Facebook Integrates WhatsApp Into Its Crisis Response Features

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3 hours ago

Facebook integrated its WhatsApp messaging application into its Crisis Response tools and added the ability for people to share firsthand accounts of timely information, including photos and videos.

The social network said people who want to offer or request help via its Crisis Response pages were previously limited to sending messages via Messenger, but starting Monday, WhatsApp is included in that mix, as well.

And in addition to sharing requests and offers for help, people can now use Facebook’s tools to share firsthand accounts of timely information, such as building collapses or road closures, with photos and videos included.

The social network also revealed updates on its Disaster Maps and Displacement Maps.

Facebook Data for Good is now working with more than 100 disaster response and public health partners, and the social network had already been providing its Disaster Maps to relief organizations, enabling them to strengthen their response efforts and maximize the efficiency of their distribution of supplies.

Facebook said in an email, “Through strengthened partnerships with organizations that support state and local emergency responders during disasters, like Direct Relief and the National Alliance for Public Safety GIS (NAPSG) Foundation, we’re now delivering insights from Disaster Maps to support state and local officials, as well as federal relief agencies, in order to better serve their communities when disasters strike.”

The social network added that it worked closely with international experts on the topic of displacement, including the International Displacement Monitoring Centre, to improve its Displacement Maps, factoring in elements such as commute patterns and tourist populations.

Facebook said, “By sharing anonymized and aggregated numbers on displaced populations at the city level, we can now empower response agencies and academics to better support displaced populations and affected communities around the world.”

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