

Americans take to social media to help post-Sandy

31 October 2012



Passengers at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport remain stranded, even as the airport resumes some service after being closed due to Hurricane Sandy.

As Americans reeled from the aftermath of superstorm Sandy Wednesday, they took to tweeting, posting and crowdsourcing to mobilize much-needed aid and help those left without power or food.

The storm has devastated New York City and New Jersey, killing dozens of people in several states and swamping miles of coastline, leaving millions without power and some transport services at a standstill.

On [Twitter](#), netizens used the hashtags #sandyaid and #sandyvolunteer to ask for relief or find out where they could help, and crowdsourced maps sprung up online to locate available wifi spots or places where supplies were available.

"In east Williamsburg, how can I help?" @honeybaked_sam tweeted, getting a prompt reply from Brooklyn-based lifestyle guide @BrooklynExposed, which posted a link to nearby

volunteering opportunities.



Work crews from Verizon pump water from an access tunnel in Lower Manhattan. On Twitter, netizens used the hashtags #sandyaid and #sandyvolunteer to ask for relief or find out where they could help, and crowdsourced maps sprung up online to locate available wifi spots or places where supplies were available.

Jessica Lawrence, managing director of NY Tech Meetup—a non-profit organization that supports the technology community in New York—said she had reached out to her 28,000-plus members through Twitter and Facebook.

Already 140 tech-savvy people were on standby to help stricken schools, businesses and other entities to get back on their feet, to help them with tech-related issues such as data recovery.

But in New York's lower Manhattan—particularly hard-hit by the storm—many of those in need were still lacking power and Lawrence said the challenge was how to connect with them, though some were now making their way to places with electricity and Internet access.

She added that social networks had been particularly useful to connect with other relief organizations, and make sure they worked together rather than overlapping in their efforts.

"I don't think it would have been nearly as easy without social media," she said.

Other organizations used social networks to gather practical information for storm-stricken people and put them on interactive [online maps](#).

The [Watershed Post](#), for instance—an online [news source](#) for counties in upstate New York—launched a crowdsourced map locating closed or reopened roads, places to get help or where aid was needed.

Another crowdsourced map focusing on the New York City area—[sandycommsmap.crowdmap.com/main—located](#) places where free wifi was available and working.

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