information, but there is also an ever increasing need to verify and determine accuracy of this information. Here are some items to consider that can help determine authenticity:

- Location of the source - are they in the place they are tweeting or posting about?
- Network - who is in their network and who follows them? Do I know this account?
- Content - Can the information be corroborated from other sources?
- Contextual updates - Do they usually post or tweet on this topic? If so, what did past or updated posts say? Do they fill in more details?
- Age - What is the age of the account in question? Be wary of recently created accounts.
- Reliability - Is the source of information reliable?

References:
- [https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/social-media](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/social-media)
- [https://guides.library.jhu.edu/evaluate/social-media](https://guides.library.jhu.edu/evaluate/social-media)