Dark sites in crisis communication

What is a dark site?

A dark site can be a stand-alone website or web pages that you prepare (but don't publish or promote) in anticipation of a crisis or emergency.

When is a dark site appropriate?

1. If your website content management system isn't very flexible or resilient
2. As a signal of intent
3. To demonstrate a different tone of voice
4. If you are planning for a long-running crisis
5. In a complicated situation, with multiple stakeholders or supply chain partners
6. As a distancing strategy

How to make the most out of your social media presence?

- ☐ Background preparation to make sure you can share information to you stakeholders as soon as possible
- ☐ Make sure you have a good social media presence (you're active and a trustworthy source)
- ☐ Provide information in varied forms (text, images, videos, tags)
- ☐ Have your channels prepared and post regularly
- ☐ Make sure all your team is trained and ready

Committing to a dark site means you will now manage two websites, inclusive of all the associated costs and maintenance work. Without good content and sound promotion, your site could end up being a net cost and an expensive distraction. These sites should be thought of as an extra, specialised tool rather than the only option to defuse a crisis.

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