

Elon Musk's Twitter Is a Disaster for Disaster Planning | The Atlantic

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For years, Twitter was at its best when bad things happened. Before Elon Musk bought it last fall, before it was [overrun with scammy ads](#), before it amplified [fake personas](#), and before its engineers were [told to get more eyeballs on the owner's tweets](#), Twitter was useful in saving lives during natural disasters and man-made crises. Emergency-management officials have used the platform to relate timely information to the public—when to [evacuate during Hurricane Ian](#), in 2022; when to hide from a gunman during the [Michigan State University](#) shootings earlier this month—while simultaneously allowing members of the public to transmit real-time data. The platform didn't just provide a valuable communications service; it changed the way emergency management functions.

That's why Musk-era Twitter alarms [so many people](#) in my field. The platform has been downgraded in multiple ways: Service is glitchier; efforts to contain misleading information are patchier; the person at the top seems largely dismissive of outside input. But now that the platform has embedded itself so deeply in the disaster-response world, it's difficult to replace. The rapidly deteriorating situation raises questions about platforms' obligation to society—questions that prickly tech execs generally don't want to consider.

[...]

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