

## CCRC Monthly Update: the MU - July, 2022



THE GOOD THE BAD THE UGLY

Welcome the **CCRC Monthly Update** (affectionately known as the MU).

Hello MU readers! We are little behind with this month's edition of the MU. We may or may not have been preoccupied by the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth – the [Calgary Stampede](#).

## The Good



OK MU readers we are admittedly popping a few buttons of our chest bursting with pride on this month's MU leadoff story: In November 14, 2021 many parts of British Columbia, Canada experienced devastating flooding after an atmospheric river passed through the province. The flooding event sadly resulted in the loss of five lives, devastated farm and agricultural land and operations, impacted municipalities, and disrupted Canada's supply chain system as all railways and road routes between Vancouver, BC and the rest of Canada were washed out, including the infamous Coquihalla highway.

One of the communities significantly impacted by the [atmospheric river event was Merritt, B.C.](#) Merritt, a population of just over 7,000 people issued a complete evacuation order after many critical utilities and services such as bridge failures (access for emergency services), water and sewer systems failed making community conditions unsafe. One of the most significant recovery challenges for the city is that resident vacancy and availability, before the flooding event was hovering close to 0%, meaning that with the current state of uninhabitable homes, there are not many places for residents to return to. At the time of the MU publishing, approximately 8% of the community still remain displaced from their homes.

The team at the Centre for Crisis & Risk Communications partnered with the City of Merritt in January, 2022 to support recovery communications. Communication efforts have been focused on several distinct and unique target audiences, including those still displaced from their homes, those who are back home and still require additional support, those who are back home and do not require supports, different levels of government, and neighbouring Indigenous communities.

As the team in Merritt continues to “think outside of the box”, with initiatives such as [3D printed homes](#), our communication efforts follow suit with new and innovative ideas. One of our favourite ideas came out of an effort to reach those who were displaced away from Merritt (many evacuees found shelter in communities outside of Merritt such as Kelowna and Kamloops). Without a record of “who was where”, we went to the local radio station, Q101 who was more than willing to help. The radio DJ interviewed Recovery Manager (and friend of the MU), Greg Solecki who asked those still displaced to utilize the stations’ text-in contest line as a means of connecting to the city and available supports. Displaced residents simply had to text “Merritt” to the [contest line](#). The radio station then provided those numbers to us so we could connect them with a Case Manager. (Now that’s thinking outside the box!)

A website connected to the City’s main website page focused solely on recovery information. This provided the user ease of use and navigation amongst all other City business. A dedicated Facebook Group for Merritt Home and Recovery was established, newspaper ads, radio ads, posters at the post office, public information sessions, streamed online and an in person public open house were some of the other communication approaches delivered by the CCRC team.

We are very grateful for the opportunity to support the recovery team, lead by one of Canada’s top emergency management professionals, [Greg Solecki](#) (did we mention he’s a friend of the MU?). We are pleased to continue our work with the City of Merritt through their recovery. (As the MU likes to say, tough times don’t build character, they reveal it. Nice work Greg Solecki, City and people of Merritt and the CCRC team!)

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## The Bad



Prime Minister Boris Johnson reads a statement outside 10 Downing Street, London, formally resigning as Conservative Party leader, in London, Thursday, July 7, 2022. (Stefan Rousseau/PA via AP)

We're going international now and we head to the U.K. where British prime minister Boris Johnson has taken a page out of Alberta Premier Jason Kenney's playbook and resigned...but not quite yet. The brash, 58-year-old politician who took Britain out of the European Union and steered it through COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine was brought down by one scandal too many - this one involving his appointment of a politician who had been accused of sexual misconduct.

The messiest of prime ministers did not leave cleanly. Johnson stepped down immediately as Conservative Party leader but said he would remain as prime minister until the party chooses his successor. The timetable for that process will be announced this month. (The last leadership contest took six weeks.) In surely the most resigned understatement of his career, Johnson said "Them's the breaks."

The MU reminds readers that we never want to be the skunk at the garden party. When it's time to go..we'll just leave. Read about the long goodbye [HERE](#).

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## The Ugly

## Rogers outage: CRTC to investigate 'root cause' of network failure



By [Eric Stober](#) · Global News

Posted July 11, 2022 3:37 pm · Updated July 11, 2022 8:53 pm



WATCH: Industry minister, Rogers CEO meet due to outage – Jul 11, 2022

In a day that no doubt was a roadmap for how bad actors in the world can hack into and shut down an economy, Rogers had a widespread wireless and internet outage in Canada this month. At least a half a million merchants use Interac debit payments which rely on the Rogers network. Government services, including the ArriveCan app, were impacted. The Niagara Health authority in Ontario had to cancel radiation therapy appointments. Some cities have warned Rogers' customers they may have trouble contacting 911 in emergencies.

As the MU likes to say, sometimes you have a PR problem and sometimes you have a problem. CCRC Senior Director [Shafiq Jamal](#) was on Global National News reassuring Canadians that they could still use the 911 system through a landline or neighbour's phone (not on the Rogers' system.) Nice job Shafiq! Read about the day the earth stood still [HERE](#).

### Collaborative Publication Opportunity

Calling all comms professionals who might want something to pass the summer time away with...the team at the Centre for Crisis & Risk Communications is working with two of North Americas leading crisis communication researchers / professors, Dr. Timothy Coombs and Dr. Vincent Covello on a new publication (title, TBD.)

**The Project:** We are interested in creating a text book, focusing on crisis and risk communications from the perspective of those who were accountable for and led the communication efforts on behalf of an organization. There are many texts that feature case studies (reviewing the communication efforts of others). As noted by Dr. Coombs, it is difficult to find a text that is from the perspective of those that led the communications. Our publication will ideally feature 12 - 16 stories shared by crisis communication professionals. Once the stories have been received and edited, Dr. Coombs and members of the team will underpin those stories with theories and principles from academia and research.

As an example, "This is a great example of the Negative Dominance Theory and how the communications focused.....etc.". Dr. Coombs has already been in contact with a publisher who has expressed interest in this project. Additionally, we think it might be fun to conclude the book with a "Choose your own crisis communication adventure" chapter, where readers can make decisions based on prompts, much like the old adventure-style books.



If you are interested in participating in this project, you can learn more [HERE](#):



### Crisis & Coffee Summer Break

Our monthly Crisis and Coffee is on a break for the summer! We look forward to welcoming back our community of crisis communication and emergency management professionals. We will be back, the second Thursday of September at 12:00 pm MT / 2:00 pm ET for great conversations with great friends. One time registration is required [HERE](#).

**Special Announcement:** Keep a look out in the MU, on our webpage and [LinkedIn](#) for a special announcement coming this September. *Hint: Something to do with learning opportunities from some of the world's top crisis & risk communication practitioners, researchers, and academics (this is called a tease in the business).*

That's it for this addition of MU. If you have any comments or stories you'd like us to mention drop us a note at [info@centreforcrisiscommunications.com](mailto:info@centreforcrisiscommunications.com) or simply click on the Contact button below. Until next month, from all of us at the CCRC, remember that the key to successful crisis & risk communications is to **Anticipate, Prepare and Practice**.

Contact the CCRC

**NO-COST 30 MINUTE CONSULTATION**



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