Reputational Threats Online:
Social media as a simultaneous agent of crisis and tool for response and resolution in the case study of an American academic library

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Presentation Outcomes

- Recognize the potential for social media to act as both an agent of crisis and as a means for crisis communication and response.

- Consider possible reputational threats online that may exist for your organization/brand upon review of the presented UNF reputational threat case.

- Identify possible preparation opportunities and solutions for reputational threats on social media using Social Listening.

- Discuss pragmatic implications and recommendations.
Social Media: Cause of Crisis & Crisis Communication Tool

Victoria & I are praying for everyone affected by Hurricane Harvey. Please join us as we pray for the safety of our Texas friends & family.

8:39 p.m. · 26 Aug 17

Lakewood Church @lakewoodch · 11h
Beginning at 12 Noon tomorrow we are collecting infant and adult diapers, baby formula and baby food.

113 Retweets 217 Likes 367

Lakewood Church @lakewoodch · 11h
Coordinating with the city, Lakewood is a collection site for distributing supplies to the Houston area shelters. LakewoodChurch.com/Relief

74 Retweets 169 Likes 241

Lakewood Church @lakewoodch · 12h
We will get through this storm together. Are you able to volunteer? Help us help others. Click here: LakewoodChurch.com/Relief

81 Retweets 80 Likes 169
UNF Case Study: What Went Wrong

Posted to UNF Student Union Facebook page on April 17, 2017 at 11:17am (two weeks before finals)

“Finals are frustrating, but remember...” #MakeYouSmileMonday #LoveUNF #SWOOPLife

UNF Library Facebook Page @unflibrary tagged by the Student Union
UNF Case Study: The Fallout

• 24 hours later, the post went viral
  – 189 reactions (Like, Haha, Wow, Sad, Angry)
  – 181 shares
    • “Where is this poster?” “The UNF Library”
    • “Our library is savage AF”
  – University President received “official call of action” from a non-campus organization that advocates for students with mental health/emotional health issues
  – The President forwarded message to Library Dean and other University admins
UNF Case Study: How We Responded

- Contacted Student Union marketing staff member asking for support in controlling the situation
- Replied to students who commented on and/or shared the photo on Facebook
  - Our goal is to build students up, not tear them down
- Message sent to Library Administration
  - “I’ve responded to the negative comments... the poster is NOT on display in the library, and we do not condone its message.”
UNF Case Study: Lessons Learned

• Accentuate the Positive
• Eliminate the Negative
• Plan for future social media crises
• Revel in the small successes

Marielisa Martinez shared UNF Student Union’s photo.
32 mins · <

SO I CAN’T EVEN CRY IN MY OWN LIBRARY? #smh 😞 😞 😞 😞 I thought my friend Tommy G would be a little bit more empathetic #finals #finalsweek 📚 📚 🙁 🙁
EDIT: this photo was not taken inside UNF’s Library.
I knew it. It didn’t sound like tommy at all, Thomas G. Carpenter Library Show Attachment

Hannah Nicole Simmons
1 Comment

Like · Comment · Share

Thomas G. Carpenter Library Hello! Just so you know, this photo was not taken in the Thomas G. Carpenter Library. Although we do agree that it’s rather humorous, we would rather support our students with finals week puppies and free coffee. 😊
Like · Reply · 1 · Commented on by María Atalano [?] · 27 mins

Marielisa Martinez Yaaaaayyyy! That’s the Tommy G I know and love ❤️❤️❤️ 😎 😎 😎
Unlike · Reply · 1 · 26 mins

Marielisa Martinez Tommy G is one of my favorite places in the WHOLE WORLD (and my official crying spot/refuge during stressful times) ❤️❤️
Unlike · Reply · 1 · 25 mins

Write a reply...
Importance of Social Listening in Online Crisis Communication

- Stewart & Arnold (2017) define social listening as “an active process of attending to, observing, interpreting, and responding to a variety of stimuli through mediated, electronic, and social channels.”

- Social Listening invites prompt response to online threats.
Additional Recommendations

- Practice Social Listening routinely
- Prepare for potential crises
  - Identify clear target audiences
  - Maintain a social presence on relevant platforms
  - Readily prepare and adapt messages according to crisis and audience needs
- Be responsive and engage with your consumers online
Questions?

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http://www.unf.edu/library/
References


