Communities respond to tragedy by making virtuous use of social networking sites for a variety of purposes. We asked students to describe why they used a social networking site after the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech, then evaluated their responses using content analysis. Students went predominately to Facebook (99%). Most (59%) of the 426 students that responded went there because their friends were already there, and to find out if their friends were OK (28%) (and to let them know they were OK).

**Abstract**

**Methods**

- Online Survey
- Content Analysis
- Keyword co-occurrence

**Findings**

- 426 participants
- 27% response rate
- 99% used Facebook
- 13 keywords from content analysis
- Good inter-rater reliability
- Keyword types
  - Relationship: related to family and friends
  - Mechanistic: related to using features of Facebook
- Keyword frequency
- Keyword Co-occurrence
  - 268 responses were coded with multiple keywords by 2 of 3 coders
  - 23 keyword pairs obtained significant Chi Square values.