# Online Event Based Resources around the 2016 Fort McMurray Wildfire

Apoorva Chauhan
Department of Computer Science
Utah State University
apoorva.chauhan@aggiemail.usu.edu

Amanda Lee Hughes
Department of Computer Science
Utah State University
amanda.hughes@usu.edu

## Outline

Event Based Resources (EBR) are online webpages and social media accounts named after an event. EBRs are interesting because they can be created by anyone and therefore, it can be difficult to judge the credibility of the information they provide. To learn more, we focus on Facebook and Twitter EBRs created around the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire.

## 2016 Fort McMurray Wildfire

**May 1, 2016**

A wildfire started in the southwest of Fort McMurray, Alberta, CAN.

**May 3, 2016**

- Wildfire entered the city of Fort McMurray.
- Forced a mass evacuation of its 80,000 residents.
- Burned nearly 600,000 hectares.
- Destroyed over 2,400 structures.

**May 19, 2016**

Wildfire crossed into the neighboring state of Saskatchewan.

**June 1 - 15, 2016**

Evacuees were allowed to re-enter their city under a voluntary phased reentry program.

**June 13, 2016**

Wildfire was classified as 'being held.'

**July 5, 2016**

Wildfire was considered 'under control.'

## Data Used

71 Facebook Pages, 2657 posts.
11 Twitter Accounts, 4976 tweets.

## Life of Event Based Resources

### CREATION

|  | EBRs created before May 1 | EBRs created May 1 - July 5 | EBRs created after July 5 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook | 1/71 (1.4%) | 69/71 (97.1%) | 1/71 (1.4%) |
| Twitter | 0/11 (0.0%) | 11/11 (100.0%) | 0/11 (0.0%) |

### DELETION

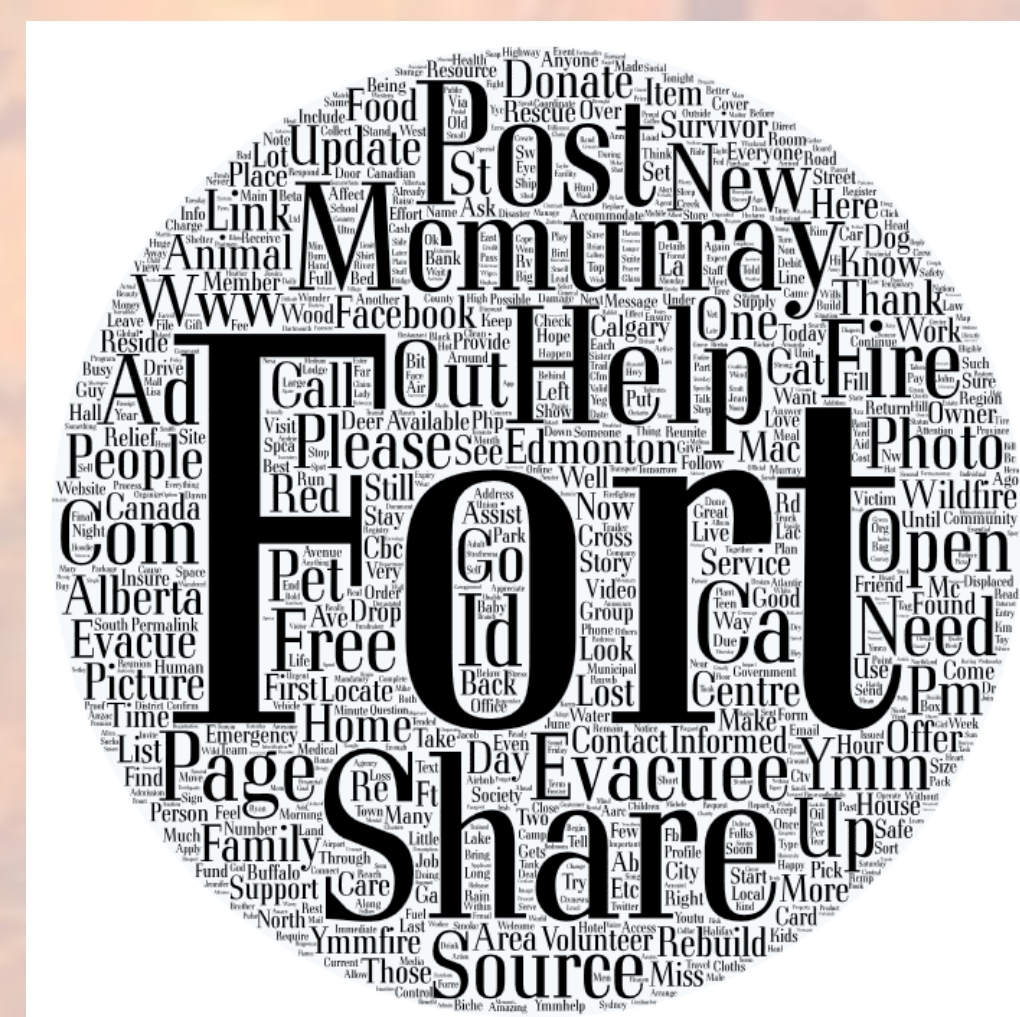|  | EBRs deleted May 1 - July 5 | EBRs deleted after July 5 |
|---|---|---|
| Facebook | 16/71 (22.5%) | 19/71 (26.7%) |
| Twitter | 0/11 (0.0%) | 2/11 (18.1%) |

### STILL ACTIVE

1. Missing Animals of Fort McMurray Fire (Facebook).
2. YMM Fire '95 Survivors Rebuild '16 (Facebook).
3. Fort McMurray Fire Central Animal Registry (Facebook).
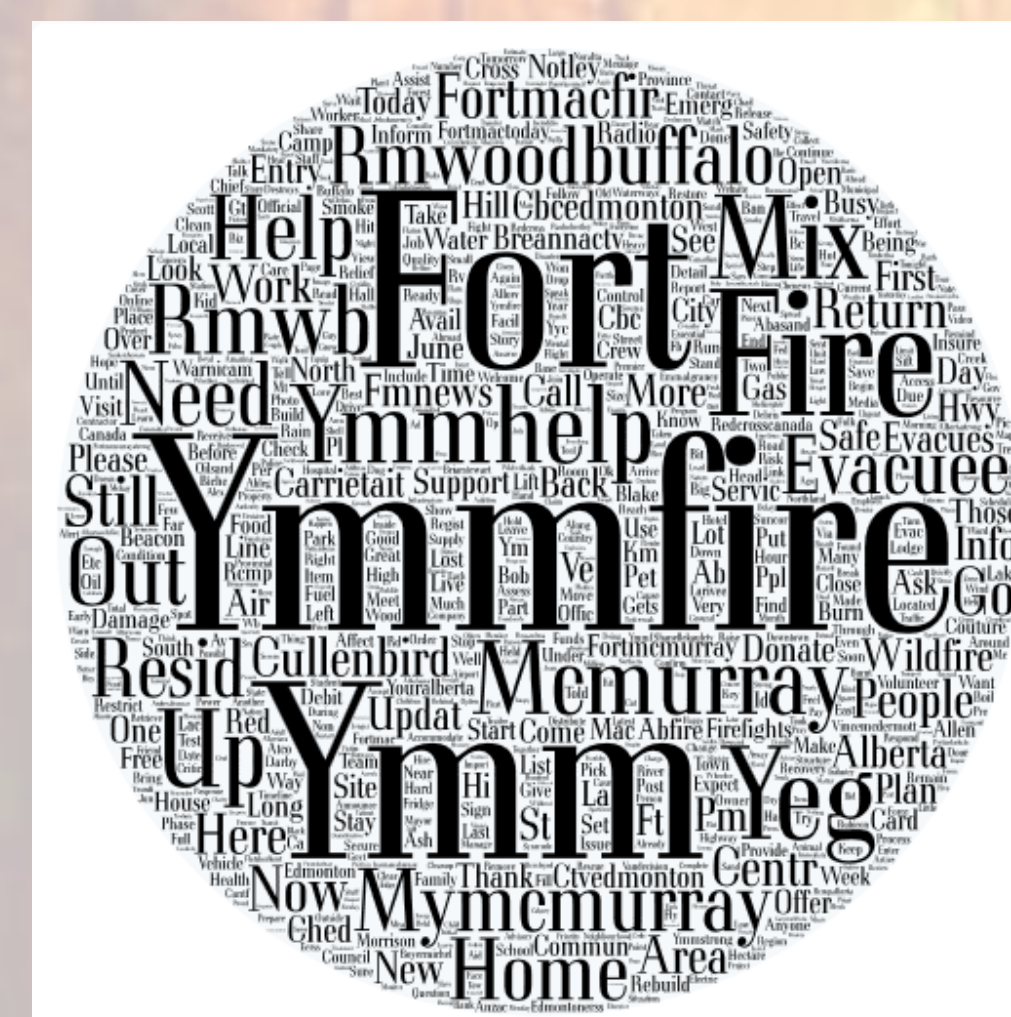
## Relevance of Event Based Resources

On Topic Posts: Messages related to the Fort McMurray Wildfire.

2639/2657 (99.7%) on-topic Facebook Posts.
4974/4976 (99.9%) on-topic Tweets.

**Facebook Posts**

**Twitter Posts**

## Types of Event Based Resources

1. **Donations (10.3%)**- EBRs asking for money and/or items.
2. **Fundraisers (18.1%)**- EBRs selling or auctioning items.
3. **Prayers (3.8%)**- EBRs sending best wishes and messages of hope.
4. **Reactions (2.5%)**- EBRs expressing personal views and opinions.
5. **Reports (32.4%)**- EBRs disseminating wildfire information.
6. **Resources (22.0%)**- EBRs requesting and offering resources.
7. **Stories (5.1%)**- EBRs sharing personal experiences.
8. **Unclassified (6.4%)**- EBRs that could not be classified due to lack of information.

## Most Popular Event Based Resources

1. Fort McMuray Evacuee Open Source Help Page (Facebook) - 41,428 likes on June 15, 2016.
2. YMMHelps (Twitter) - 1,446 followers on June 18, 2016.

## Summary

This study provides an overview of the Event Based Resources created around the 2016 Fort McMurray Wildfire. It documents how these resources behave and what kinds of information they provide. It also builds a foundation for future studies that will determine the accuracy and the credibility of the information posted by these EBRs. This work will also help emergency responders as well as the public determine which EBRs should be trusted and which should not.

## Next Steps

1. Interview Owners and Administrators of EBRs.
2. Evaluate the Accuracy of EBRs.