

15-002: Tornado or ICBM launch?		
Agency: ReadyOC	Topic(s):	Picture and hashtag use
Date: 02-13-15	Platform:	Instagram

Pictures are such an important part of every social media post. Instagram is mainly based on pictures and hashtags to engage all users. This was evident when Orange County's Emergency Preparedness team posted this on their Instagram feed.

To the untrained eye, it does seem like a severe microstorm/cloud/tornado. However, the picture shows a launch of a rocket pulled from google images or desktop computer wallpaper. Furthermore, this post could also be misconstrued as a missile/ICBM launch or an attack on US soil.

Finding original content is tough, but professionals take the time to discern the little details in the pictures to showcase the safety theme and share actionable information. It is our duty to correctly inform the public on dangers that we encounter. We also must strive to provide actionable information with our engagement digital strategies.

If ReadyOC used the correct picture of a tornado, adding safety tips to the post (like those featured below) could have enhanced their theme:

"Monitor weather reports provided by your local media. #NWS #NOAA #Tornado #Prepared2015"

or

"If there is a power outage, have extra batteries for a battery-operated radio and your cell phone including your cell phone charger #Tornado #Prepared2015"

or

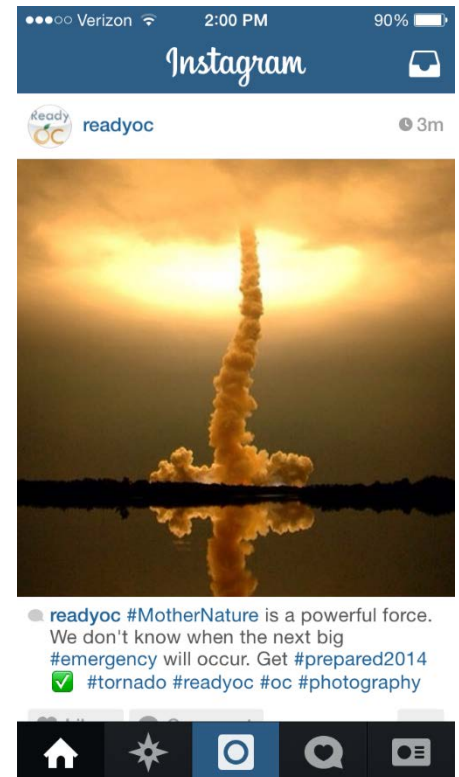
"Consider buying a NOAA Weather Radio/All Hazards receiver, which receives broadcast alerts directly from the National Weather Service #NWS #Tornado #Prepared2015"

Right now, the hashtag #photography is unnecessary because it doesn't relate to the post. Remember social media, especially Instagram, is a visual medium. Your reader's Instagram feed space is at a premium.

By laying it out this way:

1. The correct picture will draw readers into the picture and (possibly) click the link in the profile.
2. You don't cause panic by showcasing a missile launch and calling it an #emergency.
3. You incorporate a preparedness action phrase to your audience for #tornado safety on Instagram
4. You use Instagram's prime digital real estate to share good hashtags to find great information.

Time is valuable, so gram good stuff.



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