

### Who am I and why am I here?



Jodie Hopperton

Product & Tech Initiative Lead
International News Media
Association (INMA)



The New Hork Times

trint











# The LA fires: it's personal







### Lunchtime, Tues Jan 7







# Nightime, Tuesday Jan 7







## **Morning Weds Jan 8**









# A media diet in an emergency







### Where did we go?

#### Two sources shone through:

- 1. Local TV news
- 2. Watch Duty

#### We discovered that

- there were unexpected sources of trust
- local news played an important role
- service journalism shone through





# Unexpected source of truth







## Watch Duty: a wildfire tracking app



Downloads: 2.5 million users in 7 days

#### Why?

- A well respected non profit,
   NGO run by volunteers
- A source of unbiased truth
- Answered local questions:
   Where is the fire? How contained? Where are evacuations?
- Bonus layers such as winds and air quality







### Local news had a moment







#### Local broadcast delivered

#### Nielsen reported:

- On Jan. 7 **1+ million** in LA tuned in to local news.
- Broadcast audiences doubled or tripled.
- Almost 17-fold jump (+1,693%) in online impressions of L.A. TV news content

#### Why?

- Visual story
- Constant updates , news every second
- Local information for local people







### LA Times saw massive gains

#### By the numbers:

- The LA Times' website experienced an 800% increase in traffic
- Monthly Visitors Doubled
- 259% increase in new digital subscriptions



#### 'LIKE A THOUSAND FIRES'

WIND-DRIVEN BLAZES DESTROY HOMES; AT LEAST 5 DEAD

PALISADES FIRE: Some residents who fled are anxious to see if houses survived

EATON FIRE: 32,500 told to evacuate as 10,600 acres burn in Altadena, Pasadena



#TEYE BALDIAN should become the common heat as the former forms a samplebor's reading on Blandon Armon sharing the Easter few Wednesday in Albadena





#### Local radio also gained

#### LAist (NPR affiliate)

- Daily readership **20X norma**l in the week the fires broke out
- Stayed at 400% above average the following weeks
- Added 10,0000 daily newsletter sign ups







## Staying power

Local media stayed.

They help give context to the aftermath:

The effect of the rain and the runoff.

The water quality.

The beaches.

The housing issues.

The permitting.

The rebuilding.









# How it played out on social media







### Huge reach across all platforms









**#PalisadesFire** peaked at **#4 worldwide** on Jan 8 with over **120,000 tweets** 

"California" saw about 1.9 million tweets

Combined, wildfire-related tweets reached a huge audience – trending worldwide implies **tens of millions** of impressions across users' feeds.

#CaliforniaWildfires was used in over 63,000 Instagram posts

A broader hashtag like **#wildfires** (not limited to L.A.) shows around **246,000 posts** 

High engagement and shares with media and celebrities resulted in hundreds of thousands, of likes/reactions.

**#PalisadesFire** went **viral**, with some clips topping **7.5** million views in just 2 days.

Wildfire-related hashtags translated into **millions of video views** – a key measure of reach on that platform.

Individual hashtag view counters aren't publicly listed, the cumulative views undoubtedly reach into the tens of millions

A satellite <u>image</u> of the LA Fires got the most interactions: **56.8k comments and 61k shares**. And this local ABC7 aerial <u>video</u> which ultimately got **48m views**.

The most interactions for keywords around the fires on Facebook were **image or video posts**, not link posts.

(Newswhip 2025)







#### Local Fox LA on TikTok









Coverage



As strong and damaging winds testioned most of Southern California, a large brush fire broke out Tuesday afternoon in the Pacific Palisades, five creas on the scene report the blain has grown to about 200 acres amid roughly 40 righ winds, and structures are being threatened. Appolication of the Proceedings of the Procedure of the P



Arried deventuting wind conditions, the fire that broke out in the Pacific Palniades Tuesday has grown. to over 700 acres. Roalnadesfire Roachipalnados Reind Roccal Ris After



Discern of cars were abandoned in the middle of the road as the Palicades Fire spread in Southern California. Fire crees had to buildoze the cars out of the way to respond to the fire. Apaltoalisative Apacifuguituales Paint Focal Fia Plin: Asartamonica Fia Facetia



Helf of a way to start a new year," Gov. Newsom says during https://witter.com/hashtag/Palsades/ve/urc/hashtag.clck press conference. The blaze burrent more than 1,200 acres of Pacific Palisades by 4 p.m. Tuenday, damaging or destroying an unknown number of homes and forcing thousands of residents to evacuate as the fiames marched toward the Facific Ocean, Ppaissedestiny Apacificpatisative Heind Roccol #1s Effire Reantamonics #1s Present Processor Population Std.



Roughly 30,000 people are under evacuation orders as the RPalcudesFire continues to grow with pers containment. The word-driven fire has already destroyed multiple homes. Footage captured by the widths monitoring cameras shows the blaze spreading through the area and a dense plume of anoke rong over the Santa Monica Mountains, #paisadesfire Apachipalizative Rwind Rocal Ris. Mire Municipanics Mis Sycolia



The Patriades Fire has scorcled over 1,500 acres in Pacific Patriades, and the flames have spread to Palsades Charter High School: #palsades/five #pacificpalsades #aind #ocal #la #five **Printipminics** Wa Preside



New video from the Pacific Pallsades fire showcases a street packed with abandoned care, early one from an apocalyose movie. The footage highlights the sheer chaos that evacuated arrid the fast-moving fire and gridliched traffic. Epolicadeolite Rysoficpalisation | Proced Fix Wire Reprintments Fix



or some parts of Santa Monics are ordered to evacuate in the eake of the 2.600-acre-ATTable admiring



Driven by utrestending winds, the Palsades fire has burned over 5,000 acres, destroying or damaging more than 1,000 structures and forcing thousands of people from their homes as it moved toward Malbu on the west and Santa Monica on the southwest with no reported containment Wednesday. Among the structures burned eas the Pulsades fininch Library.

If you're told to evacuate, EVACUATE MARCDIATELY.

STAY SAFE LAW Relayable Replicades/live Reacticepalandes Reind Reacs! His Alive Pearlamonics



3 "WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH PIRE PERSONNEL W.L.A. COUNTY." \$ Fire officials admit sessioned are abetithed too thin to handle the massive wildfree burning across the region. Reinfuncements from out of state are on the way. Add St, Africa St, Af #EmergencyResponse #StaySate #FirsSeason #WWXfireUpdate #PalsadesFire #EatonFire

RESIDENTS WORK TO PROTECT THEIR HOMES Residents in the Parchi Palicades have gone to extreme lengths to printed their property.

Evacuate when told--it's for your safety. Turn off eater and gas to help the fivefight. Pack essentials to be ready for at least a week.

Alfresodena Multadiona Muscificpolitades Mia Pica Maintamunica.

by Officials rement us. A Your safety is your stuff.

"Head the advice of first requinders when they ask you to exacuste, evacuate. This is not a drift. Sing? BLAFice PCAFices BCaliforniathistives BEmarismy/fuspoons PStaylafe religione Affaliadasfine PEaconfine PFacadena Kultadena Apacificpalitades **Fig Pick Plantan** 

are in the Pacific Falsades area, but others seem in parts of Santa Monica and



Attadena: Two people were folial more than 1,000 structures were destroyed as force wildfals. raped in the Los Angeles area. STAY SAFE LAI W BLAFfre BLAFfres BCaliforniaWillflines. #EmergencyResponse #StaySale #FireSeason #WildfireUpdate #FalsadesFire #EatorFire #Fissdens Reliadens Resulfiqualisades Ris Ris Riantamonics



HEARTBREAKING UPDATE: FIVE people have now died in the Eaton Fire burning in the Altadena and Pasadena areas, according to Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna, #Eston/line #Pasadena Maltadena MCattornial/Bollines MLAfina MLAFines MCA MLA Mytaysiate

of: At least 70,000 residents so far are under evacuation orders. Many of the



Are LA friefighters running out of easter? As friefighters continue to battle multiple exiditives across. Liss Angeles County, concerns have been voiced over the local water supply and its impact on firefighting efforts. Phosphing Physphingnesia Posithymiafines Rysificactes/ira



The Braitsoffice has burned more than 10,000 acres in the Brainsdana and Attackina area. The Eaton Fire and others have destroyed hundreds of buildings, including the Two Dragons Martial Arts Studio in Altadena, the roof of which collapsed #live on FOX 11's air.

Article services



NEW FIRE BREAKS OUT IN HOLLYWOOD HILLS: Yet another brush fire engited Wednesday in fireswary Los Angeles, this time advancing rapidly in the Hollywood Hills near the popular Runyon Canusin area, prompting mandatory execuation orders as the flames threatened homes. The Surget A second 5:50 p.m. in an area near Solar and Astral drives, and crews on the scene was moving quickly uphill and rapidly threatening homes. #sunsetfire: Molywoodhills - Salires Ria Ritaysale

S. 75M street



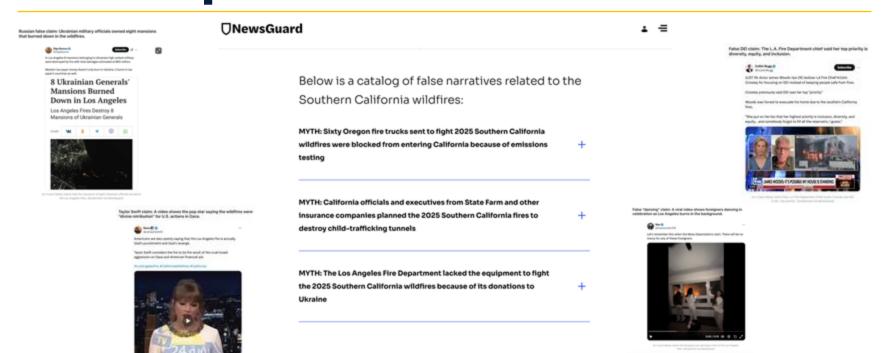
corpacced Hills, LA City Councilmentier Nithya Raman is urging those not affected by the fires to stay off the roads to keep them open for emergency crews and evacuees. More fire coverage at the of its our big. Popifornia/laws Apalicacles/fre Restorfine

centinue to rage across Los Angeles County, including the Fauractine in the





### Social spread false narratives









# Service journalism came into play







### **Community action**



People needed destinations that brought them together to help:

- Who needs help?
- What was needed?
- Where to drop items?
- How could you volunteer?

This was on social platforms and on messaging apps.







#### Publishers showed How to help

The NYTimes and LA Times both showcased a new tab: **How to help** 

Why?

Because aside from wanting to be updated, they recognised that their audience felt helpless and wanted to do something.











# What does this mean for you?







#### Where does news fit?

News is one part of the information ecosystem.

Which is distributed across **many platforms**.







## What is news anyway?

Journalism is more than **data**. It's **context**. It's **relevance**. It's **expertise**. It's **making sense of things**.

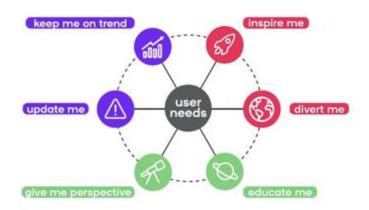
It's not what we label it.
It's what your **communities need**.



## If there is one takeaway from this

Think less about what you **do**.

And more about what your users **need**.



This is true for your **content** and your **products**.





### Thank you!



#### **Jodie Hopperton**

Product & Tech Initiative Lead International News Media Association

jodie.hopperton@inma.org



