

UK police aim to adapt to Twitter-led protests

February 9 2011, By RAPHAEL G. SATTER , Associated Press

(AP) -- Authorities will have to move faster to help contain the increasing number of protests being organized and run through social media sites, Britain's police inspection body said Wednesday.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary said [police forces](#) would have to focus on speed and communication as demonstrators turn to Internet sites such as [Twitter](#) to coordinate their actions.

"Large numbers of protesters can be organized in hours and change their focus in minutes through the use of social media and mobile phones," the report said. "Those responsible for commanding events must plan with this adaptability in mind."

The report singled out UK Uncut, a protest group organized quickly by Twitter users upset at the government's plans to slash public spending and perceived tax avoidance by major British companies. The group has used social-networking sites to help coordinate their actions; the tools include a live mapping service intended to help protesters dodge police cordons.

The inspectorate said the agility of these new [protests](#) means that police have to work within "tighter timeframes, in a way that responds as swiftly as possible to events."

It also said that police forces - many of which have long been working to expand their online presence - would have to consider how best to

communicate with tech-savvy protesters.

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