


Managing the Unfathomable

Presented by: Corinne Morton, CEO





TRUST

Preparing for a Crisis/Tragedy

- Create a crisis management plan.
- Plan for various scenarios to ensure the safety of students and staff.
- Protocol for notifying parents/guardians and the community.
- Develop a relationship with local law enforcement and emergency officials.
- Designate a spokesperson and media contact.
- Establish internal communication procedures.
- Create sample messaging for common scenarios.

What to Communicate (Key Points)

- What has happened?
- What do you know about its cause?
- How are you handling it?
- When will you know more?
- When will you tell us more?

How to Communicate

- Utilize your school emergency network to phone, email and text school families that a crisis has occurred.
- District website and social media accounts, as necessary.
- Hotline dedicated to emergency information and updated frequently.
- Letters to the community.
- If there is a need, set up a public meeting or press conference to answer questions.

What are the needs of a district during a crisis?

- Cooperate and coordinate with law enforcement personnel.
- Manage the needs and safety of students and staff.
- Implement the school emergency plan and safely evacuate students and staff from the school site to a predetermined gathering location.
- Have a school spokesperson available and informed.
- Furnish accurate and timely information on the crisis or emergency.
- Maintain confidentiality of student and employee information, as required by law.
- Notify parents and guardians.

What are the needs of the media during a school crisis?

- To report as much information as quickly as possible.
- To receive a constant flow of information; to accurately report the story.
- To depend on school officials, law enforcement representatives, eyewitnesses and others involved in the crisis to furnish as much confirmed information as possible.
- Potentially work from a designated area on campus.
- Provide background information on the school site.



Emotion

When the Crisis Hits

- Remain calm, stay on point and be tactful.
- Contact the proper law enforcement and school officials.
- Collect all verified accurate information and provide to necessary school staff.
- Prepare messaging for the appropriate parties, including media statements or letters for your parents or community, if applicable.
- If necessary, work with law enforcement and school security to set up media staging area.
- Provide regular updates to the media and parents/community.

Dealing with the Emotions of Those Directly and Indirectly Involved

- District to offer services to those in need.
- Does the crisis involve the broader community or only the district?
- Listen and empathize. Be supportive and non-judgmental.
- Avoidance or intense emotion.

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Outside Factors

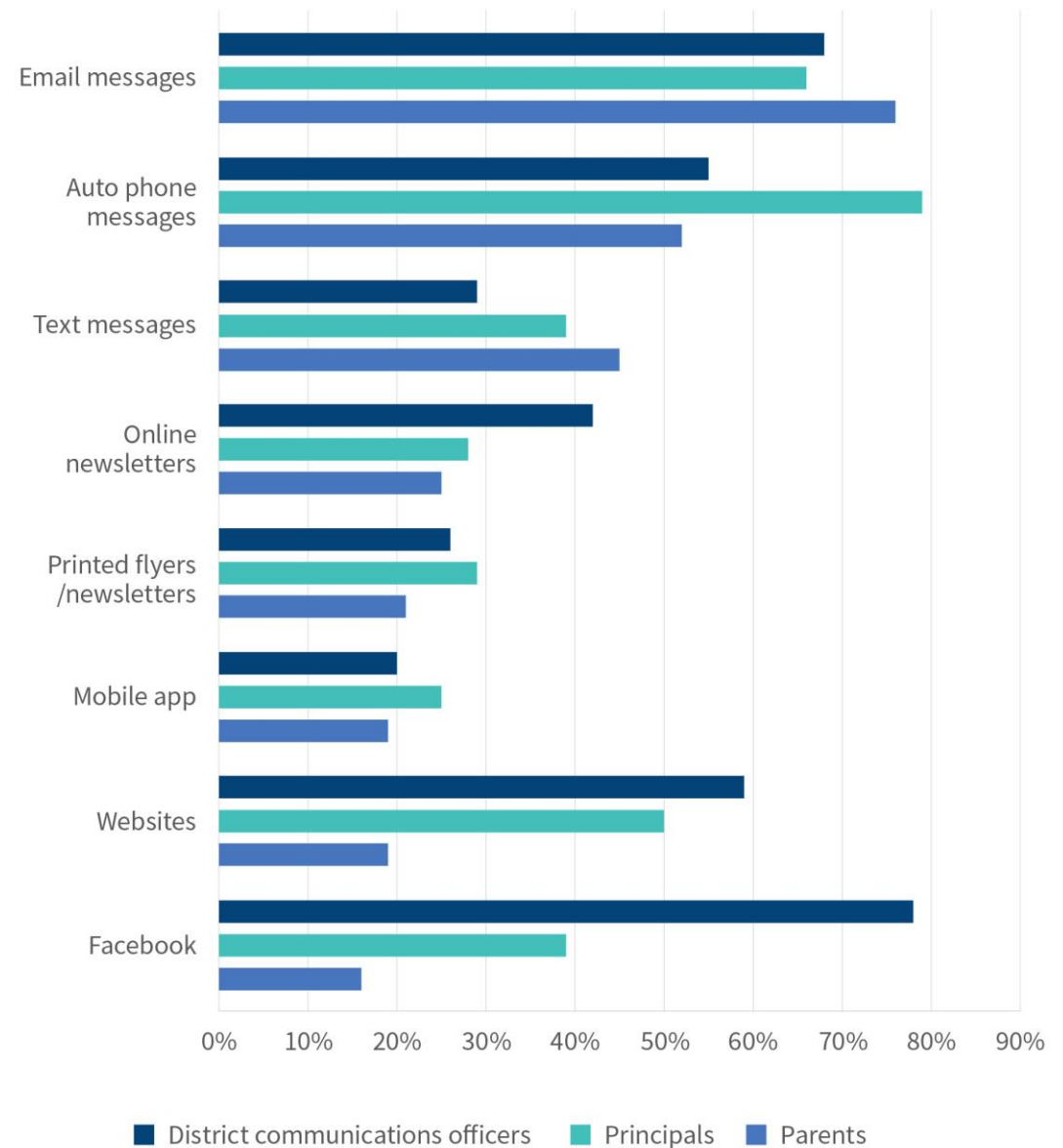
Social Media/Mobile Devices

- Middle school- and high school-aged students are likely to inform parents via cell phone of an issue.
- Can trigger or exacerbate a crisis.
- Parents/community may look to a district's social media account before looking at its website.
- Information can be shared inside crucial community/parent groups or with members of the media.
- Any information a district shares becomes public (this should always be top of mind).

*Blackboard report “Trends in Community Engagement”

Comparative Views on Effective Communication*

Figure E: Comparative views: Parents vs. administrators on the most effective ways for schools and districts to communicate regarding general information or notifications



SOCIAL MEDIA	PARENTS 29 OR YOUNGER IN AGE	PARENTS 30 -39 IN AGE	PARENTS 40-49 IN AGE	PARENTS 50-59 IN AGE
Facebook	64%	66%	60%	51%
Instagram	37%	28%	18%	10%
Snapchat	33%	11%	5%	3%
Twitter	11%	8%	11%	9%
YouTube	43%	30%	23%	19%
Video msg	27%	23%	19%	17%

Social media tools cited by parents of school-aged children*

*Blackboard report "Trends in Community Engagement"

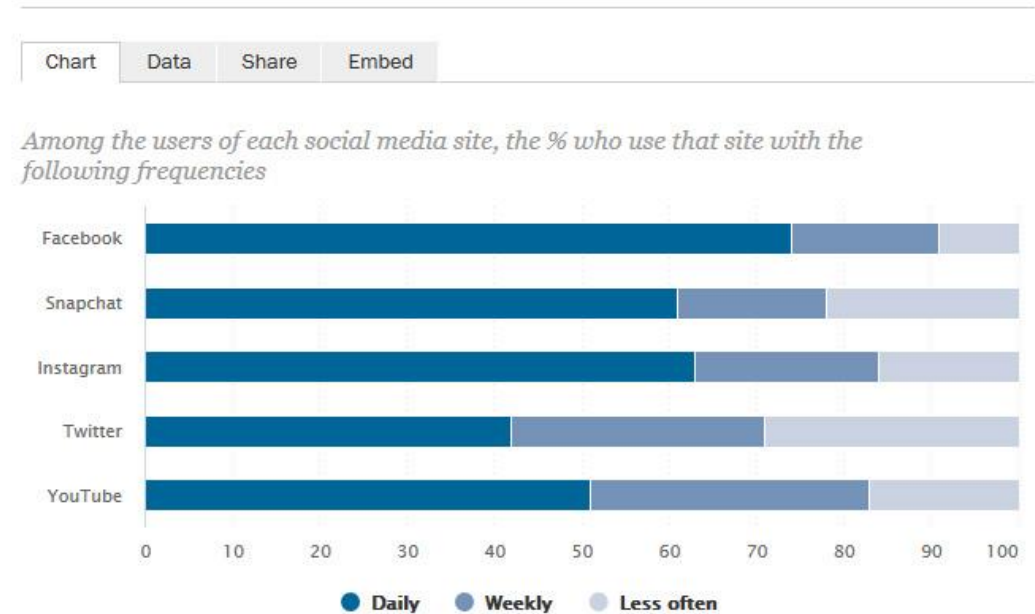
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Data shows how often Americans use social media sites*



How often Americans use social media sites

For many users, social media is part of their daily routine. Roughly three-quarters of Facebook users – and around six-in-ten Instagram users – visit these sites at least once a day.



Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 8 to Feb. 7, 2019.

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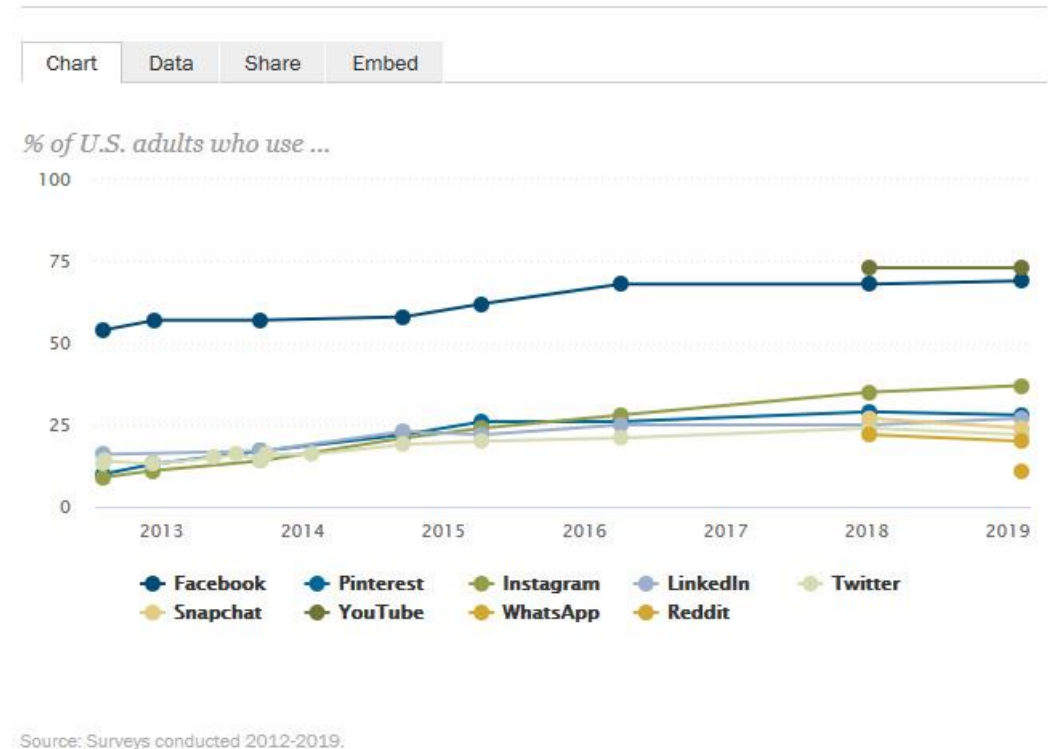
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Which social media platforms are most popular*



Which social media platforms are most popular

YouTube and Facebook are the most-widely used online platforms, and its user base is most broadly representative of the population as a whole. Smaller shares of Americans use sites such as Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and LinkedIn.



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Communication Tips

- During a crisis, use all of the methods available to you in reaching out to stakeholders.
- Provide all school/district staff members with any information needed. Parents will call every school if lines are busy – even those not impacted by the situation.
- Make sure a consistent message is shared in all areas – website, social media sites, phone scripts and media releases.
- Messages should contain a time when updates will be provided.

Recovery

What comes next?

- Support for adults as well as students.
- Post-crisis meeting.
- Calm leadership and consistency in discipline.
- Rumor control – Updated messaging.
- Create a safe and welcoming environment for students and staff.
- Predict and prepare.
- Normalize the expected reactions to trauma.
- Create opportunities to talk amongst students, staff and members of the community.