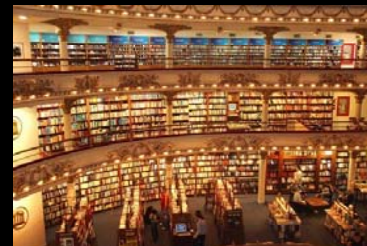


THIS WEEK, THE CONSUMER



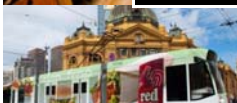
THE INTERNET AND
NATURAL
DISASTERS

WATCHED FREE TO AIR TV



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No	Program	Network	Average Audience
1	Packed to the Rafters	7	1,805,000
2	My Kitchen Rules – Tuesday	7	1,662,00
3	My Kitchen Rules – Monday	7	1,428,000
4	My Kitchen Rules – Wednesday	7	1,406,000
5	Seven News	7	1,325,000



Source: OzTAM' (Top 5 programs ranked by audience, consolidated week commencing 06.03.11 to 12.03.11 5 City Metro, 0200-0159, basic program logs as per schedule)

WATCHED FTV DIGITAL CHANNELS



No	Program	Network	Average Audience
1	Heartbeat	7TWO	357,000
2	The Amazing Race	7Mate	340,000
3	Jonathan Creek	7TWO	315,000
4	Neighbours	ELEVEN	306,000
5	Heartbeat	7TWO	300,000

Source: OzTAM' (Top 5 programs ranked by audience, consolidated week commencing 06.03.11 to 12.03.11 5 City Metro, 0200-0159, basic program logs as per schedule)

WATCHED STV SPORT



No	Program	Network	Average Audience
1	Live: NRL – Titans V Dragons	FOX SPORTS 2	233,000
2	Live: NRL – Warriors V Eels	FOX SPORTS 2	192,000
3	Cricket: World Series Cricket	FOX SPORTS 1	105,000
4	NRL – Storm V Sea Eagles	FOX SPORTS 2	104,000
5	Live: Cricket – ICC World Cup England V South Africa	FOX SPORTS 1	97,000

Source: OzTAM' (Top 5 programs ranked by audience, consolidated week commencing 06.03.11 to 12.03.11 5 City Metro, 0200-0159, basic program logs as per schedule)

WATCHED STV SHOWS



No	Program	Network	Average Audience
1	ABC World News: Japan Quake	Sky News	79,000
2	News Night: Japan Quake	Sky News	77,000
3	New Tricks	UKTV/+2	64,000
4	Sky World News: Japan Quake	Sky News	63,000
5	News Day: Japan Quake	Sky News	61,000



Source: OzTAM' (Top 5 programs ranked by audience, consolidated week commencing 06.03.11 to 12.03.11 5 City Metro, 0200-0159, basic program logs as per schedule)

AT THE BOX OFFICE



No	Movie	Weeks In Cinema	Weekly Total	Gross Total
1	Hall Pass	1	\$1,974,169	\$1,985,366
2	The Adjustment Bureau	1	\$1,792,943	\$1,850,539
3	I Am Number Four	2	\$1,309,041	\$5,034,613
4	The King's Speech	11	\$1,076,124	\$27,364,833
5	Gnomeo and Juliet	3	\$1,066,124	\$5,146,517

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TOP FIVE SELLING SINGLES

1 S&M
Artist: Rihanna



2 On The Floor
Artist: Jennifer Lopez ft. Pitbull



3 Price Tag
Artist: Jessie J Feat. B.o.B



4 Born This Way
Artist: Lady Gaga

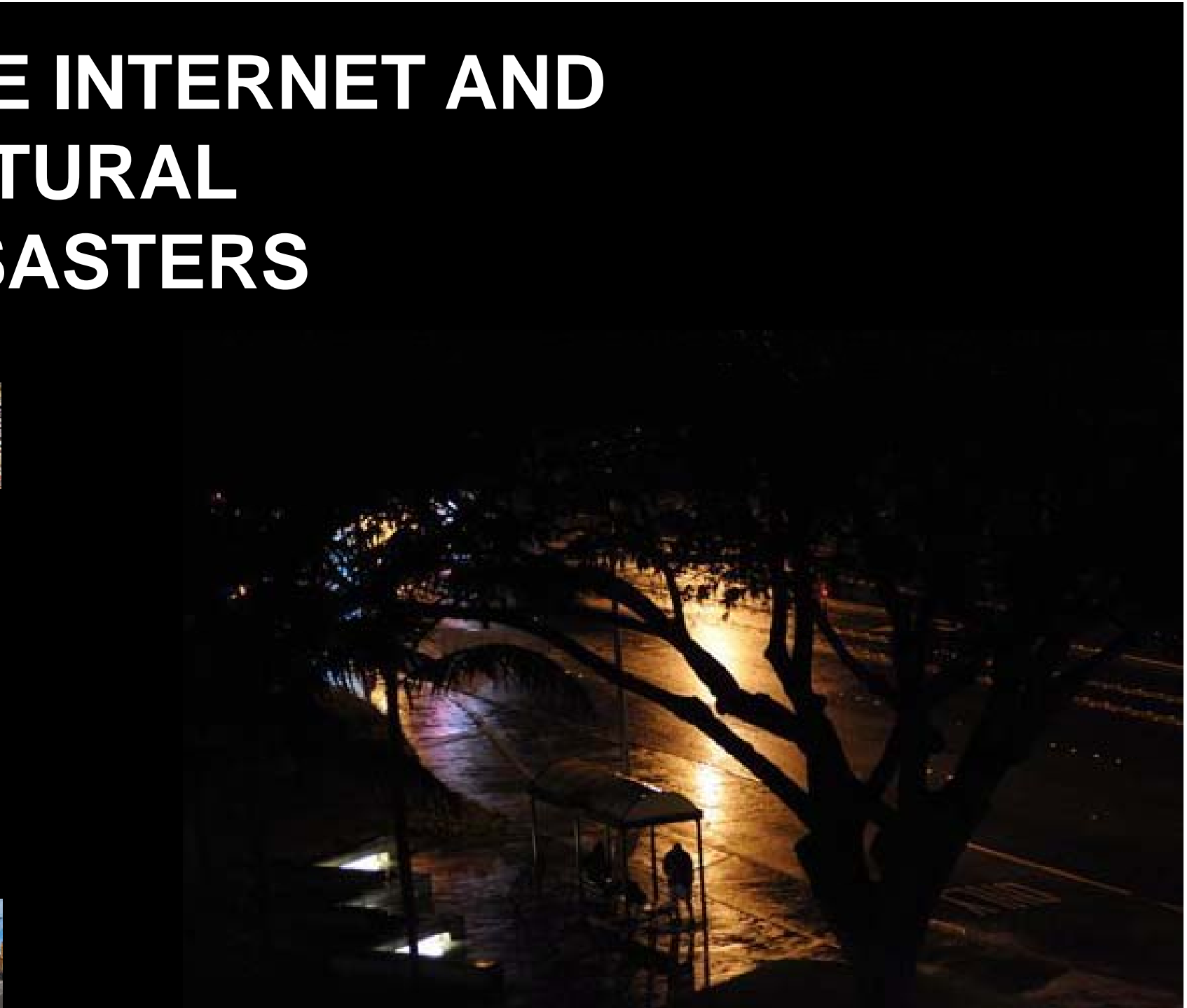


5 Coming Home
Artist: Diddy and Dirty Money Feat. Skylar Grey



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THE INTERNET AND NATURAL DISASTERS



ONLINE IMPACT



In the past, our only access to news coverage of natural disasters came via television, radio and press updates. In 2011 we have an entire smorgasbord of new applications to keep us updated.



Online news sites provide us with rolling coverage of new developments as they happen as well as an extensive array of images. Social networking allows us to keep in contact with loved ones in disaster areas. Networks such as Facebook and Twitter also facilitate the sharing of news and information. Sites such as YouTube allow users to upload and share amateur video content.



For me personally, what perhaps came across as the greatest and most horrifying development, was the ability to watch live footage of the tsunami. I sat at my desk, knees held to my chest watching, in real time as the wave smothered the east coast. I saw homes swept off their foundations. I saw cars speeding hopelessly to escape the wall of water. I saw an international natural disaster in my own eyes. It eradicated any sense of detachment often conveyed through polished news reports.

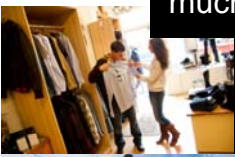


Of course the effects are different depending on your proximity to the disaster. For example, I did in fact witness a national disaster with my own eyes in the Brisbane floods. Many of my neighbours lost their homes and most of their possessions during this time. I feel just as connected to the Japanese disaster as I did to the one that occurred in my own town.



This week we take a look at the role the internet has to play in the discourse of natural disasters. We will explore the impact on both a local and international level. I will even ask the question, how much news is too much news?

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TWITTER

Twitter lends itself perfectly to communication during the time of natural disasters. The short and concise message structure enables authors to convey their point with ease and direction. To be frank, the majority of messages on Twitter can be ignored as pointless background noise. Sure, they are supportive but many are redundant statements about nothing.

They can be broken out into the following sub categories:

INFORMATIVE

Online news sites that have a Twitter presence have been using the site to post explanatory headlines that then direct the user to the host site. This has also been used to post small updates regarding things such as affected areas, local area warnings or even up to date developments on the current nuclear situation.

COMMUNICATIVE

Users connected to helpful and positive Twitter accounts are able to re-tweet the posted information. This provides previously unconnected users with the spread of information. This is particularly useful in the spreading of local warnings and even helping to dispel myths floating around – this was used successfully during the Brisbane floods with the Qld Police account.

SUPPORTIVE

Twitter has recently erupted with well wishes for the affected. Notably, most of these are somewhat essentially meaningless clutter. The truly beneficial presence is that of reputable organisations tweeting information about how to help or donate. These messages are then communicated across the network as explained above.

OFFENSIVE

One downside to user generated content is the notion of unsolicited opinions. Many people are using Twitter as their own personal soapbox. One such twitter trend is so ignorant it brings me to tears. There are people out there who are actually attributing the disaster as karmic retribution for the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941. You can read it all here: <http://twitpic.com/497kdf>

TWITTER TWITS

Rule one of comedy, humour is often open to debate. For example, many people enjoy the comedic stylings of Russel Brand, whereas I personally find him to be a vile and dirty human being who represents the low common denominator in joke telling. Rule two of comedy, know your audience.

These are not hard to remember, yet some people still struggle to get it right. These are people that think it is appropriate to post jokes about disaster situations on Twitter. Too soon? Of course, you insensitive jerk.

Example One: 50 Cent (Dumb)

The rapper proved that he shouldn't quit his day job by posting ignorant tweets in what he later revealed was purely for the purpose of shock value. In relation to the impending tsunami he tweeted, "Look this is very serious people I had to evacuate all my hoes from LA, Hawaii and Japan. I had to do it. LOL".

Example Two: (Dumber)

The Family Guy scriptwriter contributed to the hoard of painful and unintelligible comments that attempted to link the earthquake and tsunami to Pearl Harbour. He tweeted: "If you wanna feel better about this earthquake in Japan, google 'Pearl Harbor death toll.'"

Example Three: Gilbert Gottfried (Dumbest)

This guy managed to be insulting via dad jokes. A true testament to an undeniable failure of a human. The man who once played Iago the parrot in Disney's Aladdin made the following comments:

- "Japan called me. They said 'maybe those jokes are a hit in the U.S., but over here, they're all sinking.'"
- "I was talking to my Japanese real estate agent. I said 'is there a school in this area.' She said 'not now, but just wait.'"
- "I just split up with my girlfriend, but like the Japanese say, 'They'll be another one floating by any minute now' ."

The comedian voiced the Alfac duck, in the insurance company's advertising. The company is based in America, but launched into, wait for it, THE JAPANESE MARKET in 2001. In fact, Alfac is the top foreign insurance company in Japan and receives a large percentage of revenue from the Asian market. As consequence for his tasteless tweeting, Gottfried was fired and forced to apologise for his comments.

What a duckhead.

FACEBOOK

Facebook has its flaws. One very good example is how an innocent 'open invite' to the birthday of 16 year old, Jess Cooper from Chatswood turned into a global prank. Website 4chan picked up the public Facebook event where Jess listed both her phone number and address. Within hours 19,000 people said they would be in attendance.

If there is anything to take away from this (aside from keeping private contact details private), it is the power of connection and sharing on Facebook. This feature is best demonstrated during times of national disaster.

The following are a few of my personal experiences:

Brisbane Floods

It all began with a comical sharing of the sensationalist Courier Mail online headline "Worse than '74, get out now". It then developed into people sharing road closures, flood levels and links to maps of the projected affected areas. It then developed into a truly insightful story sharing device. Users would post photos of water levels and personal stories that resonated with others. Users were able to keep in touch with their friends and informed of each other's situation.

After the floods Facebook was then used to help promote clean up efforts. There were many example of people placing open calls for help, which were then circulated and resulted in complete strangers showing up with brooms and two very helpful hands.

Japanese earthquake, tsunami and nuclear emergency

It started last Friday afternoon. News spread around the office about the Japanese earthquake and impending tsunami, then when I ventured online to find out more details I also decided to check Facebook. Here I was presented with several friends sharing the link to Al Jazeera's live stream. I clicked on the link and was instantly connected to a realtime video of the tsunami hitting Japan.

Since then, people I know have been sharing constant updates about developments and links to disaster relief funds.



GOOGLE

Google has offered two tools to aid in disaster management and assistance.

PERSON FINDER

Designed in 2010 in response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti, Google Person Finder is a registry and message board for survivors, family and loved ones. It allows users to post and search information about each other's status and whereabouts.

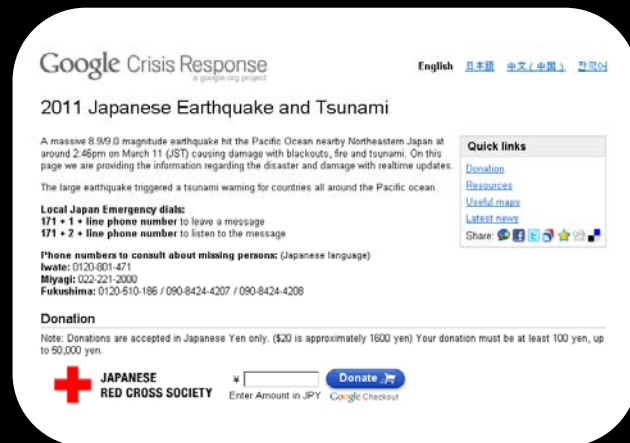
The website is currently tracking about 25,000 records



The screenshot shows the 'Person Finder: 2011 Japan Earthquake' page. At the top, there are language options: 日本語 | English | 繁體中文(香港) | 繁體中文(臺灣) | Português(Bras) | español. Below this is the question 'What is your situation?' with two buttons: 'I'm looking for someone' (green) and 'I have information about someone' (blue). A status line says 'Currently tracking about 180700 records.' Below that is the alternate URL: '代替 URL / Alternate URL : <http://goo.gl/sagas> 災害に関する情報 / Other Resources'. A disclaimer states: 'PLEASE NOTE: All data entered will be available to the public and viewable and usable by anyone. Google does not review or verify the accuracy of this data.' At the bottom, there are links for 'Embed this tool on your site - Developers - Terms of Service' and the Google logo.

CRISIS CENTRE

Crisis Centre is another helpful tool for family members. It enables users to keep up to date with information regarding the damage and disaster in realtime updates. The site features emergency contacts, missing persons hotlines, donation opportunities, warnings, shelter information, blackout information, maps, news, disaster message boards and a link to person finder.



The screenshot shows the 'Google Crisis Response' page for the '2011 Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami'. The page is in English. It features a 'Quick links' sidebar with links for 'Donation', 'Resources', 'Useful maps', and 'Latest news'. The main content area includes a paragraph about the earthquake: 'A massive 8.9/9.0 magnitude earthquake hit the Pacific Ocean nearby Northeastern Japan at around 2:46pm on March 11 (JST) causing damage with blackouts, fire and tsunami. On this page we are providing the information regarding the disaster and damage with realtime updates.' Below this is a note: 'The large earthquake triggered a tsunami warning for countries all around the Pacific ocean.' There are sections for 'Local Japan Emergency dialac' (171-1 for leaving a message, 171-2 for listening), 'Phone numbers to consult about missing persons: (Japanese language)' (Iwate: 0120-801-471, Miyagi: 022-221-2000, Fukushima: 0120-510-186 / 090-8424-4207 / 090-8424-4208), and 'Donation'. A note states: 'Note: Donations are accepted in Japanese Yen only. (\$20 is approximately 1600 yen) Your donation must be at least 100 yen, up to 50,000 yen.' At the bottom, there is a 'JAPANESE RED CROSS SOCIETY' logo and a 'Donate' button with a 'Google Checkout' link.

HOW MUCH NEWS IS TOO MUCH

Here at work I have a dual screen set up. Ordinarily it is perfect for managing my workload, but this week it has a different use. The right hand screen, formerly reserved for supplementary media schedules or the HKDC desktop has now been dedicated to several tabs of rolling news coverage.

I have developed new working habits to accommodate my news obsession. I will complete a task, check the news. Complete a task, check the news. This behaviour is sending me into a spiral of worry and often unnecessary concern. The up to the minute reporting leaves little time for fact (and spell) checking and consequently often results in greatly over-dramatised reporting. There was the imminent second tsunami on Monday and the constant fluctuation between a Chernobyl scale disaster and a small localised nuclear complication.

Consequently I have now educated myself on nuclear fission. I now know what the inside of the containment device looks like, and how thick the concrete protection within the Fukushima Daiichi BW reactor. I now know what the nuclear fuel is and at what temperature it melts. I can now watch the Simpsons and understand exactly what it means when Homer brings the plant to the brink of core meltdown.

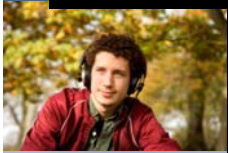
I know more than ever wanted to, and it is tearing me to pieces. I can't concentrate on work because I am so distracted by the trouble surrounding the world. Additionally – did you know that a 4.0 earthquake was detected off the coast of Innisfail in Far North Queensland on Tuesday afternoon? Did you know that the world is predicted to end in 2012? Did you know that the earth has its own process of regulatory homeostasis whereby it works to eradicate all variables that disrupt its stable operation. Did you know that I am freaking out!?

In and out, just breathe. Sometimes I wish I could live like my Nanna who operates under the principle – “if I don't know about it, it is not happening”. With the advent of all this information technology at our fingers it is nearly impossible. No longer can we turn a blind eye to an impending/possible nuclear disaster. Oh no, now we have the opportunity to sit hundreds of kilometres away and stress about the ground crew working to stabilise and cool down the reactors.

So I guess I have to pose a very open question... are we better or worse off by having access to all this information? To those of you who answer a defiant yes, remember that most of this information is passing from channel to channel like Chinese whispers. Then to all of those who instantly scoff and say we're worse off, don't forget the fact that we are now a more informed and objective society with opportunities to learn more details about the major issues affecting our world.

If you need me, I will be sitting on the fence with my laptop constantly refreshing news websites.

VISIT US ONLINE



<http://thisweektheconsumer.tumblr.com/>



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The screenshot shows a Tumblr post interface. At the top, there are navigation links: '+ FOLLOW', 'ASK', and 'ARCHIVE', along with a search bar. The main title of the post is 'THIS WEEK, THE CONSUMER' in large, bold, black letters. Below the title is a subtitle: 'I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST WEEK...'. The post features a video player with a play button in the center. The video shows a group of women in black dresses performing a dance or exercise routine in a studio. A red banner above the video says 'Posted 3 days ago'. Below the video player, there are social media interaction icons: a camera icon, a heart icon with a red notification bubble, and a speech bubble icon. The video player controls show a progress bar at 00:00 / 34:33. At the bottom of the post, the text 'Runaway, fast as you can.' is visible. The background of the Tumblr page is a grid of various images, including the same images seen in the left sidebar of the overall image.