DIPLOMACY IN THE INTERNET ERA

Twitter *for* diplomats

by @andreas212nyc

preface by Giulio Terzi
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy



TWITTER FOR DIPLOMATS

by @andreas212nyc

preface by Giulio Terzi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy

Published by DiploFoundation and Istituto Diplomatico (2013)





DiploFoundation
Rue de Lausanne 56
CH-1202 Genève 21, Switzerland
website: *http://www.diplomacy.edu*

Istituto Diplomatico
Ministero degli Affari Esteri
Via di Villa Madama, 250
00135 Roma, Italy
website: *http://isdi.esteri.it*

The views expressed in this book are the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the publishers.

The author: Andreas Sandre – aka @andreas212nyc – is a Press and Public Affairs Officer at the Embassy of Italy in Washington DC. He is a regular contributor to DiploFoundation, the Global Policy Journal, and BigThink.

Book Series directed by Stefano Baldi and Jovan Kurbalija.

Editing: Mary Murphy
Cover design, Layout & Prepress: Rudolf Tušek
Printed in Serbia



This work is licensed under http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/

ISBN: 978-99932-53-27-3

Twitter for Diplomats is not a manual, or a list of what to do or not to do. It is rather a collection of information, anecdotes, and experiences. It recounts a few episodes involving foreign ministers and ambassadors, as well as their ways of interacting with the tool and exploring its great potential. It wants to inspire ambassadors and diplomats to open and nurture their accounts – and it wants to inspire all of us to use Twitter to also listen and open our minds.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface 7

Social media and diplomacy 9

Twitter or Facebook? 13

Twitter diplomacy 24

Ambassadors love to tweet 37

Twitter on the world stage 47

Risks and challenges 54

Twitter from A to Z 60

Endnotes 67

PREFACE

Diplomacy has traditionally been depicted in literature and movies as intrinsically secret and full of intrigue, carried out by few actors, with public opinion playing a passive role, if any. This description was quite true in the Talleyrand and Metternich era and partly throughout the twentieth century. Over the last decade, the widespread use of the Internet, and particularly social media, ushered in a new era for diplomats.

World time zones and distances have shrunk dramatically; the worldwide-shared flow of information has become massive, makingit difficult to separate local from global thus raising citizens' expectations to participate in foreign policy decision-making and implementation processes.

This transformation poses compelling challenges for diplomats, while providing them with new opportunities. Today, social media exposes foreign policymakers to global audiences while at the same time allowing governments to reach them instantly. With only 140 characters, Twitter creates and broadcasts news and opinions in real time, in a simple and concise way, furthering foreign policy goals. One cannot underestimate the potential risks of this new and much wider exposure. But, by bringing it closer to citizens, Twitter has two big positive effects on foreign policy: it fosters a beneficial exchange of ideas between policymakers and civil society and enhances diplomats' ability to gather information and to anticipate, analyze, manage, and react to events.

It came as no surprise to my staff when, on the very first day in office as Foreign Minister, I opened my Twitter account and started working to imbue the administration with the idea of the importance of digital diplomacy. Over the past 14 months I have been constantly encouraging the use of social media at every level of Italian diplomacy. And today, from Washington to Bucharest, from Tunis to Beijing, dozens of Italian embassies and consulates have at least one official profile on a social network, thus strengthening the global reach of our foreign policy and our interaction with foreign citizens as well as with our nationals everywhere.

I consider *Twitter for Diplomats* to be an extremely timely publication. The power of social media in shaping events will keep growing in the years to come and this e-book could serve as an essential compass to sail, wit-

tingly, through the ever-changing waters of digital diplomacy and global communication. It offers a wide array of examples of influential foreign policy players using Twitter to communicate on a global scale and makes some insightful comments, presenting to the reader an accurate snapshot of the state of play of public diplomacy.

The case-oriented approach makes the publication particularly useful to understand the dynamics of Twitter diplomacy. Indeed, it is a must read for both those interested in communication strategies and those who, more simply, want to know first-hand how diplomats and ministers work and tweet.

Giulio Terzi – @GiulioTerzi
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIPLOMACY

One hundred and forty characters have changed the way we see the world. They have changed how foreign policy shapes itself and how it responds to new international challenges. In ancient Rome, this phenomenon was called *Vox Populi*; today it goes under many different names: e-diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy, Twiplomacy, and others. Although not perfect synonyms, they all refer to the use of the Web, information and communications technology (ICT), and social media tools to engage in diplomatic activities and carry out foreign policy objectives.

While Twitter is today seen as the most common e-diplomacy tool, it is only one of the many ways foreign ministries around the world are engaging in the most viral and exciting new development in modern diplomacy.

Since March 2006, when Twitter's founder Jack Dorsey – aka @jack – published the very first tweet in history, a lot has changed. It was 3:50pm, March 21, 2006, and since then it has been re-tweeted almost 7000 times.



@jack's 'twttr' tweet was the first of several billion and counting. It took Twitter three years, two months, and one day to reach the first billion tweets, and it took about 18 months for the first 500 000 users to sign up. Today, an estimated 500 million people use Twitter's real-time information and social networking service: many of those are governments, embassies, and – of course – diplomats.

With the spread of Twitter, the ways in which people and governments interact with each other have changed, as well as how a nation sets up its diplomatic strategies and actuates its foreign policy agenda and objectives. The flow of information and the way diplomats share information have also changed. As has the meaning of real time: today's 'real-er' time

– more real, faster, and more widespread – has in a way impeached the effectiveness of traditional politics. Information has decentralized, enabling larger shifts in power and political change. A clear example is what happened in North Africa and the Middle East with the so-called Arab Spring. Even though the roots of the many revolutions that affected those areas are in the ground, and not in Twitter – as Tunisian blogger Lina Ben Mhenni, aka @benmhennilina, recently said at a Twiplomacy conference in Turin last June 2012 – social media has certainly contributed to the timing and amplification of the turmoil in a viral way, to borrow some Internet jargon. 'They showed the power of the best of old ideas allied with the best of new technology – iFreedom', explained Ambassador Tom Fletcher – aka @HMATomFletcher – the UK envoy to Lebanon, in a recent blog.[1] 'The dystopian views of the role of social media in these revolutions is largely been disproven, but we can definitely say that social networks accelerated movement-making, facilitated leaderlessness, enriched the information environment,' said Alec Ross – aka @AlecJRoss, the US Secretary of State's Senior Advisor for Innovation – in an interview with Matt Wells of the *Guardian* in March 2012.

On June 14, 2012, on his Economic Statecraft Day video message to US Embassies around the world, US President Barack Obama – aka @barackobama – said: 'In the 21st century, our nations are connected like never before. In our global economy, our prosperity is shared. That's why, as President, I've committed the United States to a new era of engagement with the world, including economic partnerships that create jobs and opportunity for all our citizens. It's part of our larger effort to renew American leadership.'

Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have been harnessing their foreign policy agenda in many different ways – in part through technology and social media – in order to advance in the country's prosperity at home and in the world at large.

Quite clearly, the US Administration has found a great ally in social media, making it an integral part of many of the programs run by the US Department of State, including the 21st Century Statecraft. It is one of Secretary Clinton's best bets on the international arena, and a very successful one. As explained by Ross, the 21st Century Statecraft umbrella

of activities is a way to complement 'traditional foreign policy tools with newly innovated and adapted instruments of statecraft that fully leverage the networks, technologies, and demographics of our interconnected world'.[2] In other words, exploring ways of using new tools and engaging new networks in pursuit of addressing today's challenges.

Whatever we might call this new trend, social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, and others, have forced diplomats and communicators alike – and not only in the USA – to rethink and redesign diplomacy while putting it in to a different context. Information technologies are indeed providing a way to better harness information while customizing and adapting new tools. That said, it is important to highlight the fact that diplomacies around the world are not moving away from traditional tools; rather, they are trying to expand their reach and to explore new innovative ways to integrate their efforts in all international fora as well as on a bilateral level. It is a way to abstract foreign policy from state-to-state interaction and instead 'pivot to the people' – to quote Princeton University's Anne Marie Slaughter, aka @SlaughterAM, a former director of policy planning in the US State Department (2009–2011) and a former dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs – as cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and diplomats try to engage with less traditional actors and players other than governments.

The origins of this new trend in diplomacy lie quite undeniably in the United States, thanks mainly to the efforts of Secretary Clinton and her Special Advisor Ross. According to a May 2012 report[3] by Fergus Hanson – aka @fergushanson – former visiting fellow in e-diplomacy at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, and now Director of Polling and Research Fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy, the United States 'has become the world's leading user of eDiplomacy'. To give you some data, the US Department of State employs around 150 full-time personnel working in 25 different e-diplomacy nodes at Headquarters while more than 900 people use it at US embassies and missions abroad.

Thanks to social media and the power of ideas, Clinton's State Department has been solidly nurturing a true engagement with the world, transforming foreign affairs in to a participatory process where top-down policies often find bottom-up solutions. It is a new diplomacy that Secretary Clin-

ton has shaped in to a veritable hub for innovation, an approach that focuses on embracing technology and communications tools while reaching out to new players.

Today's State Department works on different fronts. It has incubated ideas — not just technology *per se* — to create a better balance between what Professor Slaughter calls the 'Billiard Ball World' and the 'Lego World'. The first is 'a world in which states are reduced to their heads of state, their foreign ministry, and their army, and they interact with other states almost entirely in terms of power', Slaughter explained in her remarks at Penn State University in March 2012. The second is 'a world in which states come apart [...] and have the ability to network or partner or make an alliance with social actors. [...] It is a horizontal world. There are no ladders because there are no hierarchies. It is a web. Power still exists in a web, but it is exercised from the center, not the top.'[4]

Twitter and other social media tools have made this transition quicker and smoother, but certainly not without tries and errors.

TWITTER OR FACEBOOK?

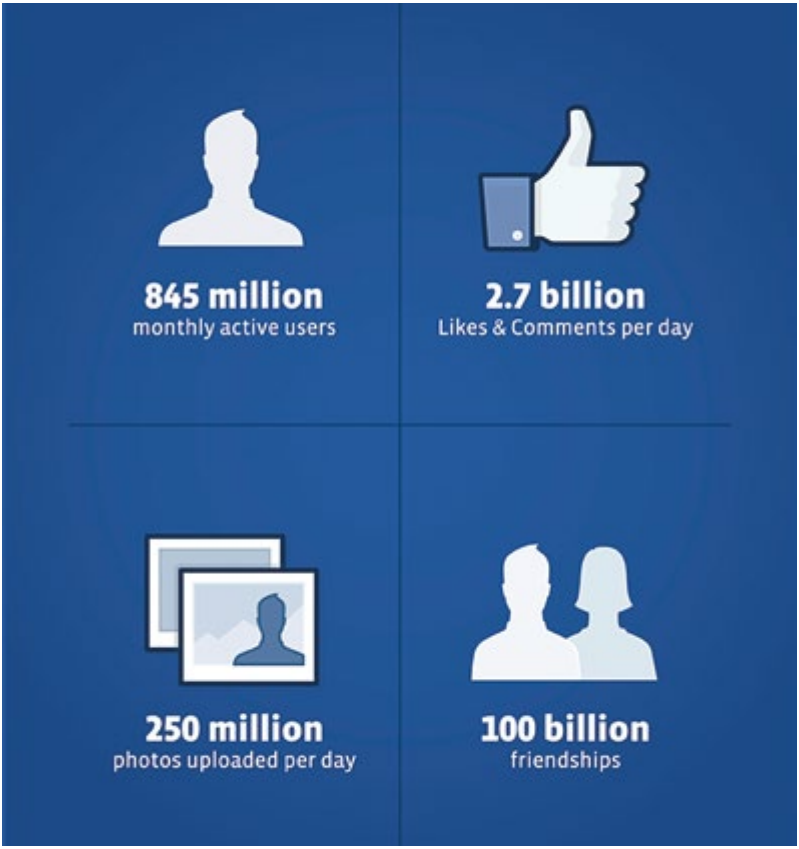
The growth registered by social networks like Facebook and Twitter in the past few years has been exponential and has been largely fueled by a transition from desktop computers to mobile, mostly with the large success of smart phones all over the world. According to a 2010 global research project into people's online activities and behaviors by TNS, the world's biggest custom research company, 'mobile users spend on average 3.1 hours per week on social networking sites compared to just 2.2 hours on email.' Covering nearly 90% of the world's online population through 50 000 interviews with consumers in 46 countries, the study – accessible at www.tnsdigitallife.com – shows the drive to mobile is mostly driven by the increased need for instant gratification and the ability of social networks to offer multiple messaging formats, including the instant message or update function.

Facebook has certainly benefited a great deal from the shift to mobile as around one-third of its user base accesses it through a mobile platform (phone or tablet). 'Mobile usage has been the fastest growing part of the Facebook experience', Facebook former Chief Technology Officer Bret Taylor – aka @btaylor – was quoted by the Wall Street Journal as saying at the Inside Social Apps conference in San Francisco in January 2011.[5] Taylor noted that Facebook has 200 million people using it on a mobile device, and that those people are more than twice as active as people who use Facebook just on a desktop computer.

As for Twitter, the company tweeted a new update about its mobile users on June 7, 2012, accounting now for a total 60% of its 140 million active base access. It is an important piece of data if you put it into its proper context of a total of more than 400 million tweets per day in June 2012, up from the 340 million figure that the company revealed in March 2012. [6]

That said, while Twitter remains undoubtedly one of the faster-growing social media tools among the diplomatic and government sectors, Facebook is still the world's foremost dominant social network, for both mobile and desktop users.

In the filing[7] for its 2012 initial public offering, Facebook had to disclose statistics heretofore unseen by the world – although estimated by many



research firms before. Growth occurred in daily active users across major markets including Brazil, Canada, Germany, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The highlights are shown in this infographic, published by Facebook in its filing documents.

In brief:

- 845 million monthly active users (anyone who has logged in once in the last 30 days), with a year-over-year growth of 39%.
- 57% of monthly active users log in daily, up from 54% in 2010.
- 483 million daily active users as of December 2011, with year-over-year growth of 48%.
- 425 million monthly mobile users.
- 100 billion friend connections as of December 31, 2011.
- 2.7 billion likes and comments per day during the last quarter of 2011.

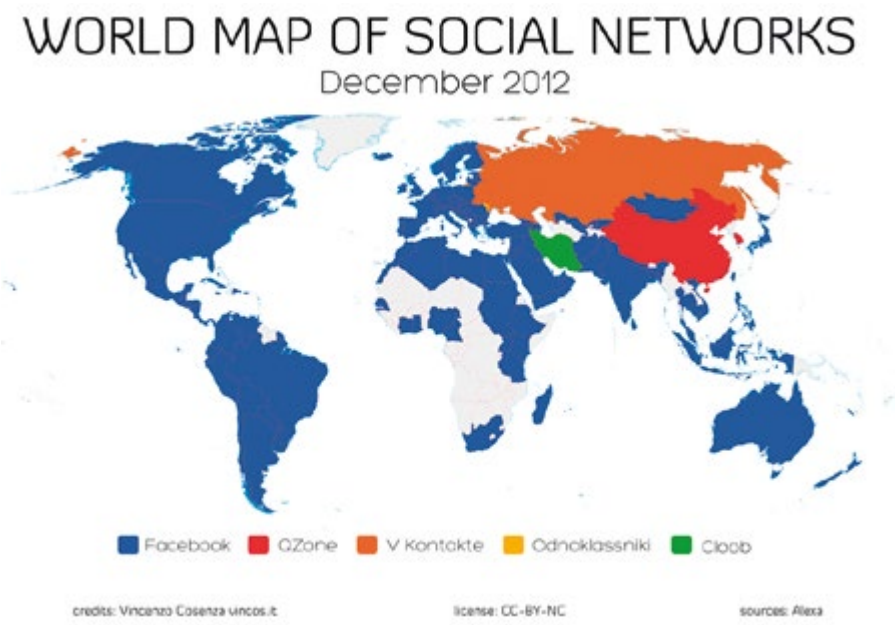
It is interesting to notice how, at the end of the fourth quarter of 2012, Facebook counted more people accessing the social media site via mobile phones and/or tablets rather than desktop computers: a total of around 618 million users out of its one-billion-plus subscribers, according to Mediabistro's AllFacebook blog. 'Even more interestingly', Mediabistro writes, 'Facebook announced that 157 million people (monthly active users) only access Facebook from their mobile device, and that number has grown quite a bit over the past year.'[8]

Twice a year (in June and in December), social media strategist Vincenzo Cosenza – aka @vincos – updates his 'world map of social networks', in which he shows what the most popular social network is in now 137 countries worldwide – at least according to a combination of Alexa and Google Trends for Websites traffic data.

The December 2012 edition[9] shows just how dominant Facebook has become in almost all countries in the world: in top position in 127 out of the 137 countries that were analyzed. According to statistics from Socialbakers, Asia is now the largest continent on Facebook with almost 278 million users, followed by Europe with 251 million, North America with 241 million, and South America with 142 million.[10]

Twitter, LinkedIn, and Badoo are currently duking it out for the #2 spot, with only a few exceptions, most notably China and Russia. Indeed, Twitter is the second or third most dominant social network in various European countries, the United States, Australia, Canada, Canada, and Japan.

'The trends reveal just how effective Facebook has been at wooing international users away from their domestic sites — although the task does get easier once the network reaches a critical mass of users within any one region', wrote the Washington Post in January 2013 suggesting that 'there are signs that the social networking giant is actively pursuing the remaining, Facebook-free outposts.' The article indicates in fact that in October 2012, founder Mark Zuckerberg met with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and 'said he has attempted to persuade developers there to build more platforms on Facebook'.[11]


WORLD MAP OF SOCIAL NETWORKS
December 2012
Facebook
QZone
V Kontakte
Odnoklassniki
Cloob
credits: Vincenzo Cosenza vincos.it
license: CC-BY-NC
sources: Alexa

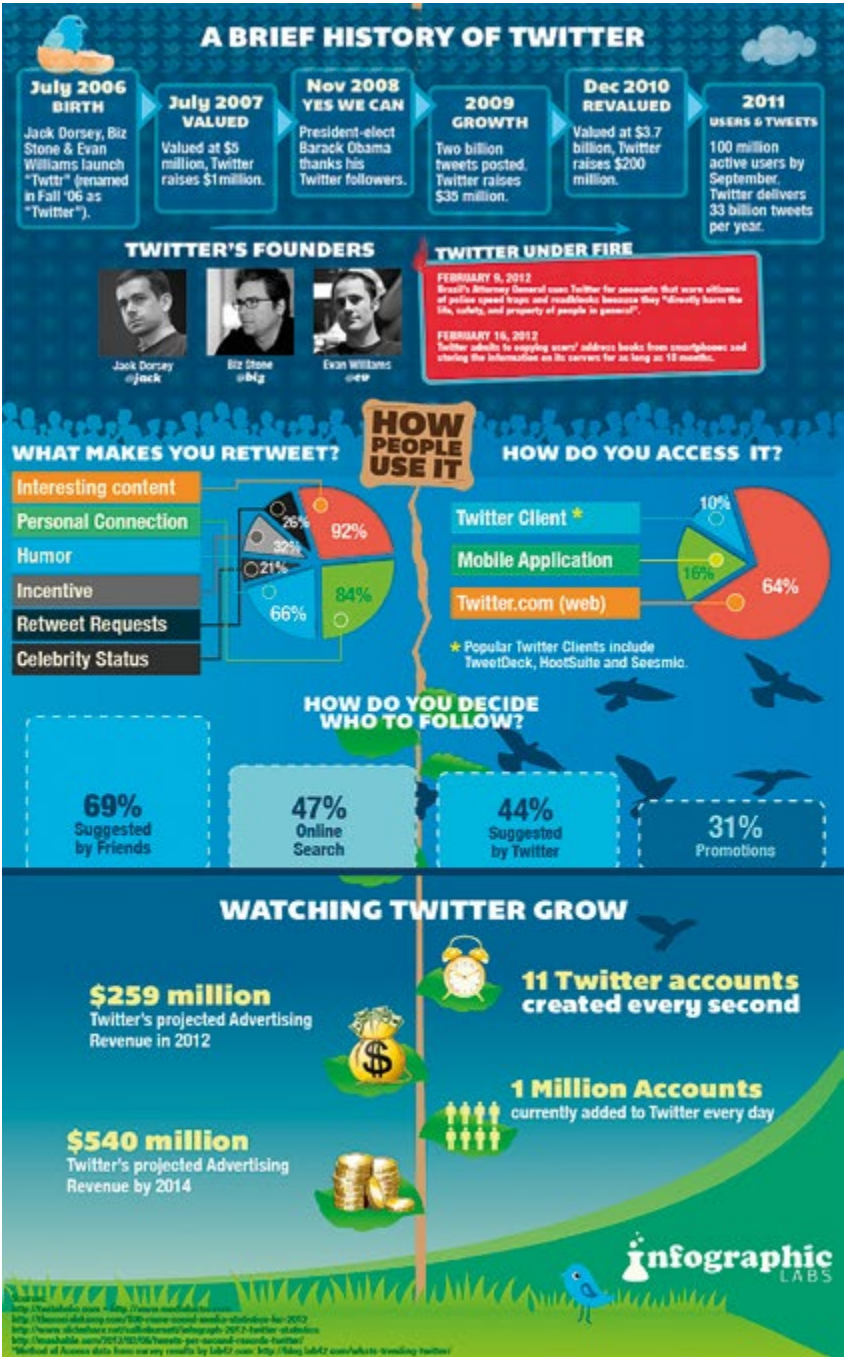

June 2009
Facebook
V Kontakte
Odnoklassniki
Lidé
Hyves
Zing
Hi5
Orkut
Nasza-Klasa
QZone
Iwiw
Maktoob
One
Mixi
Friendster
Wretch
Cyworld
credits: Vincenzo Cosenza www.vincos.it
license: CC-BY-NC
sources: Google Trends for Websites/Alexa

The maps by Vincenzo Cosenza on the previous page show the spread and evolution of Facebook and other social media in the past three years.

But how big is Twitter?

According to Infographic Labs, as of the beginning of 2012, Twitter has an estimated 500 million users, which generate 175 million tweets a day. The largest pool of Twitter users is in the USA with some 107.7 million profiles.




A BRIEF HISTORY OF TWITTER
July 2006
BIRTH
Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone & Evan Williams launch "Twttr" (renamed in Fall '06 as "Twitter").
July 2007
VALUED
Valued at $5 million, Twitter raises $1 million.
Nov 2008
YES WE CAN
President-elect Barack Obama thanks his Twitter followers.
2009
GROWTH
Two billion tweets posted. Twitter raises $35 million.
Dec 2010
REVALUED
Valued at $3.7 billion, Twitter raises $200 million.
2011
USERS & TWEETS
100 million active users by September. Twitter delivers 33 billion tweets per year.
TWITTER'S FOUNDERS
Jack Dorsey @jack
Biz Stone @biz
Evan Williams @ev
TWITTER UNDER FIRE
FEBRUARY 9, 2012
Brazil's Attorney General sues Twitter for accounts that warn citizens of police speed traps and roadblocks because they "directly harm the life, safety, and property of people in general".
FEBRUARY 16, 2012
Twitter admits to copying users' address books from smartphones and storing the information on its servers for as long as 18 months.
HOW PEOPLE USE IT
WHAT MAKES YOU RETWEET?
Interesting content
Personal Connection
Humor
Incentive
Retweet Requests
Celebrity Status
92%
84%
66%
32%
26%
21%
HOW DO YOU ACCESS IT?
Twitter Client *
Mobile Application
Twitter.com (web)
64%
16%
10%
* Popular Twitter Clients include TweetDeck, HootSuite and Seesmic.
HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHO TO FOLLOW?
69% Suggested by Friends
47% Online Search
44% Suggested by Twitter
31% Promotions
WATCHING TWITTER GROW
$259 million
Twitter's projected Advertising Revenue in 2012
$540 million
Twitter's projected Advertising Revenue by 2014
11 Twitter accounts created every second
1 Million Accounts
currently added to Twitter every day
infographic LABS

The infographics by Infographic Labs (see page 17-18) went viral in the first quarter on 2012, indicating a growing interest around Twitter. Blogger Cara Pring [12] – aka @carapring – has put together a brief summary of the most recent statistics regarding Twitter (as of February 2012):

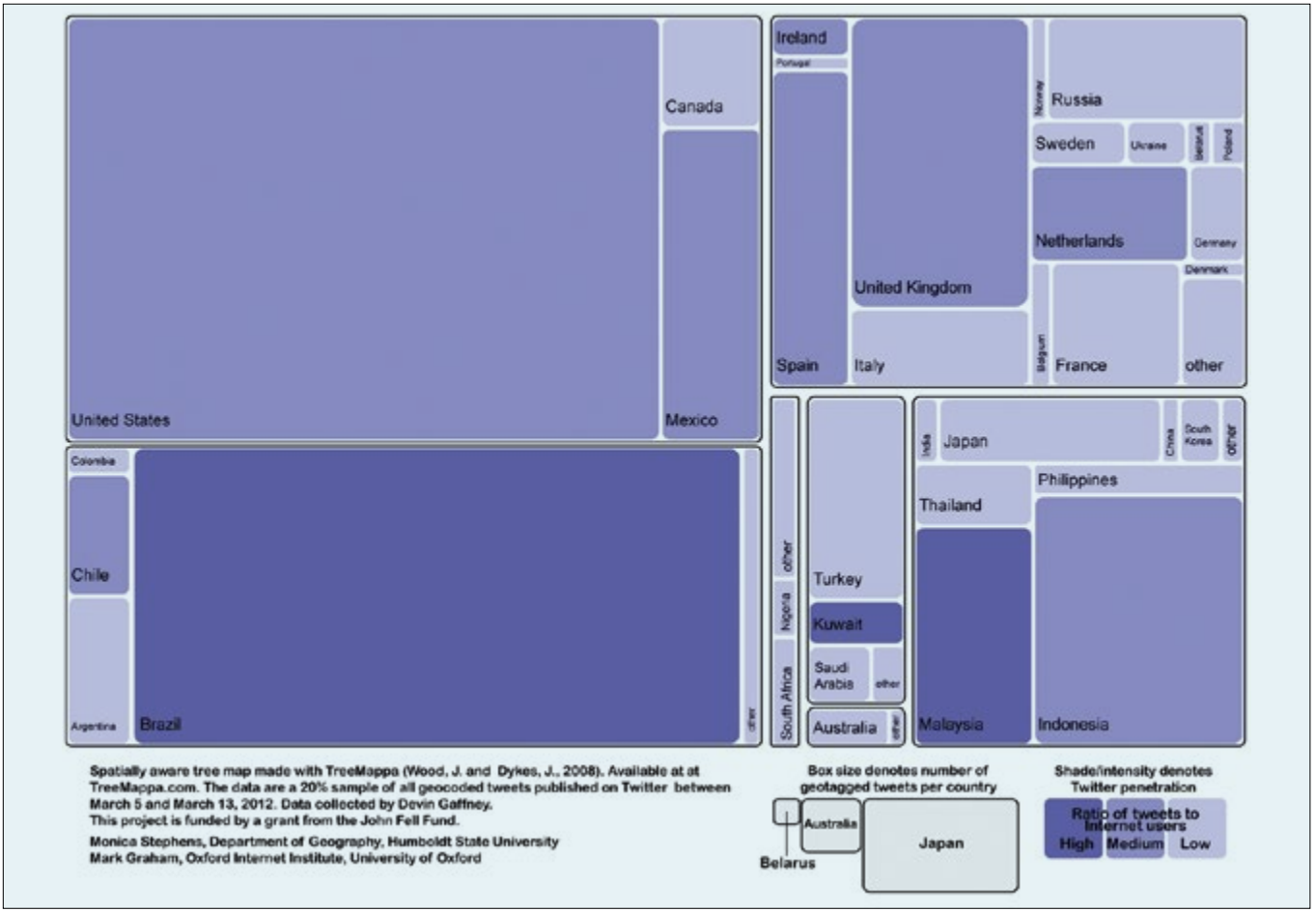
- Twitter is growing at a rate of 11 accounts per second.
- On a busy day, Twitter sees about 175 million tweets.
- The USA has 107.7 million Twitter accounts, Brazil has 33.3 million and Japan 29.9 million.
- The USA represents 28.1% of all Twitter users.
- The Netherlands is the most active country on Twitter (33% of the total activity); Japan was second with 30%, Spain third with 29%, and the USA made a four-way tie with Indonesia, Venezuela, and Canada at 28%.
- Only 27% of Twitter users are active (defined as those who tweeted at least once in the past three months).
- 30% of Twitter users have an income over $100 000.

Twitter's large reach is evident not only in the number of worldwide users, but also where tweets originate. A visualization map put together by Mark Graham and Monica Stephens at the Oxford Internet Institute[13] shows that the most prolific twitterers/tweeters – or the six largest countries in terms of information production through Twitter – are: (1) the United States, (2) Brazil, (3) Indonesia, (4) the United Kingdom, (5) Mexico, and (6) Malaysia.

'It is interesting to note that only two of the countries on that list are in the Global North and are traditional hubs of the production of codified knowledge', the researchers pointed out.

Using color intensity, the visualization also shows Twitter penetration: the darker the rectangle, the higher the percentage of Internet users on Twitter.

'By mapping the distribution of tweets in the world it becomes apparent that Twitter is allowing for broader participation than is possible in most other platforms and media', the report reads. 'In other words, it might be allowing for a "democratization" of information production and sharing because of its low barriers to entry and adaptability to mobile devices.' The conclusion of the Oxford Internet Institute is backed by the fact that 'barriers to the dissemination of information, such as censorship, are also


United States
Canada
Mexico
Colombia
Chile
Argentina
Brazil
other
Ireland
Portugal
Spain
United Kingdom
Italy
Norway
Russia
Sweden
Ukraine
Belarus
Poland
Netherlands
Germany
Denmark
Belgium
France
other
other
Nigeria
South Africa
Turkey
Kuwait
Saudi Arabia
other
Australia
other
India
Japan
China
South Korea
other
Thailand
Philippines
Malaysia
Indonesia
Spatially aware tree map made with TreeMappa (Wood, J. and Dykes, J., 2008). Available at at TreeMappa.com. The data are a 20% sample of all geocoded tweets published on Twitter between March 5 and March 13, 2012. Data collected by Devin Gaffney.
This project is funded by a grant from the John Fell Fund.
Monica Stephens, Department of Geography, Humboldt State University
Mark Graham, Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford
Box size denotes number of geotagged tweets per country
Belarus
Australia
Japan
Shade/intensity denotes Twitter penetration
Ratio of tweets to Internet users
High
Medium
Low

visible through the small proportion of tweets originating in China (home to the largest population of Internet users in the world)'.

Researchers at the Oxford Internet Institute used data sets comprised of a sample of 20% of all geo-referenced tweets sent between March 5 and March 13, 2012.[14] In total, that amounts to 4.5 million data points.

While more research is undoubtedly necessary to better understand the geography of content on Twitter, the map is an important set of reference and surely a starting point for social media actors – diplomats included – to understand the geographies of information, as virtual layers and augmentations of place increasingly matter to public and digital diplomacy structures.

Another important piece of the puzzle to understand the dynamics of social media is who uses what. As pointed out by Richard Darell[15] – aka @minervity – 'we're constantly trying to find new channels to get our ideas, daily happenings and business interests across to new and exciting people' and that makes it even more difficult to chart what to focus on depending on what industry you're in.

OnlineMBA – aka @OnlineMBA_com – has put together a useful infographic on the demographics of social media, in terms of gender, age, education, and income. 'Some sites' users are more demographically alike than others', commented[16] Mashable Social Media – aka @mashablesocialmedia. 'One thing is the same for most social sites — college students, or those who have completed some college, represent the majority on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Digg and Reddit. Among Facebook users, 57% have completed some college, and 24% have earned a bachelor's or master's degree. Although, people 45 and older make up 46% of Facebook users.'

Indeed, Twitter shows some demographically interesting strength. In terms of age, for example, users are well distributed across the board with 58% between the age of 25 and 44. In addition, when it comes to education, Twitter registers a total of 83% of its users with some college experience or college degree compared to 81% for Facebook users.


A Case Study In
Social Media Demographics
Over 66% of all adult online users are connected to one or more social media platforms. Use of these platforms and tools has been increasing steadily over the last 10 years, for both personal and business reasons.
Here we take a look at the statistics behind some of the most popular platforms:
GENDER:
Male
Female
AGE:
0-24
25-34
35-44
45+
EDUCATION:
Less Than HS Diploma
High School
Some College
Bachelor's Or Graduate Degree
HOUSEHOLD INCOME:
$0 - $24,999
$25,000 - $49,000
$50,000 - $99,999
$100,000+
845 MILLION ACTIVE USERS
facebook
ADDITIONAL DATA:
Average Friend Count:
100
Average Daily Visits On Mobile:
200 Million
Average Visits Per Month:
40
Average Visits On Site Per Month:
23.20 Minutes Per Visit
127 MILLION ACTIVE USERS
twitter
ADDITIONAL DATA:
Online Tweeters:
13% Of Online Individuals Use Twitter
Tweeters On Mobile:
54%
Tweet At Least Once A Day:
36%
Average Time On Site:
11:50 Minutes Per Visit

Demographic data show how Twitter can be a useful tool for diplomats to gauge their presence and level of interaction, as well as to understand how social and economic dynamics can influence Internet users, the content they share, and what users are looking for in their interaction with social media. A further analysis, in fact, reveals that the number of Twitter users between 25 and 44 years of age has been growing significantly since late 2010. A 2011 report by the Pew Internet & American Life Project[17] states that 'although young adults continue to have relatively high rates of Twitter usage, the number of 30–49-year-olds who use the service has doubled since late 2010 – from 7% of such users in November to 14% in May 2011.'

The Pew report suggests that 'this growth trend is especially pronounced among 25–34-year-olds' as Twitter use for this cohort roughly doubled between November 2010 and February 2012 from 9% to 17%. Similarly, growth in Twitter use among Internet users ages 35–44 was notable as well (from 8% in late 2010 to 16% in spring 2012).

While users' data, demographics, and penetration statistics are certainly useful in choosing – or in focusing on – the social media tool that most fits our needs, listening to the public and interacting with our readers is indeed the best way to find our personal fit, whether it's Twitter, Facebook, or other networks.

TWITTER DIPLOMACY

Once considered the social media tool of choice for Hollywood celebrities, Twitter is now an important means of conducting business for many presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, ambassadors, and diplomats. In fact, according to a July 2012 study[18] by public relations and communications firm Burson-Marsteller – aka @B_M – almost two-thirds of world leaders have a Twitter account.

'Twitter is closing the communication gap between us and our world leaders', said Jeremy Galbraith – aka @GalbraithJeremy – CEO of Burson-Marsteller Europe, Middle East and Africa, at the release of the study. 'On the one hand it allows heads of state and government to broadcast their daily activities and government news to an ever growing audience. On the other hand it allows citizens direct access to their leaders. Consequently, it is now, more than ever, critical for these leaders to get it right on the social network.'

The presence of this many world leaders on Twitter and the number of their followers however does not necessarily translate into better connectiveness. In fact, looking at the interactions and interconnections of world leaders on Twitter, Burson-Marsteller reveals that almost half of them don't follow any of their peers.

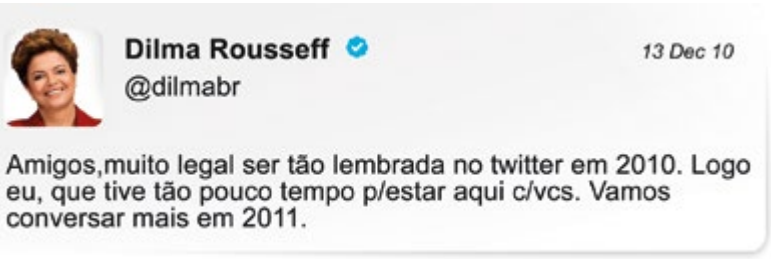
The best connected world leader is the President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy – aka @euHvR – with 11 mutual follows, while the most followed is US President Barack Obama – aka @BarackObama – with more than 19 million followers. Obama is also the fifth most followed person in the world after singer Britney Spears – aka @britneyspears.

The study, titled Twiplomacy, analyzed 264 government accounts in 125 countries. Its findings, available at www.twiplomacy.com, reveal that of the 120 personal accounts, only 30 tweet personally and then only occasionally. In addition, politicians seem to embrace Twitter mostly during election campaigns but tend to abandon it almost completely once elected.

It is the case of French President François Hollande – aka @fhollande – who's been silent after taking office. As of July 26, 2012, his last tweet was a #FollowFriday posted on May 18.



Hollande's counterpart in Brazil, President Dilma Rousseff – aka @dilmabr – has not tweeted since December 2010, even if in her last message she encourages her supporters to engage more with her on Twitter in 2011. She took office on January 1, 2011, and went Twitter-silent.



This map shows interactions between the 25 most connected leaders on Twitter. 'While the social network invites direct interaction between users – the study finds – few world leaders take advantage of this opportunity to develop connections.'

The topic has so many different angles that in June 2012 French-based news agency AFP has launched its proprietary e-diplomacy 'hub' (ediplomacy.afp.com). It is an innovative tool for exploring the world of digital diplomacy, as well as visualizing, analyzing, and measuring the presence and influence of diplomatic actors on Twitter, across the globe and in real time.

'Driving the app is a database stocked with more than 4000 individually-validated accounts spread across 120 countries, ranging from heads of state and ministers to experts, activists and politically-motivated hackers', explains AFP. Algorithms designed by analysts at the French news agency measure levels of influence for both states and individuals, and calculate



which issues – represented by hashtags – are dominating the global conversation among digital diplomats.

Since the launch of AFP's e-diplomacy Hub and the recent release of Burson-Marsteller research study on Twiplomacy, the debate surrounding the use of social media tools in diplomacy and foreign affairs has risen to new heights, and some are even speculating that e-diplomacy might eventually replace traditional diplomacy.

Far from it!

'If somebody thinks that 140 characters is the diplomatic solution to solving the world's problems, then we've got a big problem', said James Carafano of the Heritage Foundation in an interview with Voice of America.[19] 'Twitter really wasn't created for diplomacy. Twitter's not even created to have a conversation', he said.

Indeed, while Twitter and Facebook's origins are far from being linked to diplomacy, it's safe to say they have certainly contributed to an increase of diplomacy's relevancy in the media and beyond, and have certainly fur-

nished it with better outreach capabilities. Of course, they are not a substitute for traditional channels used in government-to-government relations. They are, however, a new way of looking at our diplomatic agendas and engaging with less traditional players.

'Speaking directly to citizens – seeing a country's people, as well as its government – is not just a rhetorical device', explained Professor Slaughter of Princeton University. In a March 2012 article on Project Syndicate,[20] Slaughter clearly explained how Secretary Clinton has executed what she calls a 'pivot to the people'.

'She has introduced policies, programs, and institutional reforms designed to support government-to-society and society-to-society diplomacy, alongside traditional government-to-government relations', Slaughter said summarizing Clinton's e-diplomacy goals.

While there is a tendency to identify e-diplomacy with terms like Twiplomacy and Digital Diplomacy, the latter are only tools used to actuate some e-diplomacy programs through social media networks such as Twitter and Facebook. When you look at Twiplomacy this way, then it can hardly be seen as a replacement for traditional diplomacy. It never will be. Rather, it is a way to help make diplomacy more efficient, more inclusive, and more engaging. It has certainly shaken the diplomatic elite and forced all traditional players to adopt a more open approach in which listening becomes as important as acting.

In a way, it is as if Twiplomacy is altering the DNA of diplomacy: a sort of genetic adaptation to new technologies. Adapting takes time and for diplomacy it might take even longer, as demonstrated by how slowly foreign ministries around the world are dipping their feet into social media tools.

However slow, Twiplomacy is forcing its way onto the foreign policy agenda as a consolidated e-diplomacy tool to rethink objectives and better respond to new challenges. As such, e-diplomacy can be easily seen as an important complement to the diplomatic craft, often time taking center stage.

'In some areas e-diplomacy is changing the way State does business', wrote Lowy Institute's Fergus Hanson, in his March 2012 report on e-diplomacy: 'In Public Diplomacy, State now operates what is effectively a global media empire, reaching a larger direct audience than the paid circulation of the ten largest US dailies and employing an army of diplomat-journalists to feed its 600-plus platforms. In other areas, like Knowledge Management, e-diplomacy is finding solutions to problems that have plagued foreign ministries for centuries.'

As Twiplomacy is consolidating within the e-diplomacy spectrum at the US State Department as well as around the world, it has been both criticized and embraced. Foreign ministers however all seem to invest in social media for diplomacy and are taking the exploration of e-tools even further – Twitter is a very hands-on experience for beginners – including it in the training of their diplomats. The goal is to keep communications channels open at all times and to bridge the gap between diplomats and citizens.

To understand how statecraft by Twitter works, Chrystia Freeland, Digital Editor at Thomson Reuters – aka @cafreeland – interviewed[21] one of the most avid practitioners among world leaders, Sweden Foreign Minister Carl Bildt – aka @carlbildt.

Bildt helped to create some hype around Twitter when in May 2012, as he was unable to reach his counterpart in Bahrain, Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa – aka @khalidalkhalifa – by traditional means of communication, he decided to tweet him.



Al Khalifa didn't take long to respond – using the more traditional diplomatic channels – but he couldn't resist responding on Twitter:



'A shout-out on Twitter — is this the future of diplomacy?, the Associated Press wrote[22] in an article about Bildt's exploit with Al Khalifa. 'It shows that in the modern world you can seek contact in modern ways', Bildt told the Associated Press before explaining that his Twitter mission to find Al Khalifa, something of a Twitter celebrity in his Persian Gulf nation of Bahrain, was very successful.

'Bildt is a veteran blogger, but he was dubious about Web 2.0, as the social-media revolution is sometimes called', Freeland writes, explaining how at the very beginning Bildt – who now counts more than 150 000 followers[23] – was rather skeptical about Twitter.

'As a matter of fact, you can say something in 140 characters', Bildt told Freeland. 'The restriction isn't as absolute as I had thought.' In fact, one way the Swedish Foreign Minister uses Twitter is promote his bigger-think pieces published on his blog or elsewhere. 'Twitter – he explains – is for links and instant comments; the blog is for longer, more considered arguments.'

A 'newbie' but rather very established user in the Twitter-sphere is Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi – aka @GiulioTerzi – who now counts almost 36 000 followers.[24] A former career ambassador himself – he was Ambassador of Italy to the United States and previously Italian Permanent Representative to the United Nations – Terzi opened a Twitter account immediately after he took up office in Rome in late 2011.

His activity on Twitter is followed very closely by his large pool of followers who, as he recounts jokingly,[25] 'do not spare him any harsh criticism'. Terzi, who tweets both in Italian and English, uses it not only as a way to

bring foreign policy closer to citizens, but also to make sure Italy's priorities are heard loud and clear.

The following is his tweet from February 9, 2012, to condemn violence in Syria:



'Social media tools are indeed a unique opportunity for diplomacies in order to collect, create – and yes, spin – information', he said in his address to the conference *Twiplomacy: Diplomacy in the Twitter age* in June 2012 in Turin, Italy. 'This also means our message must be clear and strong enough to be able to undergo the direct checks by thousands and thousands of individuals that are not familiar with diplomatic etiquette and say it as they see it.'

One of the most active diplomatic players on Twitter is also UK Foreign Secretary William Hague – aka @WilliamJHague. Hague has a very hands-on approach to Twitter and uses it to help his followers better understand UK foreign policy while starting an open dialogue with the public, both at home and abroad.

The followings are tweets from Hague on May 8, 2012:







Hague is not shy on Twitter and frequently interacts with both his followers and his political counterparts. On April 26, 2012, he posted the following message on his Facebook wall: 'I've just had a friendly debate on Facebook vs Twitter with the acting Foreign Minister of Singapore. Which do you think is the best tool for communicating?'

Earlier that day, Hague posted the following tweet:



The discussion bloomed on both Twitter and Facebook, with thousands of tweets, replies, and RTs (retweets), likes, and Facebook posts.

On May 15, 2012, Hague held an online Q&A session. We asked – and the question was later re-tweeted by Hague:



He answered:



Hague recently celebrated his 100 000th follower with the launch of 'Meet the Foreign Secretary', a new initiative aimed at improving his rapport with the fan base and better engaging with the public, both at home and abroad: he invited everybody on Twitter to send a tweet containing the hashtag #meetFS, and say: what idea, innovation or trend you think will have the greatest impact on our world over the next 20 years; or what you believe the Foreign Office's priorities should be over the next year. Five of the participants will be chosen to meet Hague at the Foreign Office in London for a discussion about foreign policy. Needless to say thousands responded, and the best ideas were collected by Hague in a Storify story page[26] he tweeted a few days in to the contest:



Hague's frankness and direct way of interacting on Twitter was clear even before he took office as Foreign Secretary. A little over a month before, in April 2010, a *Telegraph* reporter – Assistant Comment Editor Will Heaven, aka @WillHeaven – while doubting he was really using Twitter himself, decided to ask him directly on Twitter. He later wrote[27] on his blog: 'Well, I've just been schooled by the Shadow Foreign Secretary. I suggested this morning that William Hague wasn't really using Twitter himself – I said it seemed unlikely that the no-nonsense Yorkshire man had been converted to social media, and that he was probably working through a tech guru. Or something along those lines.' So why was he schooled? What brought him to that conclusion? Well, that same day Heaven posted on Twitter: '@WilliamJHague I'm told that I have wronged you, by suggesting it wasn't you tweeting. Am I forgiven?' Hague answered: '@WillHeaven you did wrong me – this is definitely me but you are forgiven! Greetings from Halifax.'

Indeed, Hague and the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) have been at the forefront of the Twitter phenomenon in the UK. Her Majesty's government was the first to come out with a Twitter manual for government departments and employees in 2009. It is also the only one to have a detailed online guide on best practices and how to use social media.[28]

One of the most notable absences in the Twitter-sphere is US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. 'Absent' is probably not the right word to describe the fact that the former First Lady does not have an official Twitter handle. Despite that, in fact, Clinton is ever so present on Twitter, thanks to @AlecJRoss, her right-hand guy for everything concerning innovation, and the extensive network of Twitter accounts of US embassies, consulates, missions, offices, ambassadors, and consuls around the world. Officially referred to as #SecClinton by @StateDept and likes, Secretary Clinton has been able to fully use e-tools like Twitter and Facebook to take 'her brand of "people to people" diplomacy international at a time when America desperately needed just her kind of star power,' as Susan Glasser writes in the July/August 2012 issue[29] of *Foreign Policy Magazine*.

Only three years ago, Hillary Clinton was admitting she knew little about how the micro blogging site works. 'I wouldn't know a Twitter from a tweeter,' ABC News' Kirit Radia quoted[30] her as saying at a press conference with her Israeli counterpart on June 17, 2009. Clinton was comment-

ing about how the State Department asked that Twitter delay scheduled site maintenance because it would shut down the service during daylight hours in Iran at the height of the political fervor there. 'The United States believes passionately and strongly in the basic principle of free expression', Clinton told reporters back then. 'And it is the case that one of the means of expression, the use of Twitter, is a very important one, not only to the Iranian people but now increasingly to people around the world, and most particularly young people. I think keeping that line of communications open and enabling people to share information, particularly at a time when there was not many other sources of information, is an important expression of the right to speak out and to be able to organize that we value.'

Since that press conference in the summer of 2009 much as changed and Secretary Clinton has invested in her own persona and star power on e-diplomacy and the use of social media tools.

In a video posted on April 5, 2011, on the Twitter YouTube channel,[31] Secretary Clinton while wishing a 'Happy 5th Birthday' to Twitter, explained how 'critical' social media tools have become for US foreign policy: 'Thanks to these connection technologies, people can exchange ideas and information instantaneously anywhere on the planet, from a laptop in London to a cellphone in Cairo', she says. 'Here at the State Department we use Twitter to share news about American foreign policy with the world. Our embassies overseas tweet in 11 languages on nearly 60 feeds and we're doing everything we can to protect the freedom to connect whether through Twitter or any other technology.'

Although e-diplomacy has been baking at the US State Department for over a decade, it has been nurtured and injected with new impulse with Clinton's arrival in 2008.

The blog *Diplomatic Ink* described[32] the evolution of e-diplomacy at the State Department quite well: 'Colin Powell was the first Secretary of State to see the potential of marrying 'E' and diplomacy, creating a task force in 2002. Condoleezza Rice took up the baton, reshaping it as Transformational Diplomacy, while the social-media presidency of Obama has unsurprisingly taken this to new heights rebranding it as 21st Century Statecraft under Hillary Clinton.'

'The State Department has been the first foreign ministry to realize the potential of new digital tools', writes Hanson in his March 2012 report. 'Although the embrace is far from complete and the spread of these new platforms is still only at an early stage, it is far more advanced than at any other foreign ministry. This mapping exercise has revealed that ediplomacy has spread somewhat organically across State from its initial home in the Taskforce on eDiplomacy. As one senior State Department official characterized it: the growth of ediplomacy has been typical of an American approach; getting on with doing and worrying about the theory later.'

That is the approach that most ministries of foreign affairs should take to explore e-tools even further – Twitter is a very hands-on experience for beginners – and train their diplomats to better respond to new challenges. It is key for governments to train both new generations of diplomats and senior officials to use social media tools to their full potential and explore new ways of interacting with traditional diplomatic players and less traditional actors, as well as the general public. The goal is to keep communications channels open at all times and to bridge the gap between diplomacy and citizens.

'A lot of the work that I do is with ambassadorial corps and foreign ministers around the world to simply help them understand the changing nature of geopolitical power because of connectedness', said Alec Ross in a recent interview with Chris Barton of the New Zealand Herald.[33] 'It's about power. The way I educate our ambassadors about social media is rooting it squarely in the exercise of political power in 2012.'

Social media training for diplomats becomes more and more important as governments try to adapt to less-structured environments and less-traditional ways of conducting diplomacy. Training diplomats in the use of digital diplomacy channels is a way for governments to fully embrace present and future opportunities provided by the Internet and social media.

'The potential results would be more transparency in governance, a government agenda that is better informed by direct citizen input, and a more informed, globally aware populace', reads a recent report[34] by the World Economic Forum.

Better training and the 'smarter' use of tools like Twitter produces a positive impact on how diplomacy works. At the same time it creates the resources, education, and much-needed skills to access and participate in the free flow of reliable and useful information while empowering diplomats and foreign policy players with the ability to make considered decisions about a nation's economic, social, and political existence.

AMBASSADORS LOVE TO TWEET

Twitter has become the tool of choice for many diplomats around the world, drastically changing the way foreign policy is processed, branded, and marketed at home with our fellow citizens and abroad with our target audiences. Its immediacy, easy consumption, and vast reach are key elements. They have attracted ambassadors, members of the diplomatic corps, press and information offices of embassies around the globe – as well as their home Ministries of Foreign Affairs and/or Foreign Trade – to a tool that, while certainly limiting the number of words and characters, provides the most complete and satisfying interconnected communication experience ever achieved by diplomats.

'Social media is fundamentally changing the way governments engage with their citizenry and position themselves on the global stage', states Fleishman-Hillard International Communications digital diplomacy website. 'Washington and many other world capitals are increasingly using Twitter, Facebook and other channels to advance their policy agendas, particularly in foreign outreach.'

Fleishman-Hillard – aka @FHDC – has been following the phenomenon from its offices in the US Capital very closely and it maintains an interactive social media directory[35] of the most active foreign embassies in Washington, including the channels they use and the followers they have. While @FHDC's gives only a partial view of the phenomenon in Washington, it gives an idea of how social media has been affecting the way many countries, cabinet ministries, ambassadors, diplomats, and international organizations.

In an article published May 31, 2012, in Tablet Magazine,[36] Ambassador of Israel to the United States Michael Oren – aka @AmbassadorOren – said: 'Today there are few alternatives as far-reaching and effective, with very wide audiences and young audiences, as Twitter.' He explained how Twitter facilitates communications with other diplomats and journalists, 'while also allowing me to add a personal touch'. He further analyzed his decision to join Twitter a year earlier: 'Most young people aren't necessarily reading your standard newspapers or watching evening news. You can also link them to things that we are putting out. I recently had an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal about the challenges facing Israel's reputation

over the last 40 years, and I was able to able put that link out through the Twitter account and greatly multiply the readers.' What Ambassador Oren also pointed out is the importance of listening: 'It's a way that I learn what's out there. And I get feedback, and that's important.'

This latter character of Twitter is very important. Twitter is a great way to communicate, but it is a greater way to listen to people, to your citizens, the foreign public to which ambassadors and diplomats market their own countries. Alec Ross once said: 'Governments and diplomats have to learn how to listen; and learn from people on Social Media.'[37] In an interview with NPR,[38] Ross went further: 'I tell all our ambassadors, remember, you only have one mouth but you have two ears, so use this as a way not just of communicating with the citizens of the country where you are serving, but also understanding the point of view of people who may not be sitting at a mahogany table inside the embassy.'

A quick informal survey conducted on Twitter[39] in June 2012 among foreign ambassadors in Washington DC revealed that the outreach value of social media is key in their work. Here are some ambassadors answering the question 'Why do you use Twitter?'









Italian Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero – aka @CBisogniero – recognizing the incredible value social media could add to Italy's presence in the USA, opened his Twitter profile immediately after his arrival in Washington in early 2012. His first tweet was a video message to the Twitter community where he virtually opened the door of his embassy to all Italians, Americans, and everybody interested in exploring more about his country.

The way ambassadors use Twitter differs quite a bit as priorities and styles are very diverse. Some ambassadors are very active and hands-on with Twitter and they tweet on multiple topics and even on their personal interests and endeavors. Others are more reserved and prefer to leave most of the tweeting activity to the main Embassy Twitter handle. A third possibility, even if less and less common, is for ambassadors to have their Twitter account managed by Embassy staff. In any of those instances, however, the goal is always to build, nurture, and maintain an open channel of communication and let people into their daily lives as representatives of a foreign country in the United States.

One of the most active and savvy ambassadors on the Twitter-sphere is without doubt Dr Dino Patti Djalal – aka @dinopattidjalal – Indonesian Ambassador to the USA, a firm believer in how technology, as embodied by cell phones, fax, e-mails, Twitter, and social media, is impacting

diplomacy and social interactions and how it 'will chance how individuals interact with national boundaries in the 21st century'.[40]

In December 2010, six months into his new post in Washington DC, Ambassador Djalal said to *Forbes Magazine*:[41] 'I announced I would be Indonesia's first Twitter ambassador. Now I have 23,000 followers. I get feedback, give out information and connect people. The field is wide open for integrating social media and information technology with diplomacy and democracy. Everybody's learning: Indonesians, Americans and Chinese.' Indeed, the learning curb was pretty quick, as Washington today counts almost 30 ambassadors active on Twitter. Since that interview, Ambassador Djalal's followers skyrocketed to over 99,000 people,[42] making him the most followed ambassador in the city.

Before going any further, however, it is imperative to make clear that the number of followers is not related to the popularity of the account holder, or to the effectiveness of the tool. Many factors can influence the number of followers, including: frequency of tweets; topics covered; Internet users in your own country; how large your communities are in the USA.

For statistical purposes only, the following is a list of the ten most followed foreign ambassadors in Washington DC, which count a total of 35 ambassadors with a Twitter account[43] (as of September 10, 2012). To give you a better idea of how engaged ambassadors are on Twitter, the box on the profile's right side shows how 'influential' each ambassador is – according to three different proprietary 'influence' indexes: Klout; AFP's e-diplomacy hub rank; and Edelman's TweetLevel index (as of September 10, 2012).

Ambassador Dino Patti Djalal (Indonesia):



Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan (Mexico):



Ambassador Felipe Bulnes (Chile):



Ambassador Namik Tan (Turkey):



Ambassador Nirupama Menon Rao (India):



Ambassador Sherry Rehman (Pakistan):



Ambassador Sherry Rehman (Ecuador):



Ambassador Jamaludin Jarjis (Malaysia):



Ambassador Jorge Arguello (Argentina):



Ambassador Michael Oren (Israel):



According to this ranking, Ambassador Djalal of Indonesia certainly counts the most followers, but he appears less influential than his colleagues from Mexico, India, Pakistan, and Ecuador. But what does influence mean in Twitter age?

While hard to define and measure, especially when it comes to Twitter, influence represents an important element for the practice of e-diplomacy.

It provides a way to better gauge how Twitter users have an impact on society and politics through their tweets and conversations.

In fact, as over the years Twitter has become a key tool for e-diplomacy, measuring influence has attracted many different social media players both within and without the diplomatic community. While most efforts are marketing-related, influence tools are an interesting tool for digital diplomacy as well as for more traditional diplomacy. As all main research papers and articles on e-diplomacy and digital diplomacy are based on or refer to influence, it is important to understand what it is and to navigate beyond its elusiveness.

So, back to the original question: What is influence? Unfortunately, no standard definition is exhaustive and covers the Twitter realm.

Too often people believe that the number of followers determines how influential a user is on Twitter. Followers are certainly part of the equation, but other factors weigh more: interactions, mentions, activity, retweets. These are all elements that amplify a user's presence on Twitter beyond the account's reach through its followers.

'Someone with millions of followers may no longer post messages frequently, while someone followed by mere tens of thousands may be a prolific poster whose messages are amplified by others', the *New York Times* quoted Twitter's co-founder Evan Williams as saying.[44]

What Williams refers to is that Twitter can be a phenomenal digital diplomacy tool only when it leads to an open conversation, and not to a monologue. As I have argued time and time again, we're at a crucial point where, when it comes to all forms of diplomacy, listening is as important as acting.

No matter what the message is, interacting with and engaging the public is important to build up trust, to increase your reach, and to influence both your network and possible new followers. That's what influence is about: listening, communicating, and engaging. The more successful you are in achieving those three goals, the more Twitter-influential you become.

'Influence is bliss... With every response and action that results from our engagement, we are slowly introduced to the laws of social physics: for every action there is a reaction – even if that reaction is silence', writes Brian Solis, social media expert and principal at Altimeter, on his blog.[45] 'The extent of this resulting activity is measured by levels of influence and other factors such as the size and shape of niche-works as well as attention aperture and time.'

Influence metrics are vast and mostly derived from proprietary formulas and algorithms developed by marketing firms. Influence, in fact, is a key element to better rebalance a company's strategy, product development, and ad campaigns. It is as important for governments and diplomacies around the world to re-calibrate foreign policy priorities and to understand those numerous non-traditional players that social media has thrown into the diplomatic arena, players who are now as engaging as the traditional actors.

'As the Web grows more massive all the time, it's becoming increasingly important to quickly assess what Internet users are influential about and how they are influenced in order to make more informed decisions', said Klout co-founder and CEO Joe Fernandez in an interview with CNN.[46]

Klout, a four-year-old online service that measures influence or the user's 'ability to drive action' – as Fernandez puts it – is one of the many companies that have dipped their feet into measuring the elusiveness of influence. Itis even more elusive and difficult to put on paper as the Web is registering a great shift from desktop to mobile, making calculations and algorithms more and more difficult.

Because influence is based on very diverse factors – the social factor being one of the most difficult to measure – results vary, sometimes even greatly, but they indeed hand interesting data, as the ranking of the 10 most followed ambassadors in Washington DC shows.

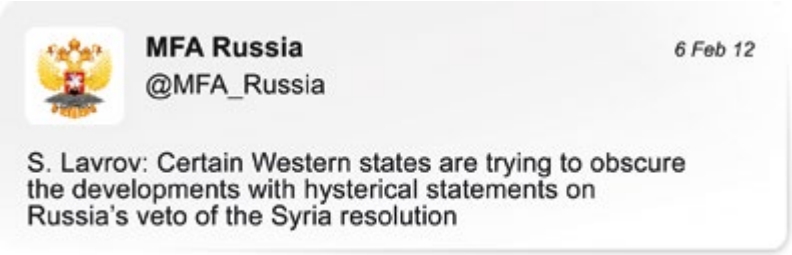
While communicating and interacting with the public, both at home and abroad, is the main goal of most of the ambassadors on Twitter – and a key element to achieve greater influence in the so-called Twitter-sphere – some are trying to go even further in their use of the tool to exploit its immediacy and real-time capabilities.

A clear example is the US Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Susan Rice – aka @AmbassadorRice. With a basin of some 185,000 followers and counting, she is one of the most followed diplomats in the world, excluding @AlecJRoss, with a total of close 400,000 followers (to give you a comparison, the population of Iceland is a little over 317,000, as of the 2010 census).

The first to use Twitter from inside closed doors at the UN Security Council in New York, Rice has always been blatantly honest in her tweets. In early February, she was tweeting:



Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reacted to Rice's tweets through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Twitter handle @MFA_Russia:



'The crisis in Syria especially has taken Twitter use to a whole new level', as *GlobalNewsroom.org* wrote[47] in a May 2012 referring to how 'a tug of

war that began behind closed doors at the [Security] Council moved out to the twitter-sphere'. 'Since the crisis began a year ago, the Security Council has struggled to reach a unanimous decision on how to resolve the unrest in the Middle Eastern country', they wrote. 'A war of tweets broke out among opposing diplomats furiously pounding on their blackberries and smart phones during the closed sessions. Their aim: to win over the public and exert pressure on their opponents.'

Ambassador Rice has also been instrumental in using Twitter to change the way diplomats interact with the media and how embassies and consulates feed the news cycle. On the one hand, she decided to use Twitter to release news and information even before feeding them to more tradition methods. On the other hand, she has been very attentive in making the American public more active in the UN decision-making process. Before opening the US rotating Presidency of the Security Council for the month of April 2012, Rice announced she will have taken to Twitter to read what Americans have to say about her role at the UN:



The response was quite overwhelming and Ambassador Rice decided to keep nurturing the dialogue for the entire month of April, answering questions through hashtag #AskRice.

While old-fashioned diplomacy is very well structured and defined, Twitter has given ambassadors a lot more flexibility, independence, and a greater voice than before. There is no right or wrong when it comes to Twitter and perhaps the best way to describe the attitude to be used while perusing ways to express ourselves on Twitter is possibly: 'What happens on Twitter does not stay on Twitter.' Diplomats from all over the world are now grasping the concept that Twitter gives them a wide-open floor, but it also gives them a better understanding of how far their message can go, for good or for bad.

TWITTER ON THE WORLD STAGE

The global character of Twitter and of other social media tools seems to perfectly fit the mission and goals of many international, multilateral, specialized, and regional organizations around the world. They have been experimenting with social networks with different levels of success and return. Multilateral diplomacy adds a different layer to the Twitter experience: not only governments are involved, but large secretariats of organizations as big and complex as the United Nations – aka @UN – or as small and lesser known as the Nordic Council – aka @nordenen.

While the complexity of those entities and the number of players involved often make the use of social media tools bureaucratically more difficult, the potential reach is largely increased by their visibility. That is why one tweet from @UN can multiply into hundreds of thousands of impressions in a matter of seconds, as the number of active followers is massively larger compared to a little known ambassador or diplomat. To give an idea of the potential reach, the @UN Twitter handle counts a total of just over 1 million followers.[48]

'Not all things are equal online', commented Sree Sreenivasan – aka @sree – Dean of Student Affairs and digital media professor at Columbia University's School of Journalism, during a lecture at the UN in December 2011. 'It is increasingly important to understand how we influence people, who's following us, and who's connecting with us', he said. Indeed, that is true for all of us, not only for international civil servants working for inter-governmental entities. Their challenge, however, is to intertwine and fit the priorities of the organization, as well as its communications needs, with the political nature of its member states and stakeholders, themselves polarized by a myriad of different factors. The key to success is to keep the focus on activities, campaigns, and the potential reach.

'A few years ago, we were debating whether or not the UN could or should even post content online in this way and, to be honest, these debates still take place', said Nancy Groves,– aka @Nancy_Groves – UN social media focal point, in an exclusive interview[49] to DevEx in September 2011. 'Normally we use social media mainly as an information dissemination tool largely because the UN has a huge amount of in-demand information to

share with people around the world, but we have used it to solicit comments from our fans and followers.'

The UN social media strategy has been very successful. According to the e-diplomacy Hub by Agence-France Press – aka @AFP – the United Nations ranks 13th in the e-diplomacy index of the most influential countries on Twitter (as of July 5, 2012):



Today, the organization counts a total of 12 Twitter accounts available in 5 languages and 16 Facebook profiles in all 6 official languages.[50] To that we need to add the social media presence of the many UN agencies, funds, programs, and offices around the world. Taking into consideration how established the UN is on social media platforms, it is safe to say it is the best connected international/ regional entity, well ahead of the European Union, EU (34th on the AFP's index); the North Atlantic Treaty Organiza-

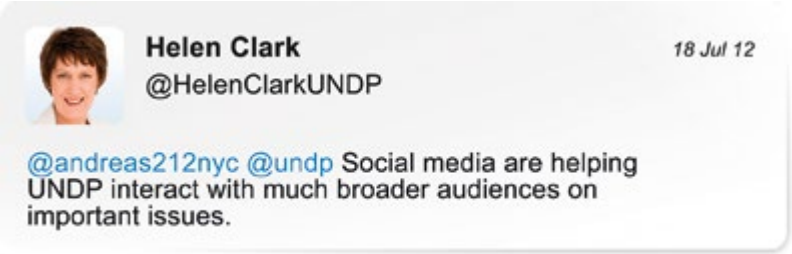
tion, NATO (49th); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD (67th); the Organization of American States, OAS (81st); and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE (100th).

The key to success? 'Once basic ground rules are established, there is no right or wrong way to use social media', Groves pointed out in the interview. 'Development organizations and NGOs should, however, keep in mind that social media best practices may not be the best practice for every organization.' This is why – and it is true for diplomats involved in both bilateral and multilateral environments – it's imperative to be familiar with the content shared on social media tools and know the ins and outs of different platforms. No matter how serious the messages, the goal is to use appropriate language without being too repetitive, boring, and obnoxious.

The UN experience shows how Twitter can be a great tool in the development and relief arena, one of the dominant areas that interests multilateral organizations and large aid groups such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

'I can think of no better way to spark conversations around the world on development issues than through the dynamic use of social media', said Helen Clark, – aka @HelenClarkUNDP – UNDP Administrator and former New Zealand Prime Minister, after being nominated by British newspaper The Guardian[51] as one of the top influencers in global development, alongside former UN World Food Programme's head Josette Sheeran – aka @JosetteSheeran – and UN Dispatch blogger Alanna Shaikh – aka @alanna_shaikh.

On July 18, 2012, Helen Clark explained in a little less than 140 characters why she likes Twitter and how it helps UNDP in its communications and outreach strategies:



An avid user of social media networks, Clark started to tweet in September 2010 to raise awareness for the Millennium Development Summit. Since then, she's been leading key social media strategies at UNDP. 'These networks are an incredibly powerful advocacy tool to educate and interact on the challenges and opportunities we face, and to work together to address them,' as she highlighted during her first live Twitter chat on International Women's Day in March 2011.

But social media tools are effective even beyond advocacy and, in some cases, as the Ushahidi experience shows, it can be the best way to access information on disaster areas and relief more quickly and effectively than governments can.

While this publication is *per se* a simple manual for helping and inspiring diplomats and international civil servants to use Twitter, it would incomplete without mentioning how social media has empowered citizens and the international community to provide help during crisis. And Ushahidi – aka @Ushahidi – is a great example of the potential of Twitter and new technologies in general.

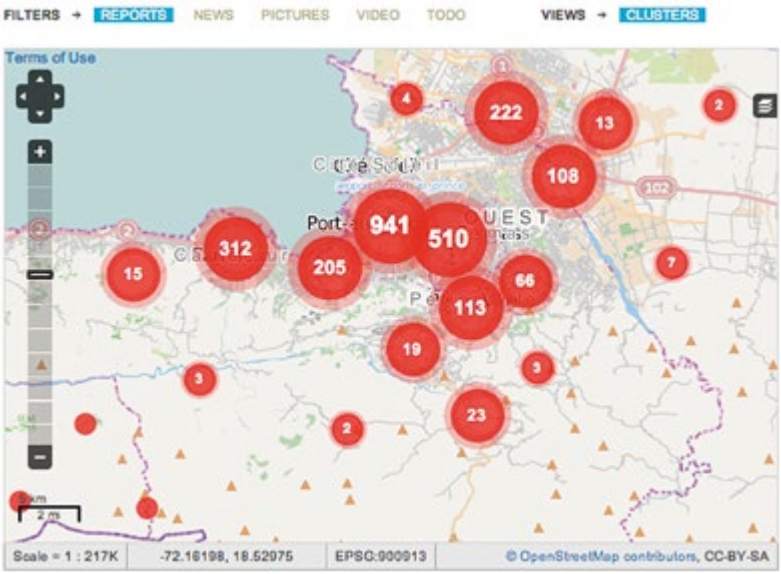
Initially developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election fallout at the beginning of 2008, Ushahidi has evolved from an ad hoc group of volunteers to a focused organization managing an open-source crowdsourcing platform that uses all Web, digital, and mobile tools to map disaster areas and conflicts... All with a simple tweet, cellphone text, or e-mail. This is when social media goes beyond diplomacy, making it a useful tool for collecting information and dispatching the right response at the right time.

In a disaster situation, the timeliness of the response is critical, as scenarios change rapidly. Ushahidi, with the help of a small army of volunteers, pulls data from different sources. It has specialized in processing Twitter posts, e-mails, and text messages from disaster sites and visually putting them onto a map, updated in real time. This helps locate people with the most critical needs and deliver medical and humanitarian relief.

'The technology community has set up interactive maps to help us identify needs and target resources', Secretary Clinton said in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti.[52] While she did

not specifically mention Ushahidi's crowdsourcing platform, it is clear she was referring to it as it was the only interactive mapping platform at the time. 'And on Monday – she continued – a seven-year-old girl and two women were pulled from the rubble of a collapsed supermarket by an American search-and-rescue team after they sent a text message calling for help.'

The following is a Ushahidi map of Port-of-Prince after the earthquake. Red dots show people and relief workers requesting help via Twitter, text messages, and e-mails.



In October 2010, a CNN article[53] suggested how a standardized syntax for post-disaster communications was starting to emerge based on Twitter hashtag conventions – for example, a tweet containing #country #specific-location #name (or @name) and #need would help spot the request right away and map it onto a Ushahidi map. 'The tags make it easier for computers and people to find the information they're looking for, and categorize it, quickly', John Sutter – aka @jdsutter – wrote mentioning Project EPIC, from the University of Colorado, and its short guide to tweeting after a disaster.

Without trying to be exhaustive, the Ushahidi experience shows how Twitter can be a useful tool, not only for regular diplomats working out of embassies and foreign ministries, but also UN, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, aid agencies, and relief workers in all areas of the world to communicate and network, and also to save lives.

'The simple fact is that the frequency and severity of disasters will continue to increase and international governments need to stay one step ahead, encouraging a Tomorrow's World culture', said UK Secretary of State for International Development Andrew Mitchell, who in April announced that Her Majesty's government will fund projects to explore how social networking technology can help rescue work.

According to *The Guardian*,[54] the UK Department for International Development will support projects with £48.5 million of funding over three years out of existing aid funds. Technologies to be explored will include:

- Twitter and social media channels to reach those affected, including direct guidance on medical issues.
- Mobile phone and satellite technology – already used in the wake of the 2010 Haiti earthquake – to track survivors and help deliver aid.
- Gaming technology to train people in disaster response scenarios.
- Smart cards to deliver cash payments to those worst affected by disaster.
- The use of Google Earth and e-mapping to locate people and disaster hotspots.

'The use of social media during disasters has grown exponentially in recent years', said Gail McGovern, President and CEO of the American Red Cross, commenting on the launch, in partnership with Dell, of a new Digital Operations Center, the first social-media-based operation devoted to humanitarian relief.[55]

Launched in spring 2012 and located in the Red Cross National Disaster Operations Center in Washington, DC, the center is modeled after Dell's Social Media Listening Command Center and uses Dell's technology solutions and consulting services.

'This partnership with Dell will enable us to better understand and anticipate disaster needs and help connect people with the resources they need during emergencies', said McGovern. 'Our goal is to become a social liaison for people, families, and communities to support one another before, during and after disasters.'

As reported by *Time Magazine* in 2011,[56] it's true that social media is often thought of as nothing more than a distraction, or an attempt to replace a real community with a virtual one. But when faced with a disaster like in Japan in March 2011, these networks become a lot more. 'I think that citizens communicating with other citizens, well, that's kind of the definition of resilience', said Kim Stephens, a senior associate at ABT Associates and an emergency-management expert. 'The biggest part of using social media during a disaster is that it's not about the government helping the public; it's about the public helping themselves. It's peer-to-peer aid.'

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

Diplomacy, whether it's digital or traditional, has risks.

In the wake of the September 2012 attacks in Benghazi and Cairo, which led to the murder of American Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens and three other men, social media has undergone tough criticism underscoring how digital diplomacy – until now an effective, and less regulated, way to engage with the world – needs to be seen for what it really is: a form of diplomatic engagement.

Let's not forget how diplomacy can really be a dangerous venture.

On August 19, 2003, a terrorist truck bomb wrecked the United Nations Headquarters in Baghdad, killing the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and 16 members of his team. A few years later, on December 11, 2007, another suicide bombing attack in Algiers, the capital city of Algeria, took the life of 17 UN employees, the second-highest death toll in the history of the United Nations. But terrorism is not the only factor to take into consideration: on January 12, 2010, a horrifying earthquake shook the capital of Haiti, in the Caribbean, killing hundreds of diplomats alongside the people of Haiti.

The world can be a tough place for diplomats and sometimes a diplomat may be 'more of a soldier than a diplomat', as former UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar describes one of his closest right hands, former chief UN hostage negotiator Giandomenico Picco.

Picco, an Italian official at the UN, put himself on the spot to ensure the release of Western hostages in Lebanon in the early 1990s: he disappeared from sight for days and traveled countless times to intimidating Shiite strongholds in Syria and Lebanon – only his assistant knew his whereabouts, not even the Secretary-General. He agreed to negotiated-kidnappings of his own persona in order to secretly meet with the captors; he was moving to a different location every night with a contract on his life. His mediation was successful and the risks he took were fruitful.

'History does not kill', Picco writes in his memoirs.[57] 'Religion does not rape women, the purity of blood does not destroy buildings, and institutions do not fail. Only individuals do these things.'

That's traditional diplomacy, but digital diplomacy is not too different. No matter what you call it, it is only the most visible result of the very same foreign policy agendas that governments put in place in their capitals to be actuated by mean of traditional diplomacy. Social media is just a new tool to help achieve strategic goals. Because the effect of digital diplomacy travels through the information channels at a much faster rate, however, it shortens the traditional chain of command and injects more visibility – and thus responsibilities – to the end user, whether an ambassador, a foreign officer, or a social media advisor. It is the speed at which social media travels that makes twiplomacy look riskier than any other form of diplomacy.

While the speed cannot be controlled, the human character of digital diplomacy can.

'Social media is a neutral entity. It is the human use of it that matters', said Tara Sonenshine – aka @TSonenshine – Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the US Department of State, in October 2012.[58] 'It was humans interacting with – or responding to – social media, that contributed significantly to the Arab Spring, and also to the violent protests we saw across the region in the past weeks', she said.

Sonenshine made clear that social media is here to stay but needs to be directed and twitched in order to make it the best tool a diplomat can have. 'I would go so far as to say, social media has evolved into the most powerful, galvanizing catalyst of our time – for better and for worse', she said. 'It is arguably as significant an event in our shared human history as the Industrial Revolution.'

Indeed, the social media revolution has been changing the way we see the world and has been changing the way we talk to the world. Not only it has made easier for governments and ambassadors to engage with the public, both foreign and at home, it has made everybody more aware of the effects – both positive and negative – a single word, tweet, Facebook comment, video, or image can have in a relatively short timeframe. Not only that, it has emphasized the need to strengthen the way we analyze social media, in particular in very strategic regions, including the Middle East.

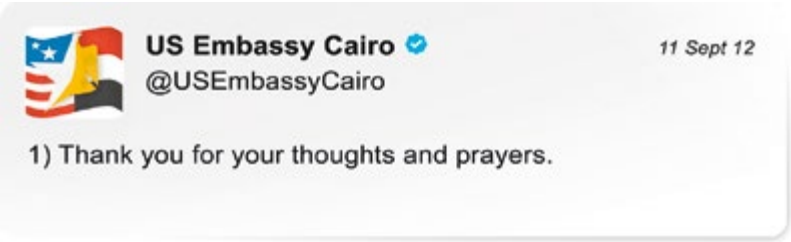
The murder of Ambassador Stevens and the assaults on the US embassy in Cairo, while acts of terrorism, not only cast a shadow on e-diplomacy efforts, raising new questions on how to control new networking technologies and channels in such a way that they're still effective. They also escalated to political confusion to the extent that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had to take full responsibility of what happened.

'I take responsibility', Clinton told CNN in an interview while on a visit to Peru.[59] 'I'm in charge of the State Department's 60 000-plus people all over the world, 275 posts. The president and the vice-president wouldn't be knowledgeable about specific decisions that are made by security professionals. They're the ones who weigh all of the threats and the risks and the needs and make a considered decision.'

While Secretary Clinton didn't mention it, social media is already under review at the State Department in order to reduce mistakes and misjudgments and provide US embassies around the world with better and clearer guidelines on how to operate on Twitter, Facebook, and such.

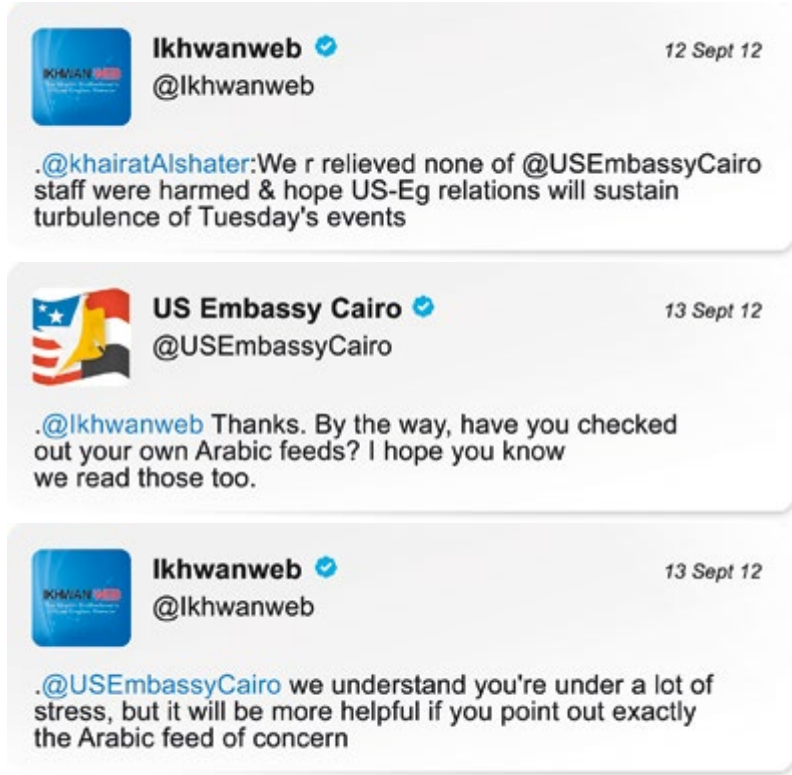
The goal, for the United States in the aftermath of September 11, 2012, and for all governments engaging in digital diplomacy, is to ensure an open dialogue but still be engaging, offering the true position of a government's agenda. The risks are always going to be present, but a responsible way to engage, yet political with strong assertions, must be pursued at all times, thus not to repeat what happened in Libya and Cairo.

In Egypt, the sarcastic Twitter exchange between the US Embassy in Cairo and the Muslim Brotherhood gave 'a passive aggressive tone to relations that have been strained by the [...] assault', as the Associated Press reported a few days after the accidents. The snark in the Embassy's feed – since then deleted – was quite apparent since the very beginning, in a series of tweets following the attacks:





The conversation became more intense in the following days:



Commenting on the unconventional tone of the embassy's feed, the State Department told *Foreign Policy*'s Josh Rogin that specific instructions not to issue the statement were ignored.[60] 'The statement was just tone deaf', an official was quoted by Rogin as saying. 'It didn't provide adequate balance. We thought the references to the 9/11 attacks were inappropriate, and we strongly advised against the kind of language that talked about "continuing efforts by misguided individuals to hurt the religious feelings of Muslims".'

While Twitter is a social medium, and as such it encourages and rewards informal conversations, 'it does not reward users who put out only staid press releases and official statements', as highlighted by Max Fisher in *The Atlantic*.[61]

'The diplomats who run the account of the U.S. embassy to Egypt seems to have understood this, attempting to master Twitter's more conversation style to maximize its public diplomacy potential', Fisher says. 'But one problem with this is that, if succeeding on Twitter outreach means running the feed like a real person instead of a faceless bureaucrat, does that make the feed reflect the individual behind it more than the broader United States and United States government, which is what the feed and embassy are meant to represent?'

Of course, embassies' feeds are – and have to remain – the clear voice of a government. This is where traditional diplomacy intersects with digital diplomacy, as goals, objectives, priorities, and risks are the same. What changes is the way to achieve them, as well the level of engagement with less traditional players. However, we still need to put the same rules in place.

'If there's one word to describe the state of digital diplomacy now, it's messy', writes Briang Fung in the *Canadian International Council Twitter and Diplomacy* series.[62] 'The most committed foreign ministries of governments around the world maintain dozens of social media accounts – some to represent embassies, others to speak for specific programs, still others to broadcast on behalf of individuals. Even then, a diplomat's public Twitter profile is more likely to be run by a public affairs officer than by the appointee herself.'

It's true most world leaders and foreign ministers don't tweet themselves – but many do as I've tried to show here in previous chapters. The personability of Twitter and Facebook is what attracted many governments to social media and that's what needs to remain intact. New rules and guidelines are in the working in most countries and a better understanding of risks and risk management will help make twiplomacy a better tool.

This is an area where innovation and ideas – rather than technology, *per se* – play the central role. Once we step into digital diplomacy, we have to look beyond Twitter and Facebook. We need to realize how the power of ideas can create better results and transition traditional diplomacy to a new phase, where people are new players, and politicians and diplomats are not elites any longer. Anne-Marie Slaughter, a former director of policy planning at the US Department of State, calls it 'pivot to the people'.

Let's use e-diplomacy and fully explore its potential to make a true pivot, thus making diplomacy the most extraordinary tool our governments can have in fulfilling our foreign policy agendas and engaging with the world.

TWITTER FROM A TO Z

This book is not meant to be a manual on how to use Twitter. It's rather a non-manual, as in all honesty Twitter is best if learned while using it, exploring all its potential day by day. Following are tips, facts, and suggestions on how to make Twitter the most incredible communication experience for ambassadors, diplomats, international civil servants, international relations, and government students, as well as anybody interested in foreign policy. They are not must dos, and they might work for some, but not for others. Let's call them food for thought.

1. First and foremost, ABBREVIATIONS are back in vogue! On Twitter, 'for' can be turned in to '4', 'to be' in to '2b', 'with' in to 'w/', and 'are' in to 'r'. But don't shy and use even more complex ABBREVIATIONS as the key is to contain your message in 140 characters!

2. Be careful: Twitter is ADDICTIVE! Enough said.

3. Your mantra should be: keep the discussion open. How? ASK questions to your followers and ANSWER them. No matter what your fan base, your followers are people and need to be treated as such. Their curiosity needs to be nurtured.

4. ANONIMITY does not pertain to Twitter, in particular when it comes to ambassadors and diplomats. That said, unless you're going to use your account for personal reasons only, identify yourself: post a profile picture with your face; state your title, and position on your profile – or if you want to be creative, post a profile that really describes you; list your location or let Twitter find you by checking the 'tweet location' box under Settings.

5. While Twitter is accessed mostly on Twitter platforms (available for desktop, tablets, and mobile devices), learn what third-party APPLICATIONS are available on the market and experiment with them: HootSuite and TweetDeck are the most commonly used. As their potential is almost infinite, however, we would need an entire new book to list the pros and cons of choosing one or the other.

6. BE real. BE yourself. Ambassadors and diplomats have tight schedules but they can always find time to write their own tweets and get to know their followers – as well as attract new ones. Although, it might be somewhat of a practice for ambassadors and high-level politicians to have others write their tweets, Twitter is fully enjoyed and becomes a real tool for diplomacy when you use it yourself.

7. The BLUE scalloped round icon/badge next to a @name (with a white check mark) identifies accounts that have been verified by Twitter. Verification cannot be requested by regular users. One way to show that an account is authentic – and it's always advisable for ambassadors – is to link the account to the official website of an embassy, MFA, and such.

8. Don't write and think like a BUREAUCRAT, as Twitter is anything but BUREAUCRATIC.

9. Be CATCHY and sexy. Even when it comes to diplomacy, the boring side of the business can be left to more traditional means of communication.

10. How to CHANGE your user name for portability reasons? Well, sometimes – and this is true particularly for ambassadors – people need to change their user @name as they get posted elsewhere. For example if an hypothetical @AmbassadorTom becomes the new Under Secretary of State of his country, he might want to keep his Twitter account but simply change it into @UnderSecTom or @PaulBTom. The procedure is simple and can be found here: support.twitter.com (keyword: change username).

11. If you use any of the Twitter applications, click CONNECT from time to time for a quick visual overview of what's going on and what people are saying about you, what they are RTing, etc.

12. While at first 140 characters can be a little scary, eventually they will force you to use your CREATIVITY and expand your horizons.

13. Remember it's possible – but not advisable – to DELETE your tweets. Do it only in very rare cases. Instead, send a tweet anew explaining edits, corrections, and errors on previous tweets.

14. DIRECT MESSAGES are as important as public ones; don't ignore them. As you can only send them to your followers (and they will have to follow you back to respond), they're a great way to quickly communicate using a private channel. Don't use them to ask people to RT you or to market your account: that's rude.

15. What's the DOT you see so often in front of the @name at the beginning of a tweet? If you start a tweet with the Twitter name of a person/entity, or if you reply someone, you can precede the @name with a DOT (example: .@andreas212nyc) to make sure everybody reads that particular tweet/reply. Keep in mind that in a reply, only your followers that also follow the person/entity you are replying to – are able to see your reply. The same happens when you start a tweet with the @name of a person/entity without using a DOT in front of it.

16. E-DIPLOMACY is more that you tweeting or using other social media. Call it E-DIPLOMACY, Digital Diplomacy, or even Twiplomacy, there is no agreed definition. Indeed, it encompasses more than just social media tools. In his May 2012 report *Revolution @State: The Spread of EDIPLOMACY*, Fergus Hanson states: 'A slightly revised working definition is the use of the web and new ICT to help carry out diplomatic objectives. This definition is broad, but escapes the tendency to confuse E-DIPLOMACY with social media tools alone.'[63]

17. Twitter does not require a particular EXPERTISE. Keep your mind open, however, and don't necessarily follow the flow. As I said before, be yourself.

18. As Friday is for Twitter the last day of the week – Saturday and Sunday register very slow traffic – use it to wrap up your Twitter activity and suggest others people/entity they might be interested in following. This is known as #FF or #FOLLOWFRIDAY. Start your tweet with either hashtags and cite a few people/entities (use their @name) as well as the reason you're suggesting them.

19. For a complete GLOSSARY, visit Twitter's Help Center support.twitter.com (keyword: glossary).

20. Only marketers care about HEAVY TRAFFIC and use it to time their tweets. It is a way to collect more followers. Tweet only when you have something to say or even when you feel like it. In some cases, however, it's convenient to post tweets during HEAVY TRAFFIC, meaning from 11am to 3pm. If you want to get the most traction on Twitter, then tweet Monday between 1pm and 3pm (New York time). Remember, however, that the country where you are posted or your country of origin have different HEAVY TRAFFIC times.

21. INFOGRAPHICS are not specifically related to Twitter, but as they present complex information and data quickly and clearly they have become quite widespread on Twitter and easily RTed.

22. JOKES are certainly allowed. Use humor to capture the attention of your readers – isn't this the same concept used in writing down a speech?

23. KEEP learning and KEEP exploring! As Twitter KEEPS evolving, thanks mainly to its millions of users and the infinite ways they use to communicate with each other, so do you.

24. LINKS are important even if they take up space in the 140 character real estate of a tweet! They give you extra space to express yourself and get your point across. To quote Swedish Foreign Minister @carlbildt: 'Twitter is for LINKS and instant comments; the blog is for longer, more considered arguments.' A technical note: a linked URL of any length will be altered by Twitter to 19 characters. However, you can use services like bit.ly or HootSuite to shorten your URLs.

25. LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN! LISTEN to your followers and all users interacting with you. Twitter is not just a simple tool of communication with the public, but also a way to listen to what the public needs, to gauge its sentiment on various topics, and to often be the first to get breaking news directly from the source and not from the media.

26. LISTS can become your new best friends. It is a smart way to follow groups of people who may or may not be among your followers or followings. It's very easy to set them up and you can include up to 500 members for each one. It's also very easy to subscribe to LISTS compiled by others.[64] On Twitter platforms you can easily see all your lists, including all those you are subscribing to, and those you are a member of.

27. MORE is not necessarily better when it comes to Twitter. Too many tweets can be perceived as spam!

28. MULTIPLE accounts are allowed. Sometimes an embassy and its ambassador both have a handle. Some other times, only one or the other is present on Twitter. For example, before opening @ITALYinUS, the official Twitter profile of the Embassy of Italy in Washington DC, in October 2012, only the Ambassador of Italy to the USA Claudio Bisogniero – aka @CBisogniero – had a Twitter account and not the embassy, which in his tweets was referred to as #ItalianEmbassy. Similarly, only the US embassy in Italy – aka @AmbasciataUsa – has an account and not US ambassador to Rome David Thorne, who is referred to as #AmbThorne in their tweets.

29. If you think your account is going to experience a rapid increase in the number of followers, change your NOTIFICATIONS (under Settings) not to have your e-mail hijacked by hundreds of messages from Twitter warning you of every new follower, new replies, new RTs.

30. Don't be too ORNATE and formal when tweeting. You don't need to refer to people as Mr, Dr, Ambassador, etc. Your message does not need to be grammatically perfect and stylistically correct. Rather it needs to be clear and concise.

31. PERSONABILITY is key when it comes to your interaction with Twitter users. It shows you're real and willing to have an open conversation.

32. Sometimes Twitter handles show a small lock next to the @name. Those are PRIVATE or PROTECTED accounts. Twitter accounts are public by default. Choosing to protect your account means that your

tweets will only be seen by approved followers – you will have to approve them manually – and will not appear in the search engine. Twitter is meant to be used as a public way of communicating with others, and that's its beauty and large potential.

33. Don't be shy to QUOTE from articles, reports, and colleagues, especially if it is something related to your country or area of activity. Remember, however, to credit the original person/entity and link URL, if available. When you want to QUOTE from others' tweets – referred as Retweet (RT) or Quote Tweet (the latter available only on Twitter mobile platforms) – don't forget you can also add your (short) comment.

34. It's not a crime to REPOST your own tweets – although you do have to alter them a bit otherwise Twitter won't let you. According to bit.ly, the half-life of a tweet is about 2.8 hours. So REPOSTING it can be useful when you want more people to see a link, event invitation, and such.

35. SEARCHEABILITY. To make yourself easily searchable by users, include in your profile key words, possibly in two languages if you're posted abroad. Remember a profile cannot be longer than 140 characters (website link excluded).

36. SIMPLICITY is the key. Pompousness and celebrity whining are not welcomed by your followers. Remember that it's as easy to follow somebody as it is to unfollow him/her/you!

37. Don't be afraid to say THANK YOU, especially when somebody starts to follow you, retweet you, congratulate you, or add you to a list.

38. TRENDS give you the pulse of Twitter. This is how Twitter defines them: 'TRENDS are determined by an algorithm and are tailored for you based on who you follow and your location. This algorithm identifies topics that are immediately popular, rather than topics that have been popular for a while or on a daily basis, to help you discover the hottest emerging topics of discussion on Twitter that matter most to you.'[65] You can participate in a trend by posting one or more tweets on that particular trend (just type the exact trend on your tweet). You

can also personalize trends by following the prompts on the Twitter platforms online or on the mobile apps.

39. TOWN HALLS, TOWNTERVIEWS (to borrow the expression from @StateDept), and TWEETUPS are becoming more and more common in national politics and foreign policy as well. And since July 2011,[66] when US President Barack Obama launched the very first Twitter TOWN HALL, they also moved to the Twitter-sphere with great success. Defined as large informal gatherings (often televised or video recorded) where everybody is invited to participate, ask questions, and comment, they're used all over the world by heads of state/government, cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and spokespeople. Twitter is a great fit for those events and they give you – and your country – a much better voice, with greater outreach and interconnection.

40. As with other social media tools, with Twitter it's about US, not you. It's about being part of a community, and not a hierarchy.

41. VOLUNTEER your thoughts and opinions on issues people care – possibly offering your country's official stance – to captivate your audience.

42. If possible, link your Twitter handle on the official WEBSITE of your embassy, ministry, or government agency. An option is also to use widgets or an embedded code to also include your Twitter feed. In both cases, ask your IT department whether they can do it or not. In addition, include it in your e-mail signature and any biographical note you might need to circulate on the Web.

43. Twitter can be the XFACTOR you were looking for. If not, it's still going to be a lot of fun. I promise.

44. Don't make your followers YAWN. There are any ways to convey a message. And if it bores you, it's probably going to bore your followers.

45. Don't be overly ZEALOUS. A good start is much better than a rushed start! And I hope this non-manual manual will contribute to help diplomats in exploring Twitter more and try it out.

ENDNOTES

1. October 2012: http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/tomfletcher/2012/10/02/the-naked-diplomat/)
2. Ross A (2012) 21st Century Statecraft: Continuing the Conversation. DipNote (February 1).
3. Hanson F (2012) Revolution @State: The Spread of eDiplomacy. Sydney, Australia: Lowy Institute for International Policy.
4. Slaughter A-M (2012) Remarks, The Big Picture: beyond hot spots & crises in our interconnected world. *Penn State Journal of Law and International Affairs* 1(2) p. 286. Available at http://elibrary.law.psu.edu/jlia/vol1/iss2/5 [accessed January 26, 2103].
5. Fowler GA (2011) Facebook CTO: Mobile Is 2011 Priority. Digits Blog, The Wall Street Journal (25 January). Available at http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2011/01/25/facebook-cto-mobile-is-2011-priority/ [accessed September 17, 2012].
6. McGee M (2012) With 400 million tweets per day, twitter spending "inordinate resources" on improving content discovery. Marketing Land (June 7). Available at http://marketingland.com/twitter-400-million-tweets-daily-improving-content-discovery-13581 [accessed September 17, 2012].
7. Facebook's Registration Statement under the Securities Act of 1933 (Form S-1) filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission on February 1, 2012.
8. http://allfacebook.com/facebook-the-mobile-network_b109702
9. Consenza V (2012) World Map of Social Networks. VincosBlog. Available at http://vincos.it/world-map-of-social-networks/ [accessed January 23, 2013].
10. SocialBakers (no date) Facebook statistics by continent. Available at http://www.socialbakers.com/countries/continents/ [accessed January 23, 2013].
11. Khazan O. (2013) The entire world is increasingly using Facebook. Washington Post. Available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/01/04/the-entire-world-is-increasingly-using-facebook/ [accessed January 26, 2013].
12. Pring C (2012) 100 more social media statistics for 2012. *The Social Skinny* (February 13). Available at http://thesocialskinny.com/100-more-social-media-statistics-for-2012/ [accessed September 17, 2012].
13. Condliffe J (2012) Where the world's tweets come from, visualized. *Gizmodo* (July 4). Available at http://gizmodo.com/5923450/where-the-worlds-tweets-come-from-visualized [accessed September 17, 2012].
14. The researchers pointed out that geo-referenced tweets comprise less than 1% of all tweets and it is possible that significant geographic biases exist in where and how people geo-reference their content. Graham M, Hale S, and Gaffney D (2012) *Where in the world are you? Geolocation and language identification in Twitter.* Unpublished Manuscript.
15. Darrell R (2011) Who uses what: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn… *Bit Rebels* (July 2011). Available at http://www.bitrebels.com/social/who-uses-what-twitter-facebook-linkedin%E2%80%A6-infographic/ [accessed September 17, 2012].
16. Skelton A (2012) Social demographics: Who's using today's biggest networks. *Mashable* (March 9). Available at http://mashable.com/2012/03/09/social-media-demographics/ [accessed September 17, 2012].
17. Smith A (2011) Twitter Update 2011. Pew Internet & American Life Project (June 1). Available at http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Twitter-Update-2011.aspx [accessed September 17, 2012].
18. Burson-Marsteller (2012) Burson-Marsteller study finds almost two-thirds of world leaders are on Twitter – but how connected are they really?r (July 26). Available

at http://www.burson-marsteller.com/Newsroom/Lists/PressReleases/DispForm.aspx?ID=891 [accessed September 17, 2012].

19. Babb C (2012) Is 'Twiplomacy' replacing traditional diplomacy? *Voice of America* (August 1). Available at http://www.voanews.com/content/twitter-diplomacy-social-media/1452891.html [accessed September 17, 2012].
20. Slaughter AM (2012) A Pivot to the People. *Project Syndicate* (March 20). Available at http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/a-pivot-to-the-people [accessed September 17, 2012].
21. Freeland C (2012) Blending Governance and Twitter. The New York Times (April 5). Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/06/us/06iht-letter06.html?_r=1 [accessed September 17, 2012].
22. Ritter K (2012) Twitter diplomacy new face of foreign relations. *Associate Press* (May 26). Available at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43185212/ns/technology_and_science-tech_and_gadgets/t/twitter-diplomacy-new-face-foreign-relations/ [September 17, 2012].
23. As of September 2012.
24. As of January 2013.
25. Remarks by Italy's Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi to the conference *Twiplomacy: Diplomacy in the Twitter age* (June 14, 2012).
26. Hague's Storify story page is available at http://storify.com/foreignoffice/meetfs [accessed October 18, 2012].
27. Haven W (2010) William Hague gets in touch on Twitter to set the record straight. *The Telegraph* (April 7). Available at http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/willheaven/100033198/william-hague-gets-in-touch-on-twitter-to-set-the-record-straight/ [accessed September 17, 2012].
28. FCO (no date) Digital Diplomacy Communication Directorate: Guidance. Available at http://digitaldiplomacy.fco.gov.uk/en/guide-train/guidance/ [accessed October 18, 2012].
29. Glasser SB (2012) Head of State. *Foreign Policy Magazine* (July/August). Available at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/18/Head_of_State [accessed September 17, 2012].
30. Radia K (2009) Clinton: 'I wouldn't know a Twitter from a tweeter' & Iran Protests US Meddling. *ABC News* (June 17). Available at http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2009/06/clinton-i-wouldnt-know-a-twitter-from-a-tweeter-iran-protests-us-meddling/ [accessed September 17, 2012].
31. Clinton H (2011) Twitter. Available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XQNDLft6eI [accessed October 26, 2012].
32. Diplomatic Ink (2012) Tis the Age of eDiplomacy by @diplomaticink, *Diplomatic Ink Blog* (April 21).
33. Barton C (2012) Chris Barton: Twitter diplomacy. *The New Zealand Herald* (August 24). Available at http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10828967 [accessed September 17, 2012].
34. Chan Y-Y (2012) Global Agenda Council on Informed Societies: Towards a code of conduct for government leaders. *World Economic Forum* (June 1).
35. Fleishman-Hillard (2012) Diplomatic Social Media Directory. Fleishman-Hillard International Communications (May 23). Available at http://events.fleishmanhillard.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/D iplomatic-Social-Media-Directory.pdf [accessed September 17. 2012].
36. Tracy M (2012)@AmbassadorOren on why he joined Twitter. *Tablet Magazine* (May 30). Available at http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/101023/ambassadororen-on-why-he-joined-twitter [accessed September 17, 2012].

37. Ross's remarks to the conference *Twiplomacy: Diplomacy in the Twitter age* (June 14, 2012).
38. Keleman M (2012) Twitter Diplomacy: State Department 2.0. NPR (February 21). Available at http://www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2012/02/21/147207004/twitter-diplomacy-state-department-2-0 [accessed September 17, 2012].
39. Results have been published on Storify: 'Why Ambassadors use Twitter?' and are available http://storify.com/andreas212nyc/why-ambassadors-use-twitter
40. Ambassador Dino Patti Djalal was among the panelists *of Rebalancing America's Ties to Asia: An Assessment of the Obama Initiative*, at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington DC, December 6, 2011.
41. Taylor D (2010) The Twitter Ambassador Dino Patti Djalal. *Forbes* December 20. Available at http://www.forbes.com/global/2010/1220/companies-twitter-dino-patti-djalal-jakarta-on-fly.html [accessed October 18, 2012].
42. As of September 10, 2012.
43. The Twitter profile of Chilean Ambassador to the USA Felipe Bulnes is not considered active as the ambassador never posted a tweet since the account was opened in February 2010.
44. Leonhardt D (2011) A better way to measure Twitter influence. *The New York Times Magazine* March 24. Available at http://6thfloor.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/24/a-better-way-to-measure-twitter-influence/ [accessed October 18, 2012].
45. Solis B (2012) Exploring and defining influence: A new study. Available at http://www.briansolis.com/2010/09/exploring-and-defining-influence-a-new-study/ [accessed October 18, 2012].
46. Hernandez V (2012) Measuring influence online: A Q&A with Klout's CEO. CNN (February 23). Available at http://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/23/tech/social-media/klout-joe-fernandez/index.html [accessed October 18, 2012].
47. Sambira J (2012) Now UN diplomats fight and make peace by Twitter. GlobalNewsroom.org (May 8). Available at http://globalnewsroom.org/now-un-diplomats-fight-and-make-peace-by-twitter/ [accessed October 18, 2012].
48. 1,001,336 as of September 10, 2012.
49. Villarino E (2011) Candid images, useful information: The UN's social media plan. DevEx (September 23). Available at http://www.devex.com/en/news/76017/secure?mem=ua&src=biz [accessed October 18, 2012].
50. A complete list is available at www.un.org/social
51. *The Guardian* (2011) Global development Twitterati" by *The Guardian* September 21. Available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2011/sep/21/global-development-twitter-users-follow [accessed October 18, 2012].
52. Hillary Clinton's remarks on Internet Freedom, Newseum, Washington DC (January 21, 2010).
53. Sutter JD (2010) Ushahidi: How to 'crowdmap' a disaster. CNN Labs (October 25). Available at http://edition.cnn.com/2010/TECH/innovation/10/25/crowdmap.disaster.internet/index.html [accessed October 18, 2012].
54. McKie R (2012) Aid officials aim to use apps and Twitter as new tools in disaster relief. *The Guardian* (April 7). Available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2012/apr/08/disaster-relief-social-networking [accessed October 18, 2012].
55. Clolery P (2012) Red Cross opens social media center for disaster response. *The Non Profit Times* (March 7). Available at http://www.thenonprofittimes.com/article/detail/red-cross-opens-social-media-center-for-disaster-response-4443 [accessed October 18, 2012].

56. Skarda E (2011) How social media is changing disaster response. *Time* (June 9). Available at http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2076195,00.html [accessed October 18, 2012].
57. Picco G (1999). *Man without a Gun. One Diplomat's Secret Struggle to Free the Hostages, Fight Terrorism, and End a War.* New York: Times Books/Random House.
58. Remarks for Pacific Council on International Policy, Los Angeles. Available at http://www.state.gov/r/remarks/2012/198546.htm [accessed October 26, 2012].
59. Labott E (2012) Clinton: 'I'm responsible for diplomats' security'. CNN (October 16). Available at http://edition.cnn.com/2012/10/15/us/clinton-benghazi/index.html [accessed October 18, 2012].
60. Rogin J (2012) Inside the public relations disaster at the Cairo embassy. *Foreign Policy's The Cable* (September 12). Available at http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/09/12/inside_the_public_relations_disaster_at_the_cairo_embassy [accessed October 18, 2012].
61. Fisher M (2012) The US Embassy to Egypt's Oddly Informal Twitter Feed. *The Atlantic* (September 13). 2012). Available at http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/09/the-us-embassy-to-egypts-oddly-informal-twitter-feed/262331/ [accessed October 18, 2012].
62. Fung B (2012) Why it's tough for embassies to get social media right. Canadian International Council's OpenCanada (October 17). http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/10/digital-diplomacy-why-its-so-tough-for-embassies-to-get-social-media-right/263744/ [accessed October 18, 2012].
63. Hanson F (2012) *Revolution @State: The Spread of EDIPLOMACY*. The Brookings Institute. Available at http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/reports/2012/3/ediplomacy%20hanson/03_ediplomacy_hanson [accessed October 18, 2012].
64. A link of some interesting lists for diplomats: https://twitter.com/andreas212nyc/lists
65. Twitter support (2012) Available at https://support.twitter.com/articles/101125-about-trending-topics# [accessed October 26, 2012].
66. Tens of thousands of questions were tweeted to #AskObama on Twitter about the economy, health care and other important issues. More information available at http://askobama.twitter.com/ [accessed October 18, 2012].

DiPLO
www.diplomacy.edu

DiploFoundation emerged from a project to introduce ICT tools to the practice of diplomacy, initiated in 1992 at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic studies in Malta. In November 2001, Diplo was established as an independent non-profit foundation by the governments of Malta and Switzerland. Diplo has received wide recognition for its work, including consultative status with the United Nations. Today, Diplo works to increase the capacity of small and developing states to engage effectively in international policy, negotiations, and diplomacy. We do this by providing **capacity development programmes** in areas such as Internet governance and climate change diplomacy; using and developing tools for **e-participation in global governance**, including remote participation in international meetings and social media for global negotiations; and providing specialised and effective **academic programmes – accredited with the University of Malta - for professional diplomats** seeking cost-effective but high-quality training in both traditional and contemporary diplomacy topics.

Ministero degli Affari Esteri
DGRI - Istituto Diplomatico

Istituto Diplomatico is that part of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) dedicated to diplomatic training. Its main task is to update and improve the professional quality of the MFA staff (both diplomats and non-diplomats) through courses and seminars. The Faculty consists mainly of internal staff and experts from the Ministry.
The two main courses offered for diplomats are aimed at newly admitted diplomats and middle-rank officials. The main activities for non-diplomat staff relate to pre-post courses and specific professional training.
The Institute is developing a series of self-paced online learning modules focused on the MFA's activities and functions. Its most recent project is a *blog* (ISDI learning corner, available at *http://istitutodiplomatico.wordpress.com/*) for sharing useful information concerning diplomatic soft skills.

Twitter for Diplomats is not a manual, or a list of what to do or not to do. It is rather a collection of information, anecdotes, and experiences.

It recounts a few episodes involving foreign ministers and ambassadors, as well as their ways of interacting with the tool and exploring its great potential.

creative commons

DiPLO
www.diplomacy.edu

Ministero degli Affari Esteri
DGRI - Istituto Diplomatico

9 789993 253273