

Independent Study Title	CROWDSOURCING FOR EVIDENCE GATHERING – A CASE STUDY FROM RATCHAPRASONG BLAST
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ABSTRACT

Social media has been used a lot for entertainment and commercial. It also plays a vital role during uncommon situations. A number of studies take social media usage during the crisis as a subject of the study. They revealed that social media can enhance collaboration among citizens and organizations or government sectors, collect useful information for future reference, and mitigate the risk by updating real time situation. Past researches studied social media in terms of the benefit and the outcome of its usage. This research explores the usage of social media, during crisis, through which a crowd was formed. Ratchaprasong Blast incident that occurred on 17 August 2015 was a unique crisis, where social media were highly utilized. Facebook and Twitter had been used massively during the initial period especially the first five days of the incident (17 – 21 August 2015). The incident was a phenomenon of interest to this research.

This study aims to understand how the online crowds were formed to support evidence gathering and how different social media platforms were used during the crisis. Case study is the research method for this study. Data posted and shared on Facebook and Twitter during the first five days of the Ratchaprasong incident was studied. ‘ระเบิดราชประสงค์’ had been used as a key search term in order

to collect any public posts or tweets from Facebook and Twitter. Collective Behavior and Uses-and-Gratification theories are adopted as a conceptual lens to view and interpret the data.

From the study, it can be concluded that within a period of the incident the collective behavior is a partially repeating process. A group of people were formed up when individuals felt uncertain and would like to do something useful; such as retweets or shares useful information or message that they valued. In addition, the research also found the similarity and differences of social media usage of netizens during the incident. Twitter and Facebook were used for sharing information. Yet, Twitter had been used a lot more on sharing opinion and asking for cooperation/request; whereas Facebook was used a lot more on sharing experience and situation update. The type of contents found mainly on Twitter was text and photos; whereas, the content found on Facebook was mainly shared link and video clips.

Keywords: social media, collective behavior, uses-and-gratifications, crowdsourcing