



# Hurricanes

What your employees are  
worrying about

A satellite image of a hurricane over the Gulf of Mexico, with a black outline of the coastline. The hurricane is centered in the Gulf, with a clear eye and spiral cloud bands. The coastline of the United States is visible on the left and top edges of the image.

# Blogging experience

- Began SciGuy blog in June, 2005
- Realized Katrina would be big
- Followed up with blogs about Rita
- Blogging became how Chron.com covered breaking news

# Hurricane blogging philosophy evolves

A satellite image of a hurricane over the Atlantic Ocean. The hurricane's eye and spiral bands are clearly visible. A black outline of the Eastern United States coastline is overlaid on the image, showing the hurricane's path relative to the land.

- I do not chase storms.
- I do not sensationalize them.
- I explain them to a general readership.
- Incredible hunger for “what it means to me”

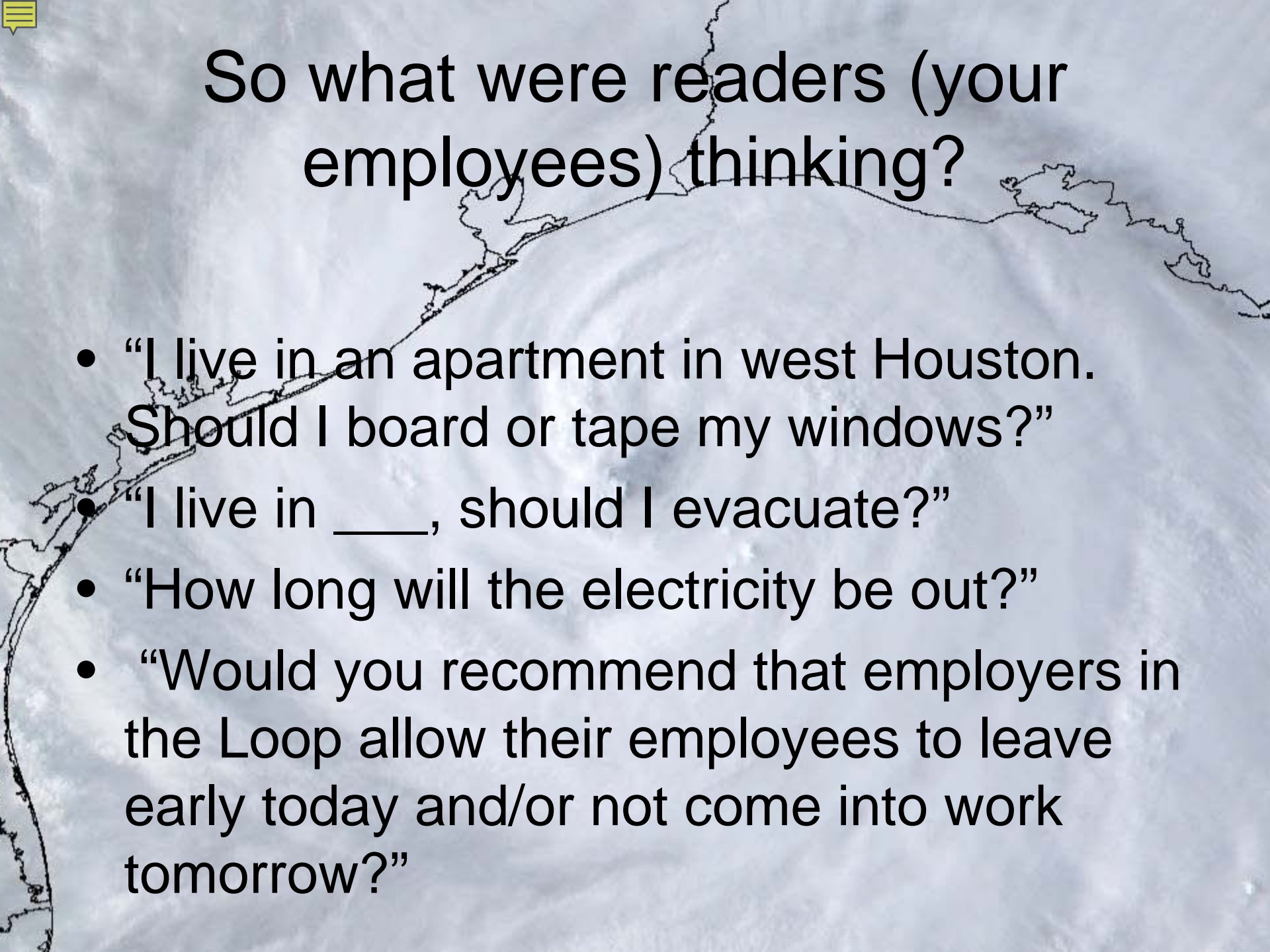
# Hurricane Ike coverage

A satellite image of Hurricane Ike, showing a well-defined eye and spiral cloud bands, positioned over the Atlantic Ocean. A black outline map of the Eastern United States coastline is overlaid on the image, showing the path of the hurricane from the northeast towards the Florida peninsula.

- 41 entries between Sept. 3 and Sept. 13
- Who should evacuate?
- Why 10 miles matters with storm surge
- Model explainers (yes, ignore CLP5)
- Don't panic, prepare
- 4+ million page views
- And yes, live chats

# During five live chats audience grew

- From 9,300 to 14,300 viewers
- From 6,600 to 13,400 replays
- Best question: *“Our dog is an outside dog, and I don't want him to leave a brownie on my carpet. Can I tie him to a tree?”*
- So many Katy questions, ongoing joke on blog



# So what were readers (your employees) thinking?

- “I live in an apartment in west Houston. Should I board or tape my windows?”
- “I live in \_\_\_\_, should I evacuate?”
- “How long will the electricity be out?”
- “Would you recommend that employers in the Loop allow their employees to leave early today and/or not come into work tomorrow?”

A satellite-style map of the Gulf of Mexico and surrounding landmasses. A black line representing a hurricane track starts from the top center, moves westward, then curves southward and westward towards the Gulf of Mexico. A yellow speech bubble icon is in the top left corner.

# People are intensely interested in hurricane forecasting

- “Which model do you trust?”
- “Do you think the storm will hit Houston?”
- “This one will miss us just like Rita did.”
- A lot of armchair forecasting
- People to avoid: Lt. Gov. of Texas.
- People to trust: National Hurricane Center, and Chris Hebert. People not excited about the big storm.

Assume your employees know  
nothing about hurricanes





# Why people need the basics

- Harris County population has grown from 2.8 million in 1990 to 4.1 million in 2009
- In addition, incredible population turnover (doctors in Med. Center, astronauts)
- Hurricane amnesia



# Summary

- Some may bluster, but most are worried
- Allow people the time they need to take care of families, homes, pets
- Employees will become obsessive
- Need a clear, decisive plan for closing (cities may dither)
- Those who must stay behind need time off in advance of storm