

Understanding GenY volunteers' unique response to environmental disasters: Examining the Rena Oil Spill response .

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This research examines the technology-centered organizing and communication behaviors of youth volunteers during a major environmental crisis in New Zealand. It analyzes accounts of 38 youth volunteers aged between 18 and 29 who responded to the havoc caused by the Rena oil spill and offers a unique view of the role of social media in catalyzing their volunteering efforts. Key factors in youth responses to the crisis included the influence of social media in framing and depicting the crisis, the attraction of the visual media in engaging and tracking the progress of their voluntary efforts, and the ease with which social media helped youth to draw on their large social networks to mobilize volunteer action. The study uses both self-organising theory and generational theory to better understanding the unique complexities which underpin the unique organising and communication dynamics of Generation Y. In doing so, the research provides practitioners with a better understanding about how, and why youth volunteers engage with environmental crises.

This research provides a generational response to Kramer, Lewis & Gossett's (2015) call for further exploration into factors encouraging volunteer engagement in crisis events, and challenges extant research that identifies emotions, feelings of responsibility, and pro-environmental attitudes as the main factors for voluntary engagement in environmental crisis events.