

# Social media helps out as Hurricane Sandy approaches

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Kathy Florczyk's dog Casey barks as he sits in a kennel cage within the hallway of Cape Henlopen High School which is being used as a Red Cross shelter in Lewes, Delaware, after his owner was evacuated from her home due to Hurricane Sandy's eminent landfall in the area.

Locating the nearest emergency shelter or chatting live with forecasters—social networks were abuzz with the latest news, tips and reassurance Sunday as Americans hunkered down for Hurricane Sandy.

The massive storm, which has already killed at least 66 people in the Caribbean, is expected to pummel large swathes of the US East Coast, leading authorities to order evacuations and halt public transport in some areas.

On [Twitter](#), #Sandy was one of the top trending topics in cities and areas

on the predicted pathway of the storm as nervous residents looked for the latest news and posted links to useful websites on how to stay safe.

[Google](#) set up an interactive map that tracks the path of the storm, provides real-time precipitation figures in areas already hit by the outer edges of Sandy and locates the user's nearest active emergency shelter.

The map also enables people to locate webcams already set up in affected areas to watch as the storm unfolds, as well as videos posted on [YouTube](#) showing the situation in various locations, including images of choppy seas or flooding.

AccuWeather.com, the weather forecast website, set up a Google+ Hangout—a group video chat—inviting netizens to join and get their questions about the hurricane answered in real time by their [meteorologists](#).

The New York Times and the Wall Street Journal, meanwhile, took down their paywalls to enable people to get storm updates for free.

"Run riot! Read everything!", one Twitter user joked, although the Wall Street Journal still had its paywall up for other stories not related to the storm.

One netizen on Twitter posted a link to the website of animal welfare group ASPCA, which told concerned pet owners how to prepare their animals for the upcoming storm.

Smartphone users were also able to download applications to help them keep informed about the storm.

The American Red Cross, for instance, provided an app giving the latest [storm](#) information, a check-list of things to have stored in the house, and

even a quiz on hurricanes to while away the hours.

On Facebook, meanwhile, a community page set up for the hurricane, which includes graphics illustrating Sandy's wind speed or "threat index", had already garnered thousands of 'likes.'

But for all the concern on social networks, many netizens also lightened the atmosphere with some humor and funny pictures.

On Tumblr, the blogging platform, one person posted a picture of a bottle of red wine with the legend "Might as well post up for Sandy #sandy #hurricane #letsdrink."

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