



**National Hurricane Survival Initiative  
Key Findings  
Wednesday, June 22, 2011**

- The latest Sachs/Mason-Dixon national poll finds that technology such as smartphones have become an integral form of communications for Americans during natural disasters.
- The poll found that 72 percent of Americans belong to a social network such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace and 45 percent said they will rely on social media to communicate with friends and loved ones in the event of a natural disaster.
- Social media use is more prevalent among younger Americans, with 91 percent of those 18-34 years old active on a social media platform and 63 percent saying they will use those platforms to communicate in a disaster.
- Even among those ages 35-59, 75 percent say they are on a social media platform and 44 percent say they will use them to communicate in a disaster.
- Women are more likely to use these platforms than men, with 75 percent of women saying they use a platform compared to 68 percent of men, and 51 percent of women saying they will turn to these platforms to communicate in a disaster compared to 39 percent of men.
- While emergency managers can utilize social media to reach victims during natural disasters, more than 50 percent of Americans said they would rely on a cell phone or home phone to communicate with family members in a disaster, even though these tools often are not frequently operational in the immediate aftermath of natural disasters such as hurricanes and tropical storms.

- The poll found that only 8 percent said they would rely on text messaging, although this has proven to be one of the most reliable forms of communication in a disaster.
- Although social media is gaining acceptance among older demographic population segments, the poll makes clear that one size won't fit all and emergency managers need to employ a variety of strategies to reach all age groups.