



September 13, 2017

Dear Dr. Brunner:

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I am writing on behalf of my co-author and myself to submit the attached manuscript, "*Coming Together Around Hashtags: Exploring the Formation of Digital Emergent Citizen Groups*," for consideration for publication in the *Journal of Public Interest Communications*.

This manuscript explores how Twitter users organized around "#PrayforUSC," a hashtag that developed after the February, 2015 murder-suicide that occurred on the campus of the University of South Carolina. The authors are interested in determining whether Twitter conversations that develop around hashtags can function as digital emergent citizen groups. The authors conducted a thematic analysis of tweets using #PrayforUSC from the time the event started through the end of the following day, when the use of the hashtag subsided. The results suggest that hashtags can be used as the foundation of digital emergent groups.

This manuscript is appropriate for publication in the *Journal of Public Interest Communications* because this journal publishes scholarship that helps create positive change in the world. The insight offered by this research can help shape emergency response contexts in the future, which is perfectly in line with the goals of the journal.

This piece has not been submitted for publication anywhere else.

I thank you for your time and consideration, and look forward to your feedback on this manuscript.

Best regards,

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