

Picture this – You Are In A Traffic Jam

NSW Police Force Media Unit

**Canadian Association of Road
Safety Professionals Conference**

**Victoria, British Columbia CANADA
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Meet the audience

- Online survey conducted for two months to determine whether use of photo would change road user attitude towards first responders/road crews at crash scenes
- 194 respondents
- 41% aged between 45-55 years and 31% aged between 35-44 years

Meet the audience

- 33% respondents had between 25-30 years driving experience
- 87% admitted to being involved in a crash. Of those 60% said the crash was minor (paint and panel damage only)
- 97% respondents have been caught in traffic jam that was result of an earlier crash

Meet the audience

- 72% said their primary social media platform was Facebook. 26% said they didn't use social media.
- 85% turned to radio programs &/or news bulletins to find out more about the delay.
- 32% used social media to get more information.

Picture this

- 28 August 2017 a motorcyclist dies after collision with a truck on M5 (major arterial road in Sydney)
- Crash occurs at the start of afternoon peak hour



Picture this

- Substantial traffic delays occur as a result of the crash
- Motorists caught in the post crash queues stop their vehicles and start asking each other what has happened on the road ahead

A first responder's view

- NSWPF CIU Sergeant Brett Samuel sent to the scene.
- Due to the time of the crash he is joined there by three other investigators.
- “We were made aware west bound traffic was being diverted at the Henry Lawson Drive off ramp. Unfortunately there was a large amount of motorists who were stuck between Henry Lawson Drive and the collision site. We were not able to turn any of these motorists around.”

A first responder's view



A first responder's view

- Sgt Samuel knew it was imperative to have the scene recorded quickly and professionally.
- Three investigators (including Sgt Samuel) were used to record the scene.
- All investigators aware of time of day and the lengthy queues.

A first responder's view

- “In this case I believe that the media (radio stations particularly) played a major role in being able to warn motorists that a fatal collision had occurred and someone was not going to make it home that night.”

Mic drop

- Afternoon radio talkback traffic updates begin with advice on the crash itself and the delays being created
- As the emergency services operation continues, updates move from being focussed on the crash to being prefaced with news of the fatality

Mic drop

- Radio producers indicate mood of callers when ringing in to report crashes is generally calm, respectful
- “If there’s a traffic incident caused by a lack of judgement e.g. an over height truck closing the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, Lane Cove Tunnel or M5 Tunnel, or road closures due to a lost load, people will often be annoyed when they call in.”

From villain to hero

- In January 2016, a truck was carrying 20 tonnes of landfill across Sydney via the Sydney Harbour Bridge (SHB).
- Load spills onto the Cahill Expressway, one of the main feeder roads to the SHB
- The driver, 61, was unaware of the spill and continued across the bridge until stopped by NSW Police.

From villain to hero



From villain to hero

- Social and mainstream media coverage highly critical of driver and company as well as alerting other road users to impending delays and potential hazard.
- Driver charged and also issued defect notices in relation to the truck.
- He was fined \$3000

From villain to hero

- As a result, the company now advocates for driver safety & has safety policy available on its web site.



Keeping it social

- Social media users when viewing a crash either :-
- Tag friends/relatives to alert them to the problem
- Use the post to provide explanation as to why their friends and family may have been delayed

Keeping it social

- Serious injury crash occurred during afternoon peak on the M2 (major arterial road in NW Sydney)
- Through liaison with supervising police at the scene, a suitable image of the crash site was obtained and added to the social media post to provide context to road users and media not at the crash site.

Keeping it social



Alexis Chertemps Marko Zjalic ...
Like Reply Message · 49w

Katya Izci Serdal Izci
Like Reply Message · 49w

...

Kay Ocampo Oh my gosh John this is why
Like Reply Message · 49w

Jessica Mcnee Luke Hutch
Like Reply Message · 4... 1

Belinda Brekelmans Wayne Edward Lewis, might give you answers to why so slow 🍀
Like Reply Message · 49w


Liv Kaltenbach Peter
Like Reply Message · 49w

Esther Lo Janice Tsui oh dear

Write a comment... 🗨️ 📷 GIF 😄

Keeping it social

Timeline Photos



Like Comment Share

Tag Photo Options

Like Comment Share

Like Reply Message · 49w

544 Chronological

76 Shares 676 Comments

View previous comments

Darren Topolski Matt Whitten
Like Reply Message · 49w

Matt Whitten At least there is a reason for the crawling!
Like Reply Message · 49w

Chris Hunt But it was on the other side of the road!! Must've been rubber neckers slowing that side down.....
Like Reply Message · 49w

Write a reply...

Write a comment...

Keeping it social

- Those surveyed had varied reaction to crash site imagery being used.
- While the majority were in favour, many highlighted the paramount need for balance between using radio news bulletins to provide context about the incident to those already in their vehicles and social media for those yet to set out or waiting for someone to return.

Keeping it social

- “I don't think most people care about the crash site. They just want you to hurry up.”
- “However if you are already in the car commercial radio is the best medium to reach an audience as road users should not be using their phones to access social media.”

Keeping it social

- “People need a reason to understand what is happening. You can't tell someone to just wait. If you give them a reason why they are waiting whether it be in a form of a picture or story they will understand the situation easier.”
- “It may also alleviate the issue of people slowing to see what has happened in the lanes that are open.”

A road to somewhere

- **Provided** victim care has been addressed, two thirds of survey respondents said they would be receptive to being shown a photo/video of the crash site on social media.
- This should be done in conjunction with confirming the fatality on mainstream media to target those already making their journey as well as those yet to set out.

Questions





Contact

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