



The Wildfire Information Ecosystem in Interior Alaska: Crisis and Preparedness Communications

Zoe Garbis

Sustainable GW, George Washington University

zoegarbis@gwu.edu



Key

Concerns

-  Health
-  Recreation

-  Employment
-  Financial/Property

Information Sources

-  TV/Digital News
-  Local/State Government (Digital & In-Person)
-  Radio
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Social Media
-  Neighbors/Community

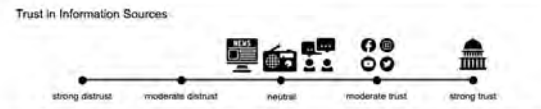
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Online Connected



Ed, a tech savvy information consumer lives near federal land and enjoys spending time outdoors. He has a strong presence on Facebook and uses it to keep up with old friends and new acquaintances. He receives Nixle text message alerts to get immediate information on his iPhone. He also goes online to check UAF Smoke for wildfire predictions to get a sense of fire conditions in order to plan weekend recreational activities. He likes to know where the fires are and where they are likely to pop up. He only uses reputable sources of fire information provided by federal and state fire agencies. If he sees smoke or drives by a fire, he will go online to check state agency sites to get more information. He and his wife try to keep some offline neighbors who live nearby informed, but do not always have the time or energy to connect with them. The family believes in a community centered around self-reliance and has opened their home to neighbors who need help in extreme situations.

Demographics	Current Information Consumption
Age: 25-44 Location: Intermix WUI Profession: Office Job	  




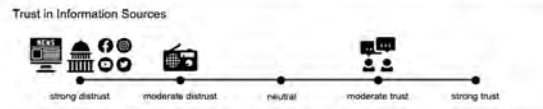
Preferred Topics: location of fire, possible fire spread
Preferred Sources: official state and federal fire agencies

Offline



George and his family moved to Alaska to get away from the social pressures of living in communities in the Lower 48. They do not have internet access and do not sign up for alert services. They do not have a reliable cell phone signal. Generally speaking, they do not particularly trust government sources or mainstream information providers. They are most likely to hear about non-visible fires and smoke from occasional contact with connected neighbors who go out of their way to be sure that they know what is going on. An alert about a quickly moving fire in 2019 was particularly helpful, but these individuals wonder if they will necessarily have the information they need when they need it. They try to have a plan so that if there is an emergency or they or one of their loved ones has a personal medical issue, they will be able to connect with someone who can help.

Demographics	Current Information Consumption
Age: 65+ Location: Interface WUI Profession: Retired	



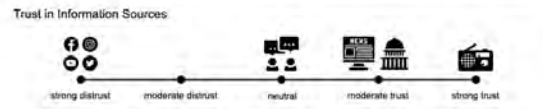
Preferred Topics: evacuations, serious risks
Preferred Sources: community and neighbors

Living My Life



Sheila is busy with her job, kids, and caring for an elderly parent. She works in the tour industry, guiding high-income corporate types from the Lower 48 who come to Alaska to fish, hunt, and see the northern lights. Wildfire smoke hurts business, blocking aviation and making it unpleasant and unsafe to be outside. Sheila is not active on social media and does not subscribe to a newspaper, but sometimes gets information from her coworkers as fire conditions change. Often there are a lot of rumors floating around about fires and she feels like it is hard to figure out what is really going on. She also gets some of her information about fires from radio and TV during the course of the day, but does not always have time to check the state agency websites. If it is not as enjoyable to stay in Alaska, Sheila is thinking of leaving the state for a place where business is more predictable and conditions are safer for her family.

Demographics	Current Information Consumption
Age: 25-44 Location: High-density urban Profession: Tourism Industry	  



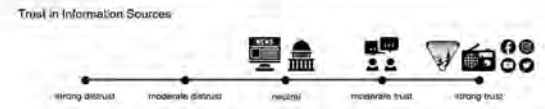
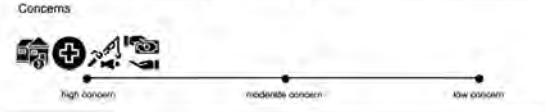
Preferred Topics: smoke, health risks, projected duration
Preferred Sources: consistent information from peers and traditional media

Indigenous Community Leader



Mary is a respected community leader in her town and carries extensive generational knowledge about the surrounding ecosystem. As both the winters and summers get warmer, she is concerned about impacts on recreational and subsistence activities as well as the health of the elderly and children. Her town is not accessible by paved roads, so she relies on radio, phone, and digital communication to ask for emergency services like firefighting, evacuation coordination, and government relief. Occasionally, she will use community Facebook pages to connect with people in her town. However, wildfires threaten phone lines and internet connectivity, so she depends heavily on radio and word-of-mouth to reach her community during emergencies. She also wishes there was more reliable federal or state-level aid in situations like these, but is confident in the strength and connectedness of her community to keep each other safe, as they have done for generations.

Demographics	Current Information Consumption
Age: 45-64 Location: Intermix WUI Profession: Tribal Council	  



Preferred Topics: evacuations, status of affected delivery
Preferred Sources: reliable, community-based