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Mediating Disaster

In this panel, we explore the idea that natural disasters, while devastatingly real in their material effects, are also moments of media crisis - particularly acute events that simultaneously disrupt and reveal the emergent systems of contemporary public communication and their relationship to uncertainty and risk. At such times, we hypothesise, the interconnections and gaps in these systems can be observed. The panel will analyse the personal and public communicative ecologies that develop around major crisis events, disasters, and outbreaks; drawing on a number of case studies and diverse disciplinary perspectives to explore the ways in which the disaster, as an event, is mediated in contemporary culture.