

Communicating Through Online Communities

When cell phone service was sporadic in Blacksburg, Virginia on April 16, 2007, students turned to online communities as a way of connecting and communicating. "Are you okay?" posts helped Virginia Tech students find their friends. Others throughout the world tapped into Facebook and Myspace to see what was happening and swap stories. According to ABC's "Dateline" (4/16/07), over 10,000 Virginia Tech students used social networks to communicate during their darkest day.

Online communities are now being used as a source of support. For instance, here is a sampling of the hundreds of Facebook groups that have been created since the Virginia Tech incident occurred:

- A tribute to those who passed at the Virginia Tech Shooting
- A tribute from Muslim Students to those who passed at the Virginia Tech
- A tribute from Canadian students to those who passed away at Virginia Tech
- A Tribute To Virginia Tech. Students From NWR7 High school
- Becker College Supports Virginia Tech
- Christians Praying for Virginia TECH
- Gun Control and the Virginia Tech Shootings

- Help victims of the Virginia Tech Massacre
- Information on Virginia Tech Shooting

Now that the gunman's identify has been released, Facebook groups about him have also sprung up, such as:

- Cho Seung-Hui: Fuel Peace with your words, not anger

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A Sampling of Events Listed Online

Schools everywhere are keeping Virginia Tech in their thoughts. Here is just a sampling of events listed through online communities:

- Event: Hokies United: Candlelight Vigil Tonight
School: Virginia Tech (VA)
- Event: Virginia Tech Candlelight Vigil at The Rock
School: Michigan State University (MI)
- Event: Virginia Tech Candlelight Vigil
School: University of Texas – Austin (TX)
- Event: ODU Prayer Vigil for the Virginia Tech Community
School: Old Dominion University (VA)
- Event: Candlelight Vigil For the Shootings at Virginia Tech
School: Washington State University (WA)
- Event: Virginia Tech Candlelight Vigil - Delaware
School: Delaware State University (DE)
- Event: UCLA Vigil in Support for Virginia Tech
School: University of California – Los Angeles (CA)
- Event: Prayer Vigil for Virginia Tech
School: Clemson University (SC)
- Event: Honoring Virginia Tech at Florida Tech and Everywhere
School: Florida Institute of Technology (FL)
- Event: Virginia Tech Candle Light Vigil
School: University of Denver (CO)

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continued

- Forgive Cho Seung-hui
- Screw Cho Seung-Hui
- Cho Seung-Hui: There could have been another outlet for your pain!!!
- I'm Korean and Have a Gun, Don't Be Scared

See for Yourself

If you'd like to see what students are saying on Facebook or start a group or event of your own, here are some simple instructions.

How to search for groups and events on Facebook:

1. Log on to www.FaceBook.com
2. In the "Search" field on the left hand side of the screen type "Virginia Tech."
3. The results will be broken down into categories such as events, groups, etc.
4. Chose what information you want listed (events or groups initiated by a member of your institution will be listed first).

How to start a group:

1. Log on to www.FaceBook.com
2. On the left side of the welcome page click "Groups."

For an interesting article about online "descansos" or "resting places" that students are tapping into as a way to handle their grief, consider reading "Online memorials help people grieve" from the *Connecticut Post* (4/16/07) at www.connpost.com/localnews/ci_5680024.

3. On the top of the "Groups" page click "Create a New Group."
4. Enter the requested information.
5. Invite group members.

How to create an event:

1. Log on to www.FaceBook.com
2. On the left side of the welcome page click "Events."
3. On the top of the "Events" page click "Create an Event."
4. Enter the requested information.
5. Invite folks to the event.

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