

# **An Examination of Digital Diplomacy and Reputation Management at International Organisations**

Keith Powell

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of Arts in the University of Malta for the degree  
of Master in Contemporary Diplomacy (Internet Governance)

June 2015

## Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work.

(signature)

Keith Powell

30 June 2015, The Hague, the Netherlands

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the following people who were helpful and supportive along during the development of this dissertation: my advisor, Dr. Stephanie Borg-Psaila, who provided guidance throughout the process, helped distribute the survey through the Diplo Foundation's social media, and provided some very insightful feedback. I would also like to thank Mr. Jun Wang, Director of External Relations at the OPCW, who took the time to read and give feedback on parts of this dissertation.

I would like to thank everyone who filled out the survey and/or participated in an interview.

I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Stephen Coulson, who provided much support as we travelled on our respective Master's degree journeys.

But particularly, I would like to acknowledge the following two people who were instrumental in this dissertation being completed: Dr. Nina Kojevnikov, who edited this dissertation and provided a ton of support during the ups and downs during its research and writing.

The other is Ms Maria Ramos, my incredibly patient and extremely capable Web Publishing Assistant. If it wasn't for her picking up my slack when I was distracted in working on this paper, there is a very good chance I wouldn't have completed it in time.

## **Abstract**

Digital diplomacy is being used at many different international organisations to help communicate their messages to a wider public, opening up new audiences outside the governmental stakeholders they do their work with. This new way of communicating has created potential reputational issues that organisations need to be aware of when using social media.

This research examines how social media is being used at international organisations in the context of the environment in which they work. It studies how reputation management principles apply to international organisations and how they are managed using the tools available for measuring the effectiveness of social media. It finds that the environment that organisations work in have much working against them structurally and politically to effectively communicate, and the tools that are available to measure social media do not help organisations manage their issues effectively, so many do not engage in this type of analysis.

## Table of Contents

Title Page.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Acronyms.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Overview of Digital Diplomacy.....	8
Chapter 2: International Organisations: The Context.....	33
Chapter 3: Reputation Management.....	43
Chapter 4: Social Media Measurements.....	52
Chapter 5: Digital Diplomacy at International Organisations: Findings, Analysis, and Discussion.....	62
Conclusion.....	82
References.....	90
Annex A: Survey Questions.....	96
Annex B: Survey Responses.....	100

## **Acronyms**

CERN - European Organization for Nuclear Research

CTBTO – Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office

ICC – International Criminal Court

IO – International Organisation

OAS – Organization of American States

OPCW – Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNDPI – United Nations Department of Public Information

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WHO – World Health Organization

WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature

## **Introduction**

On 30 January 2015, the United Nations (UN) held its first ever “Social Media Day”. This event was an acknowledgement of the importance of digital platforms in the work of international organisations. The event, which was webcast all over the world, attracted widespread interest, with the UN reporting that over 9,000 messages were sent over the social media platform Twitter using the official hashtag #SocialUN.

Despite this new attention to digital diplomacy at the international level, international organisations are still finding their feet in terms how to best use the various social media platforms. Discussions are still taking place regarding about what they should use social media for, and many organisations are faced with bureaucratic hurdles and ingrained policies deep within their organisations that hinder innovations such as digital diplomacy initiatives.

Nevertheless, digital technology is changing the way international organisations communicate. Big Data and crowd-sourcing initiatives such as Global Pulse at the United Nations and their use by humanitarian organisations engaged in crisis response all point to new directions based upon new types of information available. Social media is also pointing towards new ways of engaging with the public that were previously unavailable before the rise of digital technology.

According to some perspectives, using web sites and social media are an important extension of public diplomacy (Morse 2012, Hanson 2012). We can see that through

campaigns by the United Nations such as the “#whatdoesittake campaign”<sup>1</sup> to mark the fifth year of the crisis in Syria and the “Happy Sounds Like” campaign<sup>2</sup> to mark the International Day of Happiness, which “recognizes the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in people’s lives and the importance of their recognition in public policy objectives” (United Nations 2015). So it is clear that even seemingly frivolous campaigns such as Happiness Day are connected in some way to policy-making at the United Nations. Public information plays a lead role in this, with digital diplomacy campaigns like the ones referenced above being a major communication channel to raise awareness of various issues that organisations are working on.

This raises the question of what kind of effect digital diplomacy initiatives are having. In the case of “Happy Sounds Like”, the United Nations received a fair amount of criticism, with critics saying that the campaign should have been tied to a fundraising goal (Marrins 2015). But it is unclear if these activities are enhancing the reputation of international organisations, damaging it, or having no effect at all. This is not a concern unique to international organisations; Chun (2005) notes that corporate reputation management is difficult to measure and is still very new.

As far as measuring the online performance of social media postings, there are many different metrics, but the main ones are “reach” (how many people saw the post); “impressions” on Twitter (the number of times a tweet appeared on a user’s timeline); and “click-throughs” (how many times a link was clicked on). Further, there are analytics tools such as Simply Measured that can analyse one account in relation to performance of another, as well as perform sentiment analysis, where the content of messages about a

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.syria-whatdoesittake.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.happysoundslike.com/en/index.html>



person, organisation, brand, etc. are positive or negative. These are important quantitative measurements to use to measure the performance of social media postings, but the more qualitative issues need deeper examination, particularly in terms of how the average person perceives an organisation to be.

A key element of this is brand building. The phrase “nation branding” is often held as a key component of public diplomacy at the state level. Kaneva (2011) offers a working definition of nation branding in this context, calling it a “compendium of discourses and practices aimed at reconstituting nationhood through marketing and branding paradigms.” Extrapolating it to the level of a multilateral international organisation, the definition could also be applied, in that “nationhood” is really a definition of a nation in its own view and an international organisation, as a body in and of itself, constitutes itself in accordance with its own view of itself as well. These two entities diverge according to the different actors who have a stake in creating the relevant definitions.

International organisations differ from nation states in that they are made of up of a collective of states that were assembled for a specific purpose (Rittberger et al, 2012). They have different functions and have varying accountability mechanisms. Further, an international organisation does not work independently; rather its work is intergovernmental and is funded by the member states that signed or acceded to the agreement that established the organisation. This means that any public diplomacy or digital diplomacy initiatives must take into consideration the interests and sensitivities of these member states, a factor which has an effect on how messages are conceived and executed.

### **Goals of the Study**

The main goal of the research is to discover if digital diplomacy efforts at international organisations are having an effect on their reputations. This analysis takes place in the context of how international organisations work and what tools are available to them to measure the effectiveness of their digital diplomacy activities.

Specifically, the research:

1. Studies the digital diplomacy landscape, identifies the major social platforms and how they are being used in digital diplomacy, and provides a contrast to how it is being used by foreign ministries in their own digital diplomacy activities.
2. Identifies the context in which international organisations operate, their operational models, and examines how public information policies either directly or indirectly have an effect on digital diplomacy activities.
3. Examines branding and reputation management techniques that are used in the public and corporate sectors and identifies the challenges international organisations face in managing reputation.
4. Examines the measurement techniques and tools used to measure social media effectiveness, identifies the metrics that are available to measure reputation.
5. Through a survey of international organisations, identifies the tools and techniques used at different organisations for digital diplomacy activities and determines whether they are used to manage the organisation's reputation.
6. Discusses areas that require further research.

## **Survey Methodology**

The research includes a survey of how different organisations use social media for digital diplomacy. The following methodology was used:

- a targeted survey distributed to digital diplomacy professionals at different international organisations; and
- follow-up interviews with volunteers who indicated their willingness to participate.

The data collected was analysed and relevant case studies are presented.

This dissertation is organised as follows:

### **Chapter 1: Overview of Digital Diplomacy**

This chapter offers an introduction to digital diplomacy and its core concepts, describes the general uses of social media in digital diplomacy, and provides some cases of its use, as documented in the Twiplomacy study of the use of Twitter by international organisations. The use of digital diplomacy and its implementation by a foreign ministry is analysed at the national level, as will the global context in which international organisations operate. The efficacy of digital diplomacy is examined in terms of whether the initiatives on which it is based have been realised. Finally, a literature review of relevant topics is provided.

### **Chapter 2: International Organisations: the Context**

This chapter discusses digital diplomacy and public information in the context of International Organizations. It is important to contextualise the work of International Organizations because they have their own organisational models and policy making

structures that make their work different from that of foreign ministries and other initiatives at the state level. The chapter discusses these models and the implications of the development of digital diplomacy programs in this context

### **Chapter 3: Reputation Management**

This chapter discusses the various ways reputation is managed at both the corporate level and in the public sector, discusses the key elements, and describes the challenges of reputation management in the context of international organisations.

### **Chapter 4: Social Media Measurements**

This chapter discusses commonly used measuring tools by social media professionals. It discusses different usages, such as building influencer networks and social media listening to generate actionable intelligence. It builds on the general description of how social media is measured that is described in Chapter 1: Overview of Digital Diplomacy. Finally, it discusses how these tools work in the context of reputation management.

### **Chapter 5: Digital Diplomacy at International Organisations: Findings, Analysis, and Discussion**

This chapter examines how social media is being implemented at international organisations, and is based on a survey that was developed, sent out, and its results interpreted. In addition, an analysis of what platforms and what metrics digital diplomacy makes use of to examine engagement with audiences and to measure performance is carried out. Finally, this chapter contains a discussion as to how digital diplomacy efforts are measured and the relationship between social media activity and organisational reputational and branding issues.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter summarises the research findings and present recommendations for enhancement or implementation of reputational measurement tools. Finally, it proposes areas for further research.

## **Chapter 1: Overview of Digital Diplomacy**

### **Introduction**

This chapter offers an introduction to digital diplomacy and its core concepts, describes the general uses of social media in digital diplomacy, and provides some cases of its use, as documented in the Twiplomacy study of the use of Twitter by international organisations. The use of digital diplomacy and its implementation by a foreign ministry is analysed at the national level, as will the global context in which international organisations operate. The efficacy of digital diplomacy is examined in terms of whether the initiatives on which it is based have been realised. Finally, a literature review of relevant topics is provided.

### **Core Concepts**

Digital diplomacy, also called e-diplomacy, is a concept that has gained traction in recent years and describes a platform that is used to engage with targeted audiences through the use of digital platforms, usually social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter. One of the reasons social media is so attractive for digital diplomacy purposes is that it is a ubiquitous tool in most peoples' daily lives, or at least it is in developed countries. Its importance necessitates that any discussion of its use be defined. In this

context, social media "consists of tools that enable open online exchange of information through conversation and interaction" (Yates and Pacquette, 2010, p.6).

This definition is crucial because it plays an essential role during the formulation of digital diplomacy initiatives, with some researchers even going as far as to define this tool as "the use of social media for diplomatic purposes" (Bjola and Holmes, 2015).

Whether this interpretation will be revised depends on how the digital landscape changes in the years to come, but at this stage of its evolution and for the purposes of this discussion, the operating definition as conceptualised by Bjola and Holmes will be used.

Although this chapter concentrates on examining how digital diplomacy is an extension of public diplomacy, there are signs that there are other ways social media is being used for diplomatic purposes. For example, an exchange of tweets between the United States (US) White House via Twitter and President Hassan Rouhani of Iran appeared to be a calculated step in warming relations between the two countries (McElroy, 2013), thus demonstrating the political potential of social media.

But until there is more evidence that social media is being used for more direct diplomatic purposes, this discussion will limit itself to its use in public diplomacy. In this context, Bjola and Jiang (2015) have analysed the impact of social media as a public diplomacy tool in the framework of how the European Union, the United States, and Japan have implemented their digital diplomacy strategies in relation to China. The researchers identified three crucial dimensions to these strategies:

The first is *agenda setting*: This refers the extent to which social media platforms "enable diplomats to set the agenda of discussion with their target audience" (Bjola and

Jiang, 2015, p. 74). In other words, in order to create effective interaction, diplomats must use social media to set the agenda of topics with the audiences they are seeking to interact with.

The second is what they call *presence-expansion*: “If a government aims to develop a good relationship with a foreign audience”, they write, “it first needs to be ‘out there’ in the relevant public sphere” (Bjola and Jiang, 2015, p.75). Bringing the concept of being “out there” to bear on the workings of an international organisation means that an organisation must be “out there” (that is, visible) as well.

The third dimension is *conversation generating*: Good public diplomacy, it is said, is not “monologue-based” but rather “dialogue-based”, and social media is an ideal platform for engaging with people directly, in that it “creates a quasi-continuous dialogue between diplomats and foreign publics” (Bjola and Jiang, 2015, p.75). This statement summarises the essence of the enormous potential of social media. The other two dimensions, it could be argued, have their place in traditional public diplomacy, given that it is possible to work to set an agenda and expand a country’s presence using more traditional media methods, such as advertising and holding events.

But taken together, these three dimensions will inform the rest of the discussion of the role that digital diplomacy plays in international organisations. A short explanation of what constitutes the major social media platforms follows, in that such an understanding properly contextualises the upcoming discussion.

According to the 2014 World Map of Social Networks (Cosenza, 2014), Facebook is the dominant social network in 128 out of the 137 countries that were analysed, averaging 1.393 billion monthly active users. Twitter and LinkedIn ranked either second or third.



The study notes that, in some regions, a more localised network is dominant, such as VKontakte in Russia and QZone in China (Cosenza 2014).

The second most relevant platform is Twitter. A study on the diplomatic use of Twitter by international organisations was released in November 2013 (Burson-Marsteller, 2013) and was updated in early 2015 (Burson-Marsteller, 2015). The study, which was called “Twiplomacy”, examined the following: how over 200 Twitter accounts are used by 101 organisations; the content of what the organisations tweeted; how conversational these organisations were; and a basic analysis of each organisation’s basic accounts. This study will be discussed in greater detail further on in this chapter.

There are many other social media platforms that are used in digital diplomacy initiatives: YouTube, a video sharing service; Instagram, which is a photo-sharing platform; and Google Plus, which is Google’s answer to a social networking platform and is similar to Facebook. But by far the major social networks are Facebook and Twitter, and so a short description of each follows.

Facebook allows a person to maintain social ties through interactions involving an individual's profile and his or her network, known on the platform as “friends”. On this platform, there is a distinction between individual pages and business or “brand” pages (pages that involve international organisations and foreign ministries). Facebook allows for postings that include texts, photos, and video material, and is overtaking YouTube as the world largest video platform for advertising (Marvin, 2015). Discussions are based around these postings, with users generally responding to posts added by the person or organisation.

Twitter allows people and organisations to interact using short public messages or declarations known as “tweets” of 140 characters or less, including spaces, to their networks, which also have “followers”. On Twitter, there is no distinction between an individual page or a brand page; this means that a person can have what s/he perceives as a direct conversation with a government or organisation on a one-to one basis, not just on a discussion thread, which is the main method of interaction on Facebook.

Users can interact with each other using such features as “retweets”, where a user shares another person’s message with their followers, sometimes with their own comments. Another feature is the “@ mention”, which is a message where a particular user is “tagged”. For example, a message sent to the United Nations Twitter feed would include “@UN” as part of the message, and refers to either a communication with a user or to the user in a manner that “tags” them, so they are aware that they are being talked about.

On both Facebook and Twitter, but particularly on Twitter, conversation streams are built on “hashtags”, which are keywords inserted into a message with a hash mark (for example #hashtag), which, when clicked on, opens a page where all messages with that hashtag are displayed. If enough messages containing the hashtag are posted within a compressed time period and within certain geographic areas, it is noted by the system, which labels it as “trending”, and appears on the Twitter pages of people in that area. For example, during the Social Good Summit in the United Kingdom in March 2015, the organisers requested that attendees, when tweeting about the conference, use the hashtag #2030Now, which resulted in the trending of the conference in London (TrendsLondon, 2015); this gave the conference greater visibility.

What makes these tools crucial to any discussion of digital diplomacy is the intimate nature of the communication. Communication barriers are broken down between the sender and the recipient, and a more direct connection between people and institutions is established. This phenomenon offers opportunities in areas such as public diplomacy, with Bjola and Jiang commenting favourably on the conversation-generating dimension of social media.

But these messages can also be used for analysis and response. For example, in humanitarian crises, social media can be used by researchers to analyse information about where the need is most urgent. Social media was used to influence the response to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, the tsunami in Japan in 2011, and Hurricane Sandy in 2012, amongst other events. Harnessing and analysing the information on hundreds of thousands of tweets allows responders to map out areas of greatest need and assign resources accordingly (Meir, 2013).

Another example of using large amounts of social media data to respond to need is the United Nations' Global Pulse initiative. Global Pulse is mandated by the United Nations High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which called for "a data revolution to improve accountability and decision-making, and to meet the challenges of measuring sustainable development progress" (UN Global Pulse, no date). An example of the UN's use of social media data to measure sustainable development progress is its programme that monitored, through the use of anonymised mobile phone data, the movements of people in Senegal in 2013; these data were compared to the "agricultural cycles and livelihoods of each region", and provided insights as to how "changes in mobility patterns could indicate changes in livelihoods or coping strategies, or exposure to new shocks" (UN Global Pulse, 2015).

An analysis of these examples of how social media is being used outside the general public diplomacy context is instructive, as it provides an overall context and justification for keeping track of the traffic on social media. But to more fully understand the important role that social media plays in public diplomacy, it is important to understand the environment that digital diplomats must work in.

### **Digital Environment**

Although the internet is a global resource, access to it is not universal due in part to technological reasons; the least developed countries, for example, are still adapting to the digital revolution. A large part of the world is still not online, with a recent estimate being that there are over 4.2 billion people not using the internet and growth in its use was seen at only at 9% per year (West, 2015). This means a large part of the world does not have access to the internet and organisations cannot reach these regions by digital means.

The other causative factor involves policies and regulation at the national level. The annual Internet Freedom Report tracks internet freedom in 65 countries, and released its fifth report in the autumn of 2014. The report indicates that internet freedom has declined for the fourth straight year, with researchers emphasising that a “growing number of countries [are] introducing online censorship and monitoring practices that are simultaneously more aggressive and more sophisticated in their targeting of individual users” (Kelly et al, 2014).

Further, in addition to what are traditionally the most common forms of internet censorship – blocking and filtering – they cite the following developments as being the

key reasons for the decline in internet freedom in the period from 2013 to 2014, including:

- the proliferation of repressive laws;
- increased surveillance;
- new regulatory controls over online media;
- more arrests of social-media users;
- intensified demands on the private sector;
- new threats facing women and LGBTI<sup>3</sup> population; and
- more sophisticated and widespread cyberattacks

(Kelly et al, 2014).

Researchers state that one of the major consequences that could come out of these threats are that the global nature of the internet may change, “transforming it from a worldwide network into a fragmented mosaic, with both the rules and the accessible content varying from one country to another” (Kelly et al, 2014).

The implications of this are troubling, both in terms of how alterations to the internet would affect the global user base and of how international organisations would approach their digital diplomacy initiatives in a changed environment. On the user level, growing censorship and surveillance programmes could create a chilling effect, whereby users, fearing reprisal, would be unwilling to engage with others on the internet, particularly in relation to anything that might be organisational or institutional in nature. Users in some

---

<sup>3</sup> LGBTI = Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex.

countries might conclude that they cannot trust that they would not be targeted if they engaged online with an international agency that, for example, was doing work with which their government took issue.

It can be stated that, if the internet becomes a fragmented space, with each country creating its own access rules, international organisations might face a very difficult environment in which to operate their digital programmes. As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, international organisations are accountable to their member states and engaging in any technological initiatives that do not respect the laws or policies inside any individual member state could trigger problems for the organisation. Foreign ministries of various nations could provide examples of these potential difficulties—examples that could easily be applied to international organisations.

One example of the difficulties that can arise involves the US Mission to China's Twitter feed @BeijingAir, which publishes the results of air-quality measurements from a monitor on the roof of the US Embassy in Beijing. Postings containing readings of high pollution levels have resulted in a dispute with the Chinese authorities, who believe that such postings violate the Vienna Convention's rule of non-interference in the internal affairs of a country, in that the readings might promote a negative image of China's environmental policies (Ramzy, 2012).

A second example that can be provided also involves the United States. The United States again found itself embroiled in controversy during the Iranian elections in 2011, when State Department officials asked Twitter to reschedule its maintenance time so that the service would be available during the day in Iran; such a change would make Twitter available in a different time zone and enable it to be used to help organise

demonstrations against the government. This caused some to wonder if this went against the Obama administration's policy of non-intervention in the election (Lichtenstein, 2012).

A further complication caused by a fragmented internet that international organisations must take into account is the blocking of some major platforms within some countries. For example, Twitter is blocked in countries such as North Korea, Iran, and mainland China (Shezi, 2015). This would mean that, if these countries were member states of an international organisation, that organisation would not have the luxury of simply ignoring the ban, as the US State Department did in the previous example involving China (see above). (China is an interesting example because as far back as 2012, despite being blocked, Twitter boasted its most active user base inside that country, where people used virtual private networks (VPNs) and other tools to access the platform (Ong, 2012). This has important implications for an international organisation, in that states parties' foreign ministries might have to tailor the digital outreach conducted by their missions to take into account the policies enforced in different host countries. Most international organisations have to consider member states' political sensitivities when formulating communications; this places barriers to true global outreach.

Further, as noted in the World Map of Social Networks, large countries, such as Russia and China, are dominated by their own social media networks, with VKontakte being dominant in Russia and QZone dominating in China, thus corroborating the fact that a fragmented approach is often adopted. The use of these platforms gives rise to certain difficult issues, in that these platforms are only created or are only allowed to exist if they are used for purposes identified by the state or if they agree to work within the legal frameworks imposed on them.

The following two case studies will demonstrate how digital diplomacy initiatives are being implemented. The first will discuss the Twiplomacy study on international organisations' use of Twitter; the other will analyse how digital diplomacy is being utilised by a particular foreign ministry – in this case the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

### **Case Study: Twiplomacy**

Twiplomacy<sup>4</sup> (Burson-Marsteller, 2013 and 2015) is a project that examined the use of Twitter in international relations and foreign affairs. One of the studies examined the use of Twitter by international organisations. This study was originally published in 2013 and was updated in early 2015. The study is interesting in that it provides a quantitative overview of how international organisations tweet. As previously noted, it provides raw numbers and does not engage in in-depth analysis, but the information gleaned from the data sheds some insight into how different organisations tweet.

However, the following analysis is limited in some respect because the 2013 data set is incomplete. For example, the executive summary noted the infamous exchange between the Nobel Peace Prize Twitter account and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the day the OPCW received the Nobel Peace Prize; when the Nobel Peace Prize committee could not reach the OPCW by phone, it resorted to Twitter to ask the organisation to contact them (Kelly, 2013). Given the exchange, it was odd that the OPCW's Twitter account was not included in the study. Another noted omission involved the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). Thus, in terms of analysis, it may be difficult to determine whether the accounts that

---

4 <http://twiplomacy.com/>



were absent in the original study but were included in the follow-up were missing because they did not yet exist or because they had been overlooked by researchers. That said, some interesting information emerges when an analysis at the macro level of the Twitter landscape of international organisations takes place.

One striking result of such an analysis is that it has been noted that all “leading” organisations have created “at least one” Twitter account and that many have set up digital teams that tweet in all six of the United Nations’ official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish). Further, they note that just over 90 organisations have Twitter feeds dedicated to the heads of their organisations (Burson-Marsteller, 2015).

One relevant metric that was examined was how “effective” an organisation’s communications on Twitter are. Communication effectiveness is measured by the number of re-tweets a particular post receives. This is important, given that one of the assumptions of the study seems to be that “more” means “better”. While the researchers note that retweets are “not the only indicator of a successful Twitter strategy . . . it surely is a better indicator than the number of followers” (Twiplomacy, 2015). In this context, the researchers offered the observation that the United Nations Children’s Fund (@UNICEF) account is “by far” the most effective international organisation in terms of its tweeting, given that each tweet sent by the @UNICEF handle was retweeted an average of 184 times (Burson-Marsteller, 2015a), an unsurprising fact, given that UNICEF’s Twitter account has, as of February 2015, over 3.5 million followers.

The next most effective international organisations in terms of retweets are the United Nations, one of whose sites uses the handle @UN, with an average of 141 retweets and

3.7 million followers and the European Organisation for Nuclear Research ([@CERN](#)), which placed third, with an average 121 retweets per tweet. The study focuses on the top five, and involves a mixture of multilateral international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs): the World Wide Fund for Nature ([@WWF](#)); the World Health Organization ([@WHO](#)); and Greenpeace ([@Greenpeace](#)), all of which received an average of 93 retweets per tweet (Burson-Marsteller, 2015b).

The 2013 study is not as precise as the 2015 analysis, but the numbers do provide the basis for identifying growth in the follow-up study in terms of retweets, where the researchers note that, at the time, [@CERN](#) and [@UNICEF](#) had the most retweets, with each tweet being retweeted an average of 100 times; the [@UN](#) [@WWF](#) [@Greenpeace](#) and [@WHO](#) accounts all averaged 63 retweets per tweet. It was noted that the median number of retweets for all the international organisations that were observed was four (Burson-Marsteller, 2013).

There was a notable change between the period between the original study (November 2013) and the follow-up (February 2015). These increases in retweets might be caused by the fact that more resources were dedicated to digital initiatives, thus facilitating the development of content encouraging additional growth.

However, it is questionable whether retweets are a true measure of effectiveness. On one hand, the number of retweets is a sign of success in that these demonstrate that the message is being amplified by others who, it must be assumed, either support the original message in the tweet or are critically commenting on it. On the other hand, there

are many other ways to examine the success of a tweet using Twitter analytics tools<sup>5</sup> that, since May 2015, are freely available and which should be taken into account when analysts measure effectiveness.

An important metric to be examined is “reach”, which Twitter measures in what it calls “impressions”. Reach, or impressions, is defined as the number of “times a user is served a Tweet in timeline or search results” (Twitter, no date). The Twiplomacy study obliquely references this comment with the number of re-tweets being an indicator of effectiveness, thus underscoring its assumption that the more retweets there are, the more effective the post. Each retweet has the potential to reach each retweeter’s followers, thus showing that the network is being used effectively to amplify the message to people outside the organisation’s immediate followers.

However, reaching people is not the same thing as interacting with them. Twitter analytics has a feature where a user can view how many times another Twitter user engaged with a particular tweet, calculating what it calls a post’s “engagement”, which Twitter defines as the “total number of times a user interacted with a Tweet. Clicks anywhere on the Tweet, including retweets, replies, follows, favourites, links, cards, hashtags, embedded media, username, profile photo, or Tweet expansion” (Twitter, no date), so perhaps a better indicator of success is the number of times a user has interacted with a tweet, rather than merely have it appear on their feed, where it is passively consumed, if it is noticed at all.

---

5

<http://analytics.twitter.com>

So simply capturing a basic snapshot of activity on an international organisation's Twitter feed does not measure a tweet's effectiveness, given that there are more ways to interact with a user than by examining of a retweeting a particular post

### **Case Study: The United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

As a contrast to the examination of how international organisations use digital diplomacy, an analysis of how this form of diplomacy is being implemented by a country's foreign ministry, in this case the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), may be instructive, as it shows a different approach being adopted to the one taken by an international organisation.

In its Digital Strategy (2012), the FCO indicated that it was pursuing a "digital by default" vision, whereby the use of digital diplomacy would become "second nature" to the Home Office; the belief existed that such a strategy would "enhance the achievement of UK objectives"(FCO, 2012, p.8). The FCO acknowledged the role of digital media in the formulation of foreign policy, noting that in "today's networked world digital and policy implementation are intertwined".

In the report, the FCO indicated that it already had an extensive digital presence on which it could build, which included the following:

- two hundred and fifty country websites, which included 93 languages;
- Over 120 Twitter and Facebook pages;
- "numerous" regional digital accounts (ex Sina Weibo in China);
- six Foreign Office Ministers on Twitter and over 20 ambassadors tweeting; and

- over 10 million page views on the FCO website (p.6).

Building on this foundation, the FCO planned to use digital media to formulate and implement foreign policy. One example of its effectiveness involved the use of digital communications following the closure of its embassy in Iran, where the “UK for Iranians” website and social media platforms continued sending messages to Iranian audiences and circumventing censorship by the Iranian media (p.7).

The FCO also uses digital media to listen to and identify important voices, which allows it to “[receive] early warning of developments and identifying key influencers” (p. 7). The report noted comments by the British Ambassador to Lebanon, Tom Fletcher, who said that, while social media could potentially start a war (for example, imagine the scenario of the possible consequences that could ensue if a diplomat tweeted a link to an anti-Islamic film), it also has the potential for engaging with non-state actors; Fletcher wrote that that “[W]e no longer have to focus solely on the elites to make our case or influence policy” and that getting social media right “has the potential to rewrite the diplomatic rulebook” (p.8).

The FCO recognised that achieving its vision of a “digital-first” philosophy means that the “day to day work of diplomacy” will need to be changed, and it has compared this shift to changes in journalism and marketing (p.9). It has identified some areas that require work for this to be achieved, including the continual need for the leadership that supports these changes. It is also interesting that the FCO is taking an approach that shows an appetite for risk in that, while its leadership understands the need for guidelines, it also wants to create an atmosphere in which innovation is encouraged,

noting that everyone wants to establish “clear guidelines for staff to tackle uncertainty and the fear of ‘getting it wrong’ on social media” (p.9).

Not only have foreign policy goals been affected by this digital-by-default strategy, the FCO has also focused on digitising other aspects of the Foreign Office’s work, such as transactional services and assistance at the consular level (for example travel advice and emergency document processing).

This case study shows that, with strong leadership and a strategic plan that encompasses different aspects of a foreign ministry’s work, a digital diplomacy plan can bear fruit in what has traditionally been a very risk-averse profession. However, as their progress report shows, the FCO has seen slow progress in implementing this strategy. In its progress report in January 2015, the FCO reported that “the digital transformation unit will continue to roll out its new training offer and highlight the importance of digital to diplomatic work at all levels. It will also monitor whether in-house specialist digital skills and knowledge are adequate, recommending adjustments as necessary” (FCO 2015). It appears that support from some important stakeholders is still ongoing, given that the unit involved in implementation has not completed its work three years after the digital strategy was published. Efforts are continuing on issues such as “highlight[ing] the importance of digital to diplomatic work” (Cabinet Office, 2015) and that “digital by default” is still a work in progress.

On the other hand, the strategy itself and the fact that there is a robust plan to roll it out show that a cohesive plan by a foreign ministry to transform the diplomacy and services can be created, given enough internal political will. At the international level, receiving institutional support on the plan is one obstacle; the other challenge is that, with the

different viewpoints of member states, it may be difficult to replicate this type of strategy at the international level.

## **Literature Review**

The literature regarding the use of digital diplomacy or social media at international organisations is sparse. However, there is a great deal of literature describing the various ways digital diplomacy has been implemented at the national level, and this review will mention those that are relevant to how they could be applied at the international level.

The Twiplomacy study that was previously discussed is by far the most thorough example of the kind of literature that will be discussed, but is not an academic study, and it should be borne in mind that it concentrates on quantitative measurements and draws all of its conclusions on that basis.

Another example of a discussion regarding the use of digital diplomacy at international organisations is one on the use of "network diplomacy" at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, the Netherlands, by Corrie (2015). In it, she describes how, in its efforts to be seen as a legitimate criminal court and indeed to be able to function as an organisation, it engages in network diplomacy to build sustained connections among different actors, from "networks of states, international organisations, and even public support" (Corrie, 2015, p. 150). The digital aspect is implemented through a series of platforms, such as a modern e-court room system; however, public channels such as the ICC website, YouTube and Twitter accounts are also utilised, as are online legal tools and a blog that is produced in partnership with an academic partner, which are designed to "democratize access to international criminal law information". All of these

empower "practitioners and level preconditions for criminal justice in both richer and materially less resourceful countries" (ICC, 2014 in Corrie, 2015, p. 160).

The ICC's content on the social media channels is meant to provide case information and tell the story about what the role of the ICC is and why it is important. It does that through tweets designed to update followers on court proceedings, by providing links to relevant documents and videos, and by announcing the dates of upcoming trials and hearings. The YouTube account has provided insider information, such as the occasional video series "Ask the Court",<sup>6</sup> during which ICC officials explain different aspects of the court's work and specific subjects, such as the video entitled "A Day with Defence Counsels"<sup>7</sup>, where, in order to foster understanding of the work being carried out, a camera followed a defence counsel both in the field and at the ICC. This is important, Corrie says, because the ICC works "under the belief that sharing timely and accurate information will enhance support and cooperation from states, international and intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, and the public, and will ultimately increase their perceptions about the ICC's legitimacy" (Corrie, 2015, p. 161).

Andreas Sandre, in his book *Digital Diplomacy: Conversation on Innovations in Foreign Policy* (2015), interviewed Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for the United Nations Secretary-General, and Deborah Seward, Director of Strategic Communications of the UN's Department of Public Information, about the UN's use of social media. Two themes emerged in this discussion: one was the importance of a unified two-way communications strategy; the other was how technology is used for "development and development communication", such as the Global Pulse initiative discussed earlier.

What is interesting is that they are not necessarily looking for large numbers, despite the

---

6 An example can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LT7YYnG8d58>.

7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JomqtGphHOE>



@UN's twitter handle having several million followers, but rather their goal is to "engage and provide the information that people who support and want to work with the UN are looking for" (Sandre, 2015, Chapter 10, Kindle Edition).

Aside from these studies, there are few credible resources that discuss digital diplomacy in the context of international organisations. There are, however, a number of studies that discuss it in a general context or as public diplomacy between states or even regions.

Philip Seib's *Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era* (2012) discusses the changes to diplomatic practice in the aftermath of the Arab Spring in 2011. Perhaps romanticising the events in places like Tunisia, Iran, and Egypt in terms of just how large a role social media played in these demonstrations, he does identify two important, differing aspects that emerged: one is the Egyptian government's heavy-handed response where it shut down the internet during the last days of President Hosni Mubarak's regime. He takes a techno-utopian approach, in that he believes that state censorship of this kind will not last long "unless you are a government such as North Korea's" and believes taking this path will lead a country to economic ruin (Seib, 2012, Chapter 1, Kindle edition). However, as the Internet Freedom Report discussed, governments are finding ways to control the internet that are not as obvious and oppressive.

Another important aspect he wrote about involved transparency and the impact that the speed of technology has on diplomatic decision-making. One of the outcomes of the Arab Spring, he asserted, is that the "rising generation [believes] they have a right to receive honest and complete information" and that "because of the growing public

interest in this right, advancing it should become a central element of global diplomacy" (Seib, 2012, Chapter 7, Kindle edition). He further noted that social media is compressing the time between an event and the reporting of it, and has gone so far as to call the 24-hour news cycle obsolete; he writes that this has implications, not only for the speed of decision-making by diplomats (Chapter 4), but also on the expectations of audiences in how fast they expect decisions to be made (Introduction).

Khatib, Dutton, and Thelwall (2012) investigated the United States' Digital Outreach Team's (DOT's) work in web-based public diplomacy to engage with people in the Middle East on various internet forums about American issues in the period from May to December 2009. They noted that the DOT made their account official with the use of the State Department's seal, and that members of the team always identified themselves as State Department officials. The researchers found that there were several issues that created problems with this type of public diplomacy. Firstly, they noted that it took several days in many cases for a response to a posting to be researched to ensure its accuracy, thus reducing its potential impact.

Secondly, another issue is that the DOT was not very popular on the forums and its posts generated a considerable negative response. Khatib et al believe that this may not have been necessarily a bad thing; it may be the case that people were "concerned enough to respond or otherwise they might have ignored the posts" (2012, p. 466). However, they observed that the DOT's goal is not always to engage directly; rather they respond to views they disagree with for the benefit of "lurkers" (i.e. forum members who read postings, but do not respond).

Xiguang and Jing (2010) examined the role of social media in the Iranian and Xinjiang riots. They noted that, during the Iranian unrest, western countries provided proxies that enabled protesters to circumvent local firewalls; Google in particular was active in that it created maps that displayed the “locations of protestors, security forces, checkpoints, helicopters and so on to assist the opposition’s demonstrations” (Xiguang and Jing, 2010, p.6). The study does not indicate if this action resulted in a complaint by the Iranian government to the US State Department in the same way that the maintenance of Twitter during events in Iran did. However, the way social media as a public diplomacy tool was used in the uprising did not go unnoticed: The researchers quoted a US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) official who opined that the “CIA suddenly realised that it is much easier to indoctrinate American values via the Internet than by sending agents to do the same job on site” (Global Times 2009 in Xiguang and Jing, 2010, p. 11).

However, they did notice the different approaches adopted by the United States and China, noting that China has “less soft power and less innovation in terms of political discourse (p.11). This means that, because the researchers considered digital diplomacy to be a “soft power activity”, the assumption could be made that China might experience problems when engaging with others in a public diplomacy context.

The adoption of different approaches to digital diplomacy and outreach to varied communities has resulted in positive results. For example, the US State Department’s “Apps for Africa” initiative involved a contest that was meant to encourage engagement with the citizens in East Africa, and was held to promote the creation of useful Apps that would be relevant to the African context, as well as to the rest of the world. The winner was an App called “iCow”, where a dairy farmer could “track and manage the breeding

period of their cows as well as monitor cow nutrition during [the] gestation period” (Millam and Avery, 2012, p.330). While it turned out to be a rather small exercise, with the Apps for Africa Facebook page only having 20 fans on its page and the @apps4Africa Twitter handle being largely inactive, the authors considered the project to be a success, because it not only managed to achieve engagement at the very highest levels (including interest shown by the then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton), but also provided opportunities for the development of best practices in terms of how the State Department interacts with tech communities in disparate areas.

Kalathil and Firestone (2014) provided an overview of the 2013 edition of the annual Aspen Institute Dialogue on Diplomacy and Technology. As part of the discussion, participants spoke about the changes taking place in the global diplomatic arena, noting that “new technologies, particularly social media, had fostered a dynamic and increasingly unpredictable environment for diplomacy” (Kalathil and Firestone, 2014, p.3). At the same time, they cautioned against placing too much emphasis on the technological aspects involved in such diplomacy, in that this removes the human element from the equation. However, the conclusions the group reached emphasised the unpredictability present in the current environment, with the changes affecting not only how such diplomacy is carried out, but also influencing the context within which diplomats react to the world around them. The underlying theme of the outcomes of this dialogue in Aspen was the importance of flexibility, including the following considerations:

- technology matters, but the importance of people should not be neglected;

- hierarchies can collapse and unpredictable actors may emerge, particularly during crises;
- amidst information, misinformation, and disinformation, trust is the most highly prized commodity;
- social media literacy is a new, crucial component of diplomacy; and
- diplomatic structures must adapt to stay relevant (Kalathil and Firestone, 2014, p.18-20).

Other related studies seem to focus on the role of the US State Department, with much of the literature focused on American digital diplomacy activities. Two interesting studies reach different interpretations on the value of the “pragmatic approach” to foreign policy adopted by the Obama administration. Researchers such as Bronk (2010) argue that the State Department needs to take a pragmatic approach and provide a flexible information-technology (IT) infrastructure that allows for best practices involving the “Three C’s: collaboration software, cyber security and the potential of the Cloud” for digital activities (Bronk, 2010, p. 46).

Conversely, Kelly (2012) disagrees with this purely practical approach, writing that there is an absence of a strategic framework for public diplomacy and that this is complicated by the “administration’s tendency to choose pragmatism over principle when exercising its foreign policies” (Kelly, 2012, p.39). In the digital diplomacy context, Kelly wonders whether “messages matter less to the Obama administration than the means to deliver them” and that when “asked to explain the public diplomacy dimension of their job, most American Foreign Service officers would be hard pressed to say what it is, and those in the know would supply an answer involving Twitter or perhaps DipNote, the

Department's public blog" (Kelly, 2012, p.39). In other words, Kelly questions the emphasis of technology over content. This brief overview of the literature on digital diplomacy as public diplomacy will be followed in the next chapter with a discussion on the context in which international organisation operate.

## **Chapter 2: International Organisations: The Context**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses digital diplomacy and public information in the context of international organizations. It is important to contextualise the work of International Organizations because they have their own organisational models and policy-making structures that make their work different from that of foreign ministries and other initiatives at the state level. The chapter discusses these models and the implications of the development of digital diplomacy programs in this context

This discussion concerns itself with digital diplomacy as being part of public information programmes because, as was discussed in the previous chapter, at this point in its evolution, social media is an extension of public diplomacy activities, which are the domain of public information at many organisations.

### **The Structure of International Organisations**

As a starting point for discussion, it may be helpful to describe the general structure of international organisations in order to properly understand the context in which they work. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides this definition in its Glossary of Statistical Terms:

International organisations are entities established by formal political agreements between their members that have the status of international treaties; their existence is recognised by law in their member countries; they are not treated as resident institutional units of the countries in which they are located. (UN (1993) in OECD, 2005).

An earlier definition, by the Yearbook of International Organizations in 1978, states that an international organisation has three elements:

- They are based on a formal instrument of agreement between the governments of nation states.
- They include three or more nation states as parties to the agreement.
- They possess a permanent secretariat performing ongoing tasks.

([www.laetusinpraesens.org](http://www.laetusinpraesens.org), no date).

Using these definitions as a baseline, the role of international organisations in each member state and how they choose to work with the organisation become complex. As a system, international organisations convert “inputs into outputs” and “react to demands and support from their environments (input) and transform (convert) these into policies directed towards their environment (output)” (Rittberger, Zangl, and Kruck, 2012, p. 71). An example is that, after the invasion by Iraq into Kuwait in 1990, the international community requested the UN Security Council to react and apply measures against this action (input). The UN Security Council met this demand and imposed an economic blockade against Iraq. Having this capacity, the researchers argue, means that international organisations can act as political actors. They “function at or like collective actors”, but at the same time they concede that in their “instrumental capacity” they act as “quasi-actors, often at the bidding of their most power member states” (Rittberger, Zandle, and Kruck, 2012, p.5).



It is important to understand the motivations for a country to become a member of a particular organisation because, as will be discussed, it has a direct impact on the public information activities of an organisation due to the authority over the organisation by the member states. International organisations are difficult to manage and to integrate with the other members and are not without political consequences domestically (Boehmer and Nordstrom, 2008, p. 288).

This raises the question of why a country would join a multilateral forum if it doesn't have a direct interest in an issue. For example, Mace and Loiseau (2005) examined why the United States took part in the Summit of the Americas, led by the Organization of American States (OAS), when it began in 1994 and chose to work for the institutionalisation of "hemispheric regionalism", despite being by far the region's dominant power. Their theory is that their participation can be used "as a means to consolidate its rule in an international environment perceived as difficult and even threatening" (Mace and Loiseau, 2005, p. 110). In other words, their participation sends a message to the other states that, despite their dominant power, they have the will to assert their influence in a multilateral forum.

But there are other motivations to join as well. Economic interdependence and security concerns are two reasons (Boehmer and Nordstrom, 2008, p. 287). A country may not have a direct stake in the business that the organisation is mandated to take part in, but a partner country may have a more direct stake, and therefore the member state may join to defend, at least in part, this particular interest. However, conflict can arise when the state interest is in direct opposition to the mandate of the organisation. An extreme example of this is the ousting of the first Director-General of the OPCW, Jose Bustani, at the behest of the American delegation in 2002. It is believed that Bustani's ouster was due to overtures by the OPCW to the government of Iraq that would have had then President Saddam Hussein

agree to have Iraq become a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention and remove the justification of an American-led invasion into the country. The Americans believed that Bustani was overstepping his authority and asked him to resign. Bustani refused, at which point the Americans threatened to withhold their financial contribution to the organisation, which at the time amounted to 22% of the annual budget. Ultimately, Bustani was removed by a special session of the organisation's Conference of the States Parties (Simons, 2013).

Any conflict between state and the organisation could create issues when implementing public information campaigns. As such, it is not in the interests of a member state to be criticised publically by an organisation to which it belongs. The OPCW in this case could clearly not voice an independent opinion, either about the American's position or about the existence or not of chemical weapons in Iraq, as Iraq was not a member state at the time. This exposes another dimension in that international organisations have challenges in creating and implementing effective public information programmes: Most of their work is performed in relationships with governments and not with the public at large. This was identified as an issue as far back as 1953 with Robert H. Cory Jr.'s examination of the United Nations' public information policies in the organisation's early years: "Most decisions under the [UN] Charter", he wrote, "are recommendations to be implemented by member governments, but public information policies may lead to action which directly affects the individual" (Cory, 1953, p. 229). This rationale for a strong public information programme would seem to bolster the member states' view of the organisation's work as presumably good and necessary, a fact that would play out well domestically.

However, he notes that there may be a conflict between the delegate, who arrives with his or her national interests in mind, and the need for the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) to disseminate its message at the global level. He observed that this

situation is handled in different ways, such as creating a small-sized public information office and putting limitations on editorial freedom. He observed that public information efforts have relatively few resources that cannot compete with the machinery of many member states, despite the public information office having, at the time, 12% of the annual budget (Cory 1953, p.220).

Looking at how the DPI has changed in the 60+ years since this study was conducted, it appears that the role of public information has decreased in importance, at least in terms of percentage of the annual budget. The programme budget for the United Nations' Public Information Office for the biennium of 2014 to 2015 was \$186,017,200 USD (A/68/6 (Sect. 28)\*) which represents 3.4% of the \$5.5 billion that the organisation proposed to its member states (A/68/6 (Introduction)\*).

This could be interpreted as being as intentional on the part of the member states. While the Public Information Office was established to “promote to the greatest possible extent an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world” (A/RES/13(I)) and given the relatively large share of the programme budget at the time (12%), the seemingly steady decrease in percentage funding over the ensuing decades may indicate a decreased interest in public information by the member states as a way to properly inform people about the its work. This could have resulted in what Marchese and Simmons (2005) call a “brand crisis”. While admittedly their study was a white paper for Prophet (the business consultancy they were employed by), it is not academic in nature but is a fairly robust examination of what they thought the UN needed to do to enhance its reputation, as they felt the legitimacy of the organisation was being called into question. They noted a poll by Public Opinion Strategies that found that people were “overwhelmingly more likely to support the UN’s development goals if implemented by the

International Red Cross, the World Health Organization (WHO) or UNICEF”, while noting the irony that UNICEF and the WHO are part of the UN system (Marchese and Simmons. 2005, p.1). Without proper resources to engage in public information strategies, organisations will find it difficult to manage reputation and to work to promote their interests, a fact that appears to be having an effect on the legitimacy of the UN in the public’s mind. Indeed, with enough resources, as noted by Kory (1953), a strong and motivated member state could eclipse the UN in a domestic public information campaign if it was in opposition to some of the work that an organisation was doing. Whether a campaign of this sort would create conflict with other member states is another question. As will be discussed in the next chapter, some member states to the UN are using their own channels to criticise policies at the United Nations and to advance their own interests.

So in terms of how public information is managed at international organisations, it appears the digital diplomat has two large obstacles to overcome:

1. One is the competing interests of the organisation and the member states. Each member state brings its own interests and priorities that affect how an organisation can respond.
2. The other is that each member state has its own public information machinery, and in the case of the most powerful countries, has resources that far outstrip that of an individual organisation. With ever-decreasing resources, public information officers must rely on resources that come at a lower cost. This is clearly where digital platforms become valuable, given their low- to no-cost nature.

In the next section, the discussion will turn to institutional structures and how they could impact digital diplomacy initiatives.

## **Institutional Structures**

In terms of international organisational structure and how they impact public information and digital diplomacy, Rittberger, Zandle, and Kruck (2012) provide a discussion of three areas of outputs that international organisations produce: policy programmes, operational activities, and educational activities, which provide the institutional context to how digital diplomacy programmes are created and implemented.

## **Policy Programmes**

They identify three types of policy programmes that determine the outputs of international organisations:

- *Regulatory programmes*, which are meant to change the behaviour of “social actors in order to avoid undesirable interactions or to achieve desirable interactions”. An example they give is the UN Charter’s ban on the threat or the use of force (p. 120).
- *Distributive programmes*, which regulate behaviour concerning the distribution of goods and services. An example is the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Number (ICANN) and its mandate to oversee the installation and allocation of internet domains (p.120-121).
- *Redistributive programmes*, which also concern the distribution of goods and services, but with the difference that resources are transferred from developed to developing countries. An example is the programmes run by organisations such as the World Bank.

## **Operational activities**

Operational activities are activities that are the result of “operational decisions which relate to the implementation of policy programmes”. These include such things as the

specification and implementation of the policy programmes, monitoring the implementation of these programmes by member states, and actions taken in the event of non-compliance (p.123-124).

### **Information Activities**

Information activities are perhaps most relevant to public information and digital diplomacy, given that these activities have an impact on both programmes and on operational decisions. The researchers noted that almost all international organisations collect the relevant information they need to fulfil their mandate and are usually involved in the creation of information and knowledge (p.132).

In terms of public information, international organisations believe that the information and knowledge they create and pass on to member states and the public can “exert a considerable influence on the information on which state and non-state actors in international politics determine their position”, they use the example of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is conducted by the OECD. It is believed that this programme, which provided comparative information on academic achievements by secondary school students in OECD member states had a major impact in the education policy in “some” member states (p. 133-34).

### **International Organisations and Digital Diplomacy**

Discussion in this chapter focused on two dimensions that affect the creation and implementation of digital diplomacy programmes at international organisations. First, the relationship between member states and the organisation, with at least some natural conflict between the two, both in terms of possible competing interests and due to the fact

that the nature of the work is between an organisation and the government of the country, not the citizens of the country.

The other dimension that must be considered is that international organisations have mandates, which vary from organisation to organisation, and the type of mandate they have determines the type of digital diplomacy activities an organisation can engage in and which of them is appropriate for its activities. Further, as information and knowledge creation play a large role in many organisations' work, each organisation must be seen as a discrete actor, with its own identity, for its activities to be credible. For example, the PISA project by the OECD would not be credible if it is seen as a product of a collection of states, but since the OECD is the "owner" of the project, the organisation is viewed as an independent actor and the information that is collected is seen as credible.

It appears that public information in general and digital diplomacy in particular must exist in a context that must transcend the day-to-day workings and activities of the organisation in order for them to be effective, meaning that information products must be created with the political sensitivities of the member states in mind, and with an approach that balances the need to be cognisant of these sensitivities and the need to produce effective information.

Social media is one area that has the potential to overcome at least some of these challenges. As public information budgets decrease, the digital approach becomes more important, as the barrier to entry is very low in that most platforms are free and thus can be used at the most basic level. If there is a motivated staff member, he or she could theoretically build a strong framework at very low cost.

Taken together, the context in which an international organisation operates both in terms of barriers and opportunities appear to make it difficult to create a strong brand and to

manage reputation, as there are many variables outside the organisations' control, the behaviour and interference of member states being the most unpredictable. The next chapter will discuss reputation and brand management in the context of international organisations.



## **Chapter 3: Reputation Management**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the various ways reputation is managed at both the corporate level and in the public sector, discusses the key elements, and describes the challenges of reputation management in the context of international organisations.

### **Reputation Management and Branding**

An understanding of the definitions of reputation and branding are required in order to establish the basic context for any discussion. While the research was being conducted, the discovery was made that there was little information available in regard to reputation management in the public sector; most research appears to have been undertaken in terms of the private sector, making it a challenge to extrapolate findings and conclusions from one sector to the other.

One of the more common definitions is offered by Barnett et al (2006) in which they define reputation as “Observers’ collective judgments of a corporation based on assessments of the financial, social, and environmental impacts attributed to the corporation over time” (Barnett et al 2006, p. 34). Note the use of the word “corporation” in this definition, which, as will be explained later in this chapter, has implications that create issues for public sector organisations in their reputation management initiatives. In creating a perception of an organisation, whether it is public or private, profit or non-profit, the concept of “branding” becomes relevant. Branding is a concept that many

assume is the application of a logo, motto or slogan, specific colours, etc that are used to create an image of the organisation or company in peoples' minds. However, as Kotler and Pfoertsch (2007) point out, a brand is much more than that. They identify four elements to work to establish a brand:

- a brand is a promise;
- a brand is the totality of perceptions—everything you see, hear, read, know, feel, think, etc.—about a product, service, or business;
- a brand holds a distinctive position in customers' minds based on past experiences, associations, and future expectations; and
- a brand is a short-cut of attributes, benefits, beliefs, and values that differentiate, reduce complexity, and simplify the decision-making process.

Kotler and Pfoertsch (2007, p. 358).

In the definition of branding identified here, branding creates a perception of the product, service or business based upon many different characteristics. A brand and reputation appear to go alongside with one another: a strong brand would follow with a good reputation. If the reputation suffers, so would the brand. The next section will discuss how brand image and reputation is extrapolated to the International sector.

### **Reputation in the International Context**

Maintaining a good reputation for an international organisation is important, especially when issues of legitimacy are raised. As discussed in Chapter 1 with Corrie's examination of the digital diplomacy at the International Criminal Court (ICC) (2015), establishing legitimacy is a core objective that the court believes is crucial for its success (Corrie 2015 p. 145). An organisation that is seeking to establish the kind of legitimacy

as the ICC in becoming a powerful world court clearly needs to manage its reputation well to achieve this.

However, outside the digital world there are many ways that an international organisation must manage their reputation through their actions to ensure that the perception of the individual organisation does not suffer due to the effects of its work. For example, Daugirdas (2014) asserts that cholera did not exist in Haiti until it was introduced by UN peacekeepers from Nepal (Daugirdas, 2014, p. 991). While Daugirdas' study was to examine accountability of international organisations in times when an international organisation breaks the law, they noted that "a reputation for complying with international law is an important facet of an IO's legitimacy" (Daugirdas 2014 p. 993). Such an assessment raises an interesting question in terms of reputation and legitimacy in regard to IOs, in that how they manage such a critical situation is central to their maintaining a good reputation.

Beyond legitimacy, reputation and brand building also work to create the feeling and trustworthiness towards an organisation. While these issues are what ultimately establishes legitimacy, and what Kotler and Pfoertsch referred to the "totality of perceptions" digital channels have the ability to transform these perceptions in many meaningful ways, from how the organisation words its postings to the imagery it produces to how others engage with the organisation (communication is two-way, or multi-way, and digital channels can transform perceptions not only when messages originate from the organisation, but how others react to them). But there are significant barriers to achieving this, which will be discussed in the next section.

## **Reputation in the Public Sector**

The organisations in the public sector have responsibilities that most private sector companies do not. Most notably, as an outcome of the application of democratic principles, public sector organisations must report their activities to their citizens so that their performance can be assessed (Broom 2009 in Hong 2013, p.347).

For policy to be truly endorsed by the public, the perception of the competence and trustworthiness of the organisation needs to be managed just as the issues they handle do. This can be difficult because the mandate of the organisation itself may not be popular, but would be necessary for the proper function of government. For example, a tax authority that is charged with collecting taxes may not be popular due to their function and a campaign to change the perception of the organisation to something more positive may not be successful (Wæraas 2008. p.213).

Wæraas and Byrkjeflot (2012), noted public organisations have a definite problem when implementing reputation management principles that are embraced by the private sector because they “lack the autonomy necessary to operate as independent organisational actors” (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot 2012. p.4).

Extrapolating this concept to the international sector is difficult, because international organisations are not independent agencies; they are mandated to fulfil certain tasks by the Member States that fund them and, although each Member State has obligations under its mandating document (whether it is a treaty like the Chemical Weapons Convention that gives the OPCW its mandate, or the UN Charter, which governs the United Nations), activities are approved by the Member States within the context of the mandating document.

This adds a further layer to the problem of reputation management in that not only does the organisation need to maintain its reputation and legitimacy with outside actors, it must also do so within the ranks of the member states and their own and their own political bureaucracies and contexts. In other words, such a situation could be exploited by various political actors to undermine the work of the organisation in order to score political points within their own countries. An example of this is the use of Twitter by Joseph Torsella, then the US ambassador for UN management and reform. Using the handle @USJoe\_UN he posted many tweets critical of travel policies of the United Nations during budget negotiations in early 2012. In them, he made some assertions and provided his opinion regarding the rules of business travel. A couple of examples include:

*15 Mar Joe Torsella @USJoe\_UN*

*With 3 billion living on less than \$2.50/day and 12.8 million Americans unemployed should even UN interns be flying business class?!?*

*2 Apr Joe Torsella @USJoe\_UN*

*Sad day for UN. It's still permissible for #UN interns to fly biz class and #G77 attempts to tie hands of #UNSG Ban's efforts at #UNReform.*

(Torsella 2012 in Wichowsky 2013)

Wichowsky's view is that these types of tweets provide transparency, saying the "practice of publicizing debates that would otherwise be negotiated quietly behind closed doors or buried deep within legalese can bring an added measure of both relevance and urgency to the process, giving the public a window into what their representatives are actually doing — or not doing " (Wichowsky 2013)

While these points can be argued it is also important to look into the content of the messages themselves, as they may be putting forth assertions which are not backed with evidence.

For example, the organisation's travel policy itself may allow an intern to travel business class, and no evidence is offered either through a link or even by means of an anecdote that this is a policy that is costing the UN significant amounts of money. In fact, no proof is given that this is actually happening or if this is a policy that is rarely used.

Another area that must be considered is that by bringing these negotiations into the public space and using emotion rather than evidence-based logic, Torsella is using social media to further the American position and apply public pressure to the other sides in the negotiations, otherwise portraying the UN as a bloated, overly privileged organisation, which most certainly would have an impact on the perception and reputation of the United Nations if his tweets established the narrative. As discussed in the previous chapter, a determined member state could advance its own interests as it has communication machinery that far eclipses the resources of an organisation. Given that the critic in this case is from the United States, if he chose to engage in a further public campaign, the resources of American media, not to mention the US Department of State, the UN would not be in a position to engage in a counter campaign.

### **Reputation in the International Sector**

The Pew Research Center (2012), as part of its Global Attitudes Project, offered some analysis on the reputation of some International Bodies, like the United Nations, the European Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The research found that, in the case of the United Nations, it enjoys a fairly good reputation inside of

many countries with a majority of people in 13 out of the 21 countries it surveyed having a positive view of the organisation, with Europe having an especially favourable view, with the exceptions being Greece, where 58% of the people surveyed gave an unfavourable view, and Turkey, where only 17% of respondents viewed the organisation positively (Pew Research 2012).

However, the European Union receives most of its favourable ratings from within its member states, with the exception of the Czech Republic, and again, Greece. It is less favourably viewed in Mexico, with only a 4 in 10 favourability rating and China with 33% of respondents responding positively.

NATO's ratings are interesting and perhaps reflect the context in which it was created, that is, the organisation was brought into being by the West as a defence against the Eastern Block during the Cold War. Most NATO Member States rated NATO positively (with the exceptions of Spain, Turkey, and once more, Greece). Given the nature of NATO and why it was established, it is perhaps not surprising that Russians do not have a positive opinion of NATO, with over 52% of that country's respondents holding an unfavourable opinion.

## **Challenges**

There is no further break down of the numbers in the Pew Study to explain why people in these countries viewed these international bodies favourably or unfavourably. Greece in particular gave poor marks to all of the international bodies studied and it would be helpful to these organisations to learn why.

Further, these studies and analyses raise the issue of the global nature of the work being done at various organisations and whether digital diplomacy should entail a similar

global approach or be targeted differently in different areas in order to better raise reputations and enhance legitimacy. In foreign ministries, public diplomacy programmes can be more easily adopted, in that these initiatives depend on an individual country's foreign policy objectives. It is perhaps not as easy to take a similar approach with international organisations, in that, with these entities, political sensitivities and available resources must form part of the equation. It would appear that, for an international organisation to properly use digital diplomacy to enhance its reputation and build its brand, the following must be taken into account:

- the countries where the work is being done; for example, if an organisation is active inside a certain country (for example, the UN's work in Haiti after the earthquake), its reputation will ultimately be enhanced given the public perception of its achievements; however, digital diplomacy efforts must work in concert with the organisation's efforts in order to ensure that there are no inconsistencies in perception between the organisation's work and its reputation;
- remembering the mandate of the organisation and properly communicating it. For example, the OPCW's role in the Syrian chemical weapons crisis consisted in confirming whether chemical weapons had been used or not. If they had been used, assigning responsibility to who actually used them was the role of the United Nations and not of the OPCW. The failure to communicate the fact that the OPCW was purely a technical organisation playing a purely technical role and that it had no adjudication powers has resulted in some criticisms that the OPCW is a toothless organisation, thereby creating reputational issues for the organisation and



- the views of the Member States must be taken into account; an understanding of how Member States view the work of an organisation is crucial. As was demonstrated by the Torsella case, Member States may act unilaterally or express particular views if they feel they are being heard on an issue or if they wish to impose their own view.

Having discussed the reputation and brand aspects to digital diplomacy programs, discussion will now turn to how social media is measured using industry standard metrics and measurement tools in order to quantify the issues discussed in this chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Social Media Measurements**

This chapter discusses commonly used measuring tools by social media professionals. It discusses different usages, such as building influencer networks and social media listening to generate actionable intelligence. It builds on the general description of how social media is measured that is described in Chapter 1: Overview of Digital Diplomacy. Finally, it discusses how these tools work in the context of reputation management.

Understanding how social media is measured is important because the tools are crucial to understand in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. They are also the basic tools used to measure social media. As will be discussed further, while there are measurement tools that can go deep into social media analysis, the basic ones afforded by the platforms give insight into the basic metrics of how social media activities are measured.

This discussion will focus on primarily on Facebook and Twitter's analytical tools with a brief discussion on other platforms that have their own analytical tools, such as YouTube and LinkedIn. But as we will see in the next chapter, Facebook and Twitter are the two social media networks that dominate in digital diplomacy programs.

**Note:** The following analysis is based on the functionality of the platforms' analytics tools as of late May 2015.

### **Twitter Analytics**

Twitter offers basic tools that allow individuals and organisations the ability to track the performance of their tweets. One way for a user to quickly see how well their postings are performing is to click the graph icon underneath the tweet. Once clicked on a user can see the very basic performance information: how many “impressions” (number of times users saw the Tweet on Twitter) and how many times another user engaged with the tweet. An engagement could be anything from a user favouriting, retweeting or responding, as well as to click on any of the hashtags or click on the profile to learn more about the person who posted the tweet. The “view details” link takes the user to the analytics section of Twitter<sup>8</sup> users for a more in-depth overview into how their Twitter activity is performing.

Twitter’s analytics dashboard displays a series of tabs that provide a comprehensive view of their Twitter activities:

- **Home.** This displays basic performance over the previous 28 days, displaying whether activity such as number of followers, amount of tweets, impressions, mentions, and followers has increased or decreased. It also provides a summary of the top performing activity.
- **Tweets.** This tab displays how well individual tweets perform in terms of impressions, engagement and overall engagement rate<sup>9</sup>. This informs how well certain types of tweets perform over time and which content is of most interest to the user’s audience.

---

8 <http://analytics.twitter.com>

9 As discussed in Chapter 1, Twitter defines “engagement rate” as “the number of engagements (clicks, retweets, replies, follows, and favourites”) divided by the total number of impressions” (Twitter, no date)

- **Followers.** This displays a graph of growth of the amount of followers over time, breaks down the followers by gender, interests, location.
- **Twitter Cards.** These are snippets of code that where you “can attach rich photos, videos and media experience to Tweets that drive traffic to your website”. (Twitter(b), no date). The benefit to this is that different pieces of content can augment your message and in addition to increasing traffic to your website.
- **Tools.** This tab provides access to the App Manager and Conversion Tracking that allow Twitter users to more advanced tracking and measurement tools.

Users can select different date ranges to provide historical comparisons and can also export the data in a comma separated values (.csv) file giving the option to import the data into other analytical tools.

Taken together, these tools provide information that, when measuring the performance of social media activities, can provide a great deal of information about what is of interest to the user’s audience. However, for digital diplomacy purposes, this does not cover sentiment, whether the responses are positive or negative, or provide the reasons why certain content is popular. For example, Twitter analytics cannot tell the user of a tweet became popular due to negative controversy surrounding it. From a reputation management point of view, Twitter provides the numbers but not the context.

### **Facebook Insights**

Facebook Insights is the tool where page owners can measure the performance of their activities on Facebook. Like Twitter Analytics, it is part of the platform (meaning, no

third-party software is required) and measures posts using similar metrics as Twitter, although some of the terminology is different.

The Facebook analytics dashboard contains six tabs that offer a page owner a deeper view of the performance of their page:

- **Overview.** This is the default view of Facebook Insights that a page owner sees when they enter the analytics section of their page. The information under this tab provides an overall summary of the previous week's Page Likes (the amount of people who follow the page by "liking it"), Post Reach (how many people see an individual post) and Engagement (the amount of people who either liked, shared or commented on a post) and provides comparison against the previous week's performance.
- **Likes.** The page under this tab provides quantitative information regarding the growth of the page in terms of how many people like it. The graphs provide information on a timeline, with a graphs that:
  - chart the overall growth of the page;
  - tracks "Net Likes", which Facebook defines as "the number of new likes minus the number of unlikes " (Facebook, no date),
  - Tracks where a page's likes come from; whether they are from the page itself, from a post on a page, a page suggestion, one of the page's posts, or "others".
- **Reach.** This is the number of people that Facebook sent a particular post to and that appears on their newsfeed. This is similar to Twitter's "impressions" metric

discussed earlier in this chapter. There are two types of reach: Organic Reach, which is the number of unique people seeing the post naturally, what Facebook calls "unpaid distribution", and "paid reach", which is the number of unique people who saw the post through advertising that the page owner purchased (Facebook 2014).

- **Visits.** This tracks the amount of people who click on any other tabs on the page. For example, the About page, the timeline, a photos tab or other. This tab also tracks where traffic came to the page from outside of Facebook.
- **Posts.** This area tracks the performance of individual posts and breaks it down into different categories: When Your Fans are Online, which compares the performance of postings based on when the page's followers are online. Post Types, describe which types of content are of most interest. Top Posts from Pages You Watch is a tool that allows page owners to benchmark their activity against others. This section provides the ability to perform deep analysis on the performance of each individual posting in terms of how people are interacting with it. It even has features that provide information of the post caused negative action on the page, like hiding the post or unliking the page after view the post.
- **People.** This area provides demographic information about page likers, such as gender, age, location, city and language and breaks this information down by total number of people, the amount of people actually reached, people who are engaged with the page's activity, and the people who use the check-in functionality

All the available analytic information, as with Twitter, can be downloaded into a comma separated values (.csv) or Microsoft Excel (.xls) file for independent analysis.

Taken together, this could provide powerful information that would allow digital diplomacy practitioners to manage issues that affect reputation. For example, a sudden spike in people unliking a page or unfollowing on Twitter could mean that an issue was breaking that has a negative effect on the organisation. The analytical information provided in these tools could determine if a singular post was responsible, what area(s) of the world the issue is being looked at negatively, and what their demographic information is, giving the digital diplomat the information that he or she requires to prepare a proper response.

It provides an opportunity to learn about the audience in order to formulate an outreach strategy that will resonate with them. It also provides the opportunity to identify blind spots, to determine if certain targeted areas or people are not well represented in the audience that engages with the page and make adjustments to the outreach strategy in order to capture their attention.

### **YouTube and LinkedIn**

Both YouTube<sup>10</sup> and LinkedIn have their own analytics tools that help users measure how well their posts are performing. YouTube, being a video sharing service, has an interest in helping their users maximise the effectiveness of their posts, in this case, video messaging. Video is perhaps different than pictures or text as it requires attention and a time commitment to engage with. YouTube appears to have created its analytics platform with this in mind. It has similar features as Facebook and Twitter in terms of

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/analytics>

how many people watched a particular video, and tracks comments and likes and dislikes. But, perhaps more crucially in measuring performance, it measures the average length of time that people spend watching the video. This metric tells the digital diplomacy practitioner what videos are popular, not just in terms of how many users clicked on the link to watch it, but also how many stayed to the end, allowing for an analysis of whether the video was successful in achieving its objectives.

LinkedIn's analytics<sup>11</sup> provide a basic overview of the performance of an organisation's page. Much like Twitter, it provides performance data such as the amount of impressions a posting has and associated engagement metrics such as clicks, interactions and engagement percentages. In terms of measuring the types of users follow and engage with the page, it also provides a breakdown of seniority, industry, company size, function and how many followers are employees of the organisation. This helps determine quality of followers and whether the page is attracting people from its target groups, and could help assess whether the post is receiving attention from the right people in the right industries.

## **Social Listening**

In terms of digital diplomacy, communicating your position and establishing an identity on social media is an important way to be engaged with the publics that are being targeted. But that is only one side of the equation. What others are saying about the organisation is very important in order to properly manage reputational issues using digital diplomacy techniques. This section will discuss social listening as a concept and discuss the idea of sentiment analysis and the challenges in using digital tools to measure it.

---

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.linkedin.com/company/\[companyname\]/analytics](https://www.linkedin.com/company/[companyname]/analytics)



As a definition, social listening can be referred to as "the process of identifying and assessing what is being said about a company, individual, product or brand on the Internet." (TechTarget, no date). There are many platforms that help organisations perform social listening exercises, such as Hootsuite, Simply Measured, Crimson Hexagon, Social Bakers, and Brandwatch, among others. Facebook and Twitter have some basic functionality that allows listening, such as Twitter lists and Pages You Watch, but the tools designed for social listening provide an overview of many different social media platforms in one area, which helps provide a macro view of activity around an issue or organisation and break it down into different measurable components. The organisation would create lists of topics and keywords that would be monitored by the tool. At the OPCW, words and phrases that are monitored include the organisation's name and acronym, the name of the Director-General, Ahmet Üzümcü, phrases such as "chemical weapons" and "Chemical Weapons Convention". Further keywords are built around boolean operators such as "chemical weapons AND Syria", and, for a time, "OPCW AND Nobel Peace Prize". This allowed monitoring of discussion directly related to the work of the organisation as well the notable events that it was involved and hear what the conversation was, both good and bad.

When analysing these conversations, one such component that emerges is the idea of building an "influencer network". This can be done to determine who organisation's biggest supporters are as well as its biggest detractors. It is important to not only find these influencers, but also identify the platforms they use. Schweidel and Moe (2014) found that when assessing reputation about a brand, the "venue" i.e. platform is just as important as the message itself, noting that they found a "significant variation" in sentiment across platforms (Schweidel and Moe 2014, p. 389).

This raises the point that social listening tools are important for reputation management because they help an organisation monitor the conversation about them and their area of mandate on platforms that organisations do not have a presence on. This does raise the tricky issue of analysing sentiment using these tools because, although one can glean a huge amount of information from social listening, there are drawbacks when analysing sentiment.

### **Sentiment Analysis**

Brandwatch, one of the social media listening company's mentioned earlier in this chapter, defines sentiment analysis as the "process of determining the emotional tone behind a series of words, used to gain an understanding of the attitudes, opinions and emotions expressed within an online mention" (Bannister, 2015).

What an online mention could be is the use of the brand name, or if they are tagged (using the @ mention in Twitter, for example) and then the message is analysed in terms of content. It is important in that sentiment has a direct impact on reputation; if your organisation is being tweeted about in a negative tone, depending on the influence of the person, it could have an impact on the reputation of the organisation.

Issues start to arise when analysis on large datasets reveals some false results, both in terms of positive and negative remarks. Brnd.me (no date) offers an analysis on this, identifying five factors that make social media sentiment analysis problematic. Sarcasm is difficult to detect, for example. Further, context is important as one word can have a different connotation based on how the word is used, ex. "my internet provider does a great job in stealing money from me". Another factor they note is ambiguity, where a

statement is made that clearly expresses a sentiment but does not contain any words that convey emotion, such as "my browser uses a lot of memory".

Another factor is what they call "comparatives", writing that a message like "Coke is better than Pepsi" clearly has different meanings based on which brand you are comparing. However, Brnd.me suggests that listening tools are not smart enough to pick sides based on the context and given the positive emotional tone of the message, it would tag the message as positive.

The last identified short coming is regional variations. They example they give is the word "sick" which has different meanings compared to the context. For example, using regional slang, a message might say "That song is sick", which is a positive statement. However, the system will tag the word "sick" as negative.

The OPCW has seen evidence of this in sentiment analysis. The words "chemical weapons" has resulted in invariably negative ratings on social listening platforms, even when the messages are positive. Knowing this, human intervention is a crucial component of sentiment analysis, in order to form an accurate picture of online sentiment of an organisation.

Having an idea of the analytical landscape that the digital world lives in is important to properly analyse the way that digital diplomacy is performed and measured at international organisations. Discussion will now turn to this analysis, with an investigation of a number of international organisations who perform digital diplomacy.

## **Chapter 5 – Digital Diplomacy at International Organisations: Findings, Analysis, and Discussion**

### **Introduction**

This chapter examines how social media is being implemented at international organisations, and is based on a survey that was developed, sent out, and its results interpreted. In addition, an analysis of what platforms and what metrics digital diplomacy makes use of to examine engagement with audiences and to measure performance is carried out. Finally, this chapter contains a discussion as to how digital diplomacy efforts are measured and the relationship between social media activity and organisational reputational and branding issues.

Previous chapters raised the issue of the context in which digital diplomacy practitioners at international organisations work and described the practical aspects of their work.

This chapter focuses on how it is implemented in terms of branding and reputation management. This glimpse is based around both a survey sent to social media practitioners at various international organisations around the world and follow-up case studies with individuals from three different organisations.

### **Methodology**

A survey (see Annex A for a list of the questions) was developed on eSurv<sup>12</sup>, a digital survey tool, and sent to members of the United Nations Social Media network, a network of practitioners working in social media in the international sector, which extends beyond the United Nations to include members who work at organisations that are not a UN agency. Targeted e-mails to other individuals working in the sector (and known to the author) were sent; DiploFoundation, an NGO active in digital diplomacy, shared the invitation to participate in the survey through its social networks (including its Twitter accounts @DiplomacyEdu, @ediplomat and @igcbp). Finally, interviews were conducted with individuals who completed the survey and volunteered for a follow-up discussion on their answers.

The survey questions were divided into four general sections: The first was a series of questions designed to identify the organisations, what platforms they were using and the types of content being produced. The second section contained questions regarding social media governance and to determine the processes that each organisation used in their preparations to use social media. The third section contained questions to understand what types of social media measurements they use and, finally, a section containing questions related to the organisations' perception of themselves and if they manage digital diplomacy in concert with a brand identity.

## **Results**

In all, 12 responses were gathered from digital diplomacy specialists working in different international organisations. With the exception of the case studies, names of organisations are not being identified due to the assurances that their responses will be kept in confidence.

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://eSurv.org?u=digidip>

While the case studies will delve into the specifics of how social media has been used for digital diplomacy purposes, the responses paint a fairly consistent picture of how different organisations use social media to conduct digital diplomacy, despite the variances in mandates of respondents' organisations. The results will be broken down into three areas: entry into social media and analysis of the various platforms; how social media is governed and measured; and an analysis of how brand identity and reputation are managed through social media channels.

### **Entry into Social Media**

Entry into social media began for the respondents as early as 2006, with UNHCR's @refugees account. A case study will be described later in this chapter on UNHCR to explain in detail how it came to be an early adopter of the use of social media. Most other organisations began their social media activities between 2008 and 2011 (with one beginning as recently as 2014); in addition, one organisation is just in the process of launching its social media programme late in 2015.

As far as platforms that responding organisations use, as discussed in Chapter One's overview of digital diplomacy, Facebook and Twitter are by far the most dominant, with 10 out of the 12 reporting that they have a Facebook presence and all of them indicating that they are on Twitter. Nine out of 12 respondents indicated that they have a YouTube channel.

Other platforms that respondents indicated that they use include LinkedIn (3), Flickr (2), and Pinterest and SlideShare (1). One respondent indicated that the organisation, depending on their target audience and their objectives in using each platform, also use

regional and national social media channels; an example given was Sina Weibo<sup>13</sup>, a microblogging platform similar to Twitter that is popular in China.

The most common types of postings are those that mention awareness of particular issues (11) and the promotion of activities of the organisation's leadership (10), followed by outreach to targeted groups and interaction with the media (both receiving 7 responses). Outreach to diaspora communities was indicated by two organisations.

One respondent, an organisation that works on humanitarian issues, indicated that their organisation also produces postings that are meant to engage and dialogue through live chats, replies, and favourites. Another organisation, who is mandated in justice-related issues, reported that they produce only one-way postings that are not meant to engage, but simply to disseminate information.

On the activities of their senior management, seven respondents indicated that their senior management were engaged on social media, while the other five do not. What is interesting is that of those seven, five organisations reported that the individual staff members produce their own postings; two others report that their communications team produces the postings and one organisation, which is involved in disarmament issues, indicated that the a "social media intern" produced the postings. It is unclear of what guidance the intern receives when being put in charge of postings, given that the organisation indicates no decision tree on approving messages, which usually lists possible consequences, costs, and outcome exists—an interesting fact, in that most other organisations make use of some kind of decision tree when posts are being approved. In most organisations, approval is handled by the communications team, but in other organisations, the entire spectrum of staff members might deal with social

---

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.weibo.com>

media issues, where individuals that have media training are empowered to post their own messages, to the other extreme where an organisation's postings are approved by the highest ranking individual of the organisation.

Engagement activity appears to be spread out over the spectrum as well. Nine respondents answered this question, and two indicated that they do not engage on social media at all. One indicated that the only thing their organisation focuses on is getting messages out. One respondent indicated that their interactions are mostly related to fulfilling document requests. Both organisations who answered negatively are involved in justice issues, which may indicate a predisposition to risk aversion. Others engage in more robust activities, such as live chats with senior management and outreach with civil society. Others report that they engage with the media, students, and other UN agencies.

As for activities with member states, of the 10 organisations that responded to this question, five indicated that they either do not engage with them or do very little. Only three indicated any kind of partnership with member states, and one of those three reported that it engages with a member state only when the organisation are "engaged in a particular activity." As will be discussed later in the chapter, such responses could indicate that tensions exist between member states and the organisation (discussed in Chapter 2).

The level of engagement and activity could also be driven by the way social media is governed and measured, discussed below.

## **Social Media Governance and Measurement**



Social media governance is important to understand in its context. Policies that provide the guidelines for action, meaning what kind of postings are acceptable, who is responsible for making them, and how to react to negative online behaviour reflect the relationship between the organisation and its member states. For example, a discussion could theoretically take place among an organisation's senior management on how the member states would react to the use of social media, what kinds of postings the member states would tolerate, and so on. But in reviewing the responses from the organisations that completed the survey, it is clear that there are other dynamics as well that affect the implementation of social media.

In terms of the implementation of a social media programme, it is perhaps not surprising that 10 respondents reported needing senior management approval to engage in this activity. Two respondents did not require consent (one of these two being UN Women, and this aspect will be discussed in the case study of their social media programme presented later in this chapter), and one organisation did not respond. Significantly, there was no correlation between the need to obtain senior management approval and the organisation's undertaking of an undergoing a formal legal or risk assessment, which may indicate that social media was implemented in an informal manner. Further analysis is needed to determine the approval chains involved and exactly what information that senior management acted on in approving the social media programmes.

Only four respondents indicated whether a formal risk assessment was performed for the organisation and given that there are three respondents who did not know or could not answer the question, it is difficult to come to a conclusion of the impact of a risk assessment on the implementation of social media.

It is more surprising that legal assessments were not performed at most organisations that responded. Legal issues can affect the organisation, such as the potential for confidential information to be inadvertently posted or the consequences of a media incident that may arise out of being active on social media and an organisation should need to know how to deal with these issues should they arise. One reason that there may not have had legal assessments, as will be explained in the case studies, is that social media was implemented by managers who had influence early on, particularly before the use of social media became a wider phenomenon. Another is that the use of social media was undertaken as part of a broader communications plan in the establishment of an agency.

An outcome of the path that each organisation took to implement social media is that all organisations have established written guidelines governing its use. The organisation that is planning for a late 2015 launch has indicated that it has not articulated guidelines, but plans to implement them in the future. Social media guidelines are an important aspect to manage reputation and branding at an organisation. Guidelines spell out how an organisation will respond to both internal and external issues and provide information as to how it will deal with issues that could affect its image. If an organisation deals with criticism in a way that does not resonate with its audience, then that could have an impact on its reputation. The same could occur in regard to how an organisation responds to bullying or abusive behaviour on its social media accounts. If negative comments are allowed to fester or are dealt with effectively, this could cause damage to the organisation and render it unable to effectively communicate. The discussion will now turn to social media measurement and how social media affects reputation from the point of view of various international organisations.

## Social Media Measurement and Reputation Management

Social media measurement and reputation are closely intertwined because it is difficult to determine how well an organisation's efforts are working until they are measured. Reputation becomes important when measurements are taking place, because the issues that have been identified as affecting perception and legitimacy can be magnified when social media is being used. This is due to the intimate nature of social media communications (discussed in Chapter 1), which reduces the distance between an individual and an organisation.

In terms of metrics that international organisations apply when looking at the efficacy of their communications, most of the respondents indicated that they use the most common ones: 12 organisations indicated that they track social media using analytics tools to measure reach (how many people saw the posting) and 11 measure the engagement rate (how many people interacted with) in relation to a particular post. Eight respondents indicated that they track clicks on the links in their postings. Interestingly, one respondent reported that his/her organisation measures the "quality" of followers through, for example, Klout<sup>14</sup> scores and if the followers are part of a target group. This will go in to the discussion on influencer networks.

Of the eight respondents to the question on whether they track users and create influencer networks, which are the most influential people in their area of expertise, four indicated that they do not. One organisation active in anti-poverty issues indicated that they track users' "sometimes" and another organisation, active in gender issues, noted that they "track as best as possible" and that they create Twitter lists with users they find

---

<sup>14</sup> Klout ([www.klout.com](http://www.klout.com)) is a tool that measures the "influence" of a person or organisation's social media activity. A Klout score is a number from between 1 and 100, which indicates the level of influence.

influential. Of the respondents that reported a more complete influencer programme, one indicated that they use “social metrics” for the institutional account and Klout for individual accounts; another indicated that they use lists in Hootsuite filtered by keywords and the Klout score. Social media listening is an aspect that appears to be overlooked. It is very easy for an organisation to create and to push messages out, but finding ways to identify influential people or institutions to engage with on social media appears not to be a high priority, or there may resource issues that prevent organisations from being more fully engaged in the listening aspect of social media.

This creates somewhat of a disconnect between how respondents view their organisation in terms of branding, with 10 of the 13 respondents indicating that their organisation has a brand identity of its own, with how it may actually be perceived by the outside world. Such a conclusion may be informed by the fact that, out of 11 organisations that answered whether they had formal branding guidelines, eight indicated that their organisations had such guidance, which was followed, and four indicated that their organisation did not have such instructions. But aside from having formal guidelines, which is very much an internal tool that keeps a consistent presentation to how information and other products are produced, it is unclear how their perceptions of having a brand identity is affected by outside perceptions. The survey totals indicate only one of the 12 respondents carry out any kind of sentiment analysis, and eight indicate that they do not. It is agreed that sentiment analysis is difficult to undertake in some ways (in regard to such issues as were discussed in the previous chapter); the reason for this, as one respondent indicated, was that such an analysis did not work for their agency because the issues they work on are seen as inherently negative when they are measure in terms of sentiment analysis, and so the efficacy

social media programmes are difficult to measure in any meaningful way in such contexts. That said, without a strong analysis being carried out on the sentiment towards the organisation and without an identification of who the influential people are in the sector within which an organisation is working, it makes it very difficult to have an genuine idea of how an organisation is perceived and if there are any reputational issues that need to be addressed.

When discussing the strengths and weaknesses of their organisation as a brand, one respondent indicated that their organisation's acronym was difficult for outsiders to remember; one spoke about the challenges of the United Nations as a whole, saying that, historically speaking, they believe that the UN is perceived very negatively. One respondent, who is involved in humanitarian issues, wrote about the challenges of building up social media efforts in order to solidify the organisation's brand, because much of what it does is very abstract and technical. Visibility is an issue of concern, with the respondent reporting the lack of a media strategy on the part of an organisation, which was only vaguely responsive to media requests. This may be because the organisation, which does not wish to be identified in this study, believes its reputation is not important in the broader world because the leadership in the organisation views its work as taking place at the state level, and so a public information component is of little importance. This is consistent with the point made in Chapter 2, which indicated that one of the challenges to digital diplomacy is that the work in most international organisations is done at the governmental level. Whether this will change in the future is unclear, but such thinking is an indication of an old-fashioned view of diplomacy; given this rather outdated approach, it is unknown how the organisation would cope with, for example, a

public information campaign waged against it from a very organised non-governmental organisation (NGO) or even a dissatisfied member state.

Collectively, the analysis indicates different levels of engagement with groups; from a macro point of view, it appears that digital diplomacy activities take place at the information dissemination level, and so the social listening component is not as well developed. The discussion will now turn to three case studies that will summarise the use of social media in digital diplomacy activities.

### **Case Study: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCR)**

A telephone interview was held on 27 May 2015 with Sybella Wilkes, a senior communications officer at the UNHCR, a United Nations agency that has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The mandate of the UNHCR is to “lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide” (UNHCR, no date).

Wilkes explained that, when the UNHCR began enhancing its social media presence, staff reached out to Twitter early on in 2006 and was granted privileged status. The Twitter handle @refugees was one of the recommended accounts, which explains its quick growth in the early years. Since then, their social media presence expanded exponentially, with institutional accounts on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, Instagram, Google Plus, and Scribd. These institutional accounts are in addition to social media accounts by field offices and individuals. Staff members in particular are empowered to post on social media and undergo media training to do so effectively. Wilkes explained that the guidance that staff members receive is that should not say anything on Twitter that they would not say on live television.

The UNHCR website bears all of the above out, particularly in the organisation's media contact section. Along with traditional media contact information, each officer has his or her own Twitter handle. A content analysis of some of these Twitter accounts reveals some individuality in the way that each communications officer uses Twitter. Melissa Fleming, the agency's Chief Communications and Spokesperson has a strong Twitter presence using the handle @melissarfleming and takes an almost journalistic approach, reporting on issues and raising awareness of UNHCR's issues, with more individual tweets than retweets. Adrian Edwards (@AdrianEdwards), Head of News & Chief Spokesperson, takes a similar approach. In contrast, Ariane Rummery (@arianerummery) appears to prefer disseminating information, with the majority of her Tweets being re-tweets of media stories and other UHCR twitter feeds.

One of the things that may guide and drive staff member engagement is the knowledge that the organisation has formulated guidelines on general social media use, staff participation, crisis communications, and what should be done if negative behaviour such as abusive or harassing postings arises. It is important that staff members have guidelines to which they can refer when they are making use of social media.

The conclusion can be drawn that the organisation makes use of main organisational accounts for different purposes. A large part of the organisation's digital diplomacy involves the telling of stories of those who are forcibly displaced, which is done through a strong photo component with presences on three photography-oriented platforms: Flickr, Pinterest, and Instagram. Scribd is used to disseminate publications, which, in the case of the UNHCR, is primarily its annual global trends report.

Wilkes explained that all of these platforms are necessary because they are used to communicate breaking news about a particular group's plight, and it is extremely important for them to bring the story to as large an audience as possible and as quickly as possible; in that context, social media drives the views of the stories that they are breaking. So, for UNHCR, it is a reputational risk for them if they were *not* engaged using all the avenues available to them.

UNHCR is an organisation that has incorporated social media into its activities in a meaningful way. The fact that it recognises that social media is a critical tool that enables it to properly implement its mandate and that staff are empowered to use it means that its work becomes more visible, a fact that has a positive impact on its reputation.

### **Case Study: United Nations Women (UNW)**

UN Women is the United Nations' newest agency, having been established by the UN General Assembly in 2010. It is a consolidation of four other parts of the United Nations, which focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment. Its mandate is to be the "United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women". (UN Women, no date). A telephone interview was held on 1 June 2015 with Ms Beatrice Frey, the social media officer at UN Women.

Frey indicated that the social media channels were created in 2008 before the organisation was officially established and, because no one outside their group really knew what they were working on, they launched and built the social media presence independently and without senior management approval. She admits that this would not be the case if they were to start work today.



UN Women now has over 50 different accounts worldwide across all platforms. Their website shows institutional accounts for Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, LinkedIn, YouTube Flickr, and Instagram. The content on these accounts is consistent among platforms, showing a singular focus on the issues surrounding gender. UNW has a small staff with the social media officer overseeing a part-time consultant and one intern. However, despite the limited resources available for social media, the organisation still manages to maintain control over the whole social media programme. For example, with many national and regional accounts being maintained by focal points in the field, UN Women is careful to maintain quality control over the account.

When a colleague is interested in creating a social media account, she or he has to fill out a template for a social media plan, which is then reviewed by the social media officer. If it is determined that there is enough capacity to properly maintain the account, then the social media officer creates it. In fact, the social media officer has access to all the accounts worldwide, including the one maintained by Phumzile Mlambo, UN Women's executive director, who has a Twitter account under the handle @phumzileunwomen. This high-level access allows the social media department to maintain control over the entire programme and, to date, there have been no incidents that required escalation to senior management.

One issue that Frey identified as problematical is that UNW has a difficult time gauging how the organisation is perceived, because sentiment analysis tools do not properly capture the tone of the messaging, noting that terms like "violence against women" invariably are tagged as negative, even if the message was positive in tone.

UN Women takes a bit more of a top-down approach than UNHCR does, with the headquarters office requiring access to all accounts. This is required under their guidelines. It is a more considered approach, one that may be appropriate to this organisation, given that a quick, fully committed social media plan is not as necessary as to UNW's mandate as it is for the UNHCR's.

### **Case Study: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has a mandate to “help achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion” (UNDP, no date). It works in 170 countries and territories to “develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results” (UNDP, no date). As part of this work, the UNDP has developed a social media programme that works in alignment with the strategic goals of the organisation. A telephone interview was conducted 8 June 2015 with Silke Von Brockhausen, the social media lead for UNDP.

Social media at UNDP was established in late 2009 by an intern who created the accounts. Von Brockhausen assumed control of the organisation's social media in early 2010. Launching the programme did not require senior management approval, but new accounts require permission from the Director of Communications. The organisation currently has active accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and Instagram.

The UNDP has communications offices in 120 of the 170 countries it works in. If an office wishes to create a social media account, it must complete a Governance Assessment Form, where those involved answer questions of how they will maintain the accounts, and verify that they have read the guidelines for commenting, for dealing with

comments, and for general postings. When an office commences its social media activities, UNDP Headquarters trains them and monitors activity to ensure the objectives are being met and are in compliance with the organisation's social media policies.

As far as interaction with the member states, Ms Von Brockhausen noted that as an organisation composed of member states, the UNDP look to the member states to provide guidance. In many cases, the UNDP partners with them on the issues. However, the organisation is careful to do not violate guidelines, and perhaps more crucially, do not post anything that provides a contradictory standpoint to the message that the organisation wishes to promulgate. But she noted that there have never been any complaints from any outside governments.

From a reputation point of view, the UNDP does not really track how they are perceived. This is due to a number of reasons: one is that, like UN Women and other organisations, it does not find that sentiment analysis tools generate accurate results, so the organisation decided to not engage in that kind of analysis. Another reason was that the UNDP does not have comparable data to see how it was perceived before social media was used. A final reason is that the UNDP has changed its strategy; its target audience has changed as well, so it is operating from a new baseline.

The UNDP has a well-developed digital media strategy, and it seems that a sufficient number of policies are in place to ensure that relations with member states remain co-operative and provide enough guidance to country offices on how to properly communicate. To operate communications in 120 countries no doubt requires different strategies depending on the context, so by ensuring that a central authority exists that

exerts authority over social media is necessary to ensure that digital diplomacy activities stay in line with organisational objectives.

## **Discussion**

Based on the respondents' answers, it can be said that digital diplomacy at international organisations still appears to be a work in progress in terms of how well the organisations are able to measure reputational credibility and legitimacy. One issue that needs further discussion is the point that UNDP made about not having comparable data to measure against in terms of perception. In terms of media strategy, social media is still fairly new compared to traditional media.

The new ways of communicating appear to be based more on the information dissemination aspect of public information than on the listening component. This is perhaps not surprising. It is far easier to post a message about yourself or your organisation than it is to devise ways to properly communicate to new audiences in ways that external parties will respond to.

A digital diplomacy strategy should ideally compose a two-way communication model. Some organisations have made attempts to track and identify influential users, but this kind of analysis seems to be something that seems to be done in organisations with more established digital diplomacy strategies, like UNDP and UN Women. It could be that the other organisations do not due to the resources available to them, or like the unnamed international organisation, they do not have a media strategy that allows for engagement. Social media for some organisations is simply an information dissemination tool. Using social media simply as a vehicle for disseminating information can be effective (depending on how the message is created), the owners of a social

media programme may find it in their interests to track conversations anyway so that it can identify issues that would need to be addressed in another medium, if necessary.

One dimension that carries the most risk for an international organisation is the use of social media in regional or national offices. These offices can, unfortunately, stray “off script” and create postings that are contrary to the messages issued by the organisation’s central office itself; in short, these offices can either ignore or create their own messaging instead. This could create a situation where differing and contradictory messages from an organisation, thus creating difficulties with the issue of legitimacy. But the reverse could be true as well. If an organisation creates a message that does not resonate with a country or region and is contrary to the local context, then the regional office should work to manage that. In light of possible difficulties arising, guidelines, monitoring, and training can and should play a large role. It is not surprising that all organisations that responded that have active social media accounts have drafted at least general guidelines, and the organisation mentioned previously that is due to launch its Twitter feed later indicated that it is planning to implement guidelines in the future. It may seem obvious, but formulating guidelines that are followed up by monitoring is a strong way to keep offices that are far away from headquarters be part of the organisation’s brand and ensure that control is asserted over messaging.

In terms of brand awareness, as indicated previously in this chapter, there may be a “disconnect” between the perception of the organisation from those inside the organisation and those outside of it. Chapter 3 discusses reputation management in the public sector; it appears that, based on some responses, some organisations face issues surrounding how they are perceived. For example, responses indicated that the weaknesses of organisations’ brands involved such things as having a difficult-to -

remember logo; another is that they believe that the UN as a whole has a bad reputation, while others mentioned their small size and cannot compete with bigger organisations in terms of brand exposure. One of the reasons could be, as indicated in Chapter 2 on international organisations, the work of an organisation at its core, takes place at the governmental level. Digital diplomacy offers a way for an organisation to communicate directly with people at the individual level, but the work is carried out between the member state and the organisation.

Finally, with many respondents indicating that they undertake little or no sentiment analysis and that there is little done in terms of monitoring in most organisations, the risk could be there if there are issues affecting them that they would be unaware of. This would grow in importance if more individuals at international organisations start engaging on social media under their own names. It is interesting that, in many organisations, high-level leadership at least tweet and, in most cases, the respondents indicate that the leaders make their tweets themselves. This may speak to the fact that they receive media training; however, leadership individuals are also those who are perhaps most keenly aware of the issues and political sensitivities involved and are in a better position to comment without creating an incident.

As a starting point of what could be a larger discussion on digital diplomacy as it is practised in international organisations, this survey paints a picture of social media programmes that are implemented differently in some ways, but in other ways share a commonality in terms of tools, sensitivity to their mandates and to the member states; the indication that many of them do not engage with member states may indicate the presence of a silo mentality or a wariness in the terms of social medial usage. This

speaks to areas that are outside the scope of this dissertation. The discussion will now turn to conclusions and areas of future research.

## Conclusion

This chapter summarises the research findings and present recommendations for enhancement or implementation of reputational measurement tools. Finally, it proposes areas for further research.

## Summary and conclusions

Digital Diplomacy, as defined for this discussion in Chapter 1, is the use of social media for diplomatic purposes. For international organisations, it involves the use of social media in terms of public information and how the organisation gets its message out about the work it is mandated to do.

- **Global Reach, Local Contexts**

The first discussion on the different tools used in the digital diplomacy toolkit and how they were used by people around the world (Chapter 1) focused on the **various local contexts that an international organisation must be mindful of** when digital diplomacy practitioners create global campaigns: One is that over **4.2 billion people still do not have access to the internet, making digital diplomacy an inappropriate avenue to reach them**. The other is that **countries regulate the internet differently** and international organisations must be mindful of using platforms that may not be available inside some member states.



- **Dominant social media platforms among International Organisations**

The platforms that respondents in the survey in Chapter 5 verified their use of **the dominant platforms of Facebook and Twitter, with almost all organisations using Facebook and all using Twitter**. Other platforms were used but the ones who branched out into other platforms usually had more resources to do so, such as the case study for UNHCR, which uses social media as a vital component in getting the word out about the plight of groups that they were trying to help.

- **Characteristics of public information offices**

In the context of how an international organisation operates, Chapter 2 discussed the nature of the relationship between the member state and the organisation, and how member states guide the mandate of and assess its work through its accountability structures. In terms of how it relates to digital diplomacy, the point was raised that **public information offices tend to be small and have editorial restrictions placed on them**. Further, it was noted that some member states have their own public information programmes with resources that an international organisation cannot compete with (Cory 1953, p.220) and indeed budgets related to public information have decreased in the decades since this study from 12% of the annual budget, as reported by Cory (1953, p.220), to 3.4% in the 2015-2015 biennium budget (UN, A/68/6 (Introduction)\*). This could provide for more opportunities for digital diplomacy activities, as the major platforms are free to use at the basic level. Content development of course, still costs money, but the basic programmes for digital can be created for very little effort. We saw this for example, in how UN Women were able to create its social media programme without any support from its senior management.

- **Branding and Reputation Management**

Branding and reputation management was discussed in Chapter 3 in the context of the public sector and international organisations. Most of the literature found on this topic surrounded concerned the private sector. Discussion of the **difficulties in creating a brand image in the private sector were that that public institutions are mandated by governments and so the function will exist as long as deemed necessary**, which means that there may not need to be reputation management at that level, and indeed it could even not work as well as hoped as an institution's mandate may not be popular with citizens but is necessary for the proper function of government, like for example, tax authorities (Wæraas 2008, p.213). It was further found that a further challenge is **that public institutions are not independent actors and do not have the autonomy necessary to manage its own reputation** (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot 2012. p.4).

Despite the assertion by Ritttberger, Zandle and Kruck that international organisations can act as political actors (2012, p. 71) although often acting at “the bidding of their most power member states” (2012, p. 5), it raises the issue that go to how international organisations conduct themselves, and the kind of autonomy they would need to have legitimacy as an organisation. In terms of conducting digital diplomacy, this need for this kind of legitimacy goes right to the heart of the question of whether an organisation can create its own voice and engage with public audiences with the kind of authority that helps maintain their credibility, particularly in the face of possible opposition of member states with a strong communications mechanism at their disposal. As we saw with the Tweets by American Ambassador Joseph Torsella, a member state is free to say what it wants on issues affecting the organisation.

- **How social media is measured**

Discussion turned to how social media is measured on the most popular platforms (Twitter and Facebook), and Chapter 4 provided a study on the difficulties on measuring reputation, sentiment and perception of an organisation when using these tools for digital diplomacy purposes. The problems with sentiment analysis in particular, with the difficulties **of software that measure sentiment not being able to understand a social media posting in its proper context and not being able to detect things like sarcasm** were confirmed by the organisations that responded to the survey. Very little is done on sentiment analysis, for many of the organisations as postings are not analysed correctly, with for example, UN Women indicating that messages surrounding violence against women are categorised as negative even if the message was not to be perceived that way.

- **Social media and reputation at International Organisations**

In Chapter 5's discussion of the results of the survey sent to the UN Social Media Network and the follow up case studies, it found that **many organisations do not engage in issues that surround reputation and brand management**, despite most organisations indicating that they have a strong brand identity. One reason that emerged from this is that **there is no historical data on how their organisation was perceived** in order to provide a baseline for comparison. Further, as UNDP indicated, it recently changed the target audiences for social media so it is working from a new baseline. Another example with UN Women, being the UN's newest agency it is still finding its identity and lacks the same kind of brand profile as, for example, UNICEF.

- **Challenges**

The challenges in this are threefold:

(a) **The nature of the organisation's work is with governments.** As an international organisation is comprised of and accountable to its member states, the priority relationship is between the member state and the secretariat that does the work. Digital diplomacy, as an extension of public diplomacy, creates a new direct relationship with individuals globally. It reduces the distance between the individual and the organisation where the member state may not be part of the conversation but could insert themselves into it if they wish to take their position public. From the survey responses, it appears that in many digital diplomacy programmes, there is little interaction with the member state in terms of collaboration on engagement activities. This may point to a resource issue or siloed communications. Further research would need to be conducted that explores this area further.

(b) **Issues surrounding branding and reputation management appear to have manifested.** As indicated in Chapter 3 on branding and reputation management, it is difficult to properly create a brand image for the public sector, due to the nature of its work. However, some organisations, like the ICC, for example, rely on its image and perception in an effort to maintain its legitimacy as a world court. But as was indicated, the larger issues seem to be that social media is still a new technology compared to other media and it may be too early to determine whether social media is having an effect on the reputation of an organisation.

(c) **There are difficulties in the management of reputation and sentiment.** While the problems inherent with sentiment analysis are not unique to international organisations, they do present challenges to the organisation if they wish to track how well they or the issues they work on are perceived. Some organisations use Twitter and Hootsuite lists for example to track keywords and influential users but in most cases it appears very

basic. Social media listening appears to be less of a priority than information dissemination for some organisations.

These challenges lead to the question of future areas of research that may provide fruitful insight into the digital diplomacy initiatives at International Organisations.

### **Future areas of research**

This dissertation concentrated on a very small part of the social media umbrella. Its use in the broader social media world in the context of diplomacy and the work of an international organisation has many different dimensions that would be of benefit for future research.

One area is the use of social media in a humanitarian context. Social media has been part of humanitarian response for several years. Yates and Pacquette (2010) have for example discussed how it was used in Haiti in the wake of the 2010 earthquake. It has been implemented at organisations such as the World Food Programme (WFP) with its ICT Humanitarian Emergency Platform (World Food Programme, no date) and initiatives like the UNHCR's mobile app for Syrian Refugees that gives them information about how to receive critical services from 60 humanitarian organisations that have locations in 420 places across Jordan (Digital Humanitarian Network, 2014). A study that researches how programs like these can be effectively mainstreamed into digital diplomacy initiatives may help identify and close any gaps that may exist.

Crisis communications is another area that new research could provide helpful insights. Related to humanitarian initiatives like the ones previously mentioned, research into how social media can be used in crisis communications, with an examination of the practices

of organisations that currently use social media for this purpose could help establish best practices.

Building on the Twiplomacy study, a content analysis on the types of postings created by organisations and staff members and measured against what people who engage with International Organizations find important and relevant to engage in could help in creating more effective digital diplomacy campaigns. Further a meta-analysis that explores the characteristics of those who follow and interact with international organisations would provide a more comprehensive picture of the broader international community and perhaps reveal new ways to engage with them and strengthen digital diplomacy initiatives.

It is clear from the literature that reputation management in the international sector is a rich area for research. A study into how reputation is managed in the broader sense and relate it to digital activities could provide a rounder view of how reputation and legitimacy is managed at the international level.

Finally, research into how social media is affecting diplomatic negotiations, whether during internal battles, such as the cited case of Ambassador Torsella's public tweeting during financial negotiations at the United Nations, or external ones, like if social media is being used by member states or international organizations as a form of intelligence gathering and being used as evidence during negotiations, may point to new ways that social media is being used for diplomatic purposes not relayed to public information.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that the digital landscape is changing in international organisations. In the past five years, most international organisations have developed at least some social media

presence, and this will only continue to grow. With this, challenges remain for organisations to properly measure the effectiveness of their digital diplomacy activities, both in the messages they are sending out and the conversation about them that appear on various social media platforms. Listening is an important aspect that appears to be overlooked in many organisations, which creates risk when these issues are not properly managed.

Changes will come and the international sector will continue to adapt, with digital diplomacy being an important tool to maintain visibility; ideally, tools will be developed that will help organisations manage their issues surrounding reputation and perception.

## References

- Bannister, K. (2015) Understanding Sentiment Analysis: What It Is & Why It's Used. *Brandwatch.com*. Available at: <https://www.brandwatch.com/2015/01/understanding-sentiment-analysis/> [accessed 20 June 2015]
- Barnett, M., Jermier, J. and Lafferty, B. (2006) Corporate reputation: The definitional landscape. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 9(1), pp: 26–38.
- Bjola, C and Holmes M (2015) Digital Diplomacy. In Bjola, C and Holmes M [eds] *Digital Diplomacy Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge. pp: 71-88.
- Bjola, C and Jiang L (2015) Social Media and Public Diplomacy; a comparative analysis of the digital diplomatic strategies of the EU, US and Japan in China. In Bjola, C and Holmes M [eds] *Digital Diplomacy Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge. Introductory page.
- Boehmer, C and Nordstrom, T. (2008) Intergovernmental Organization Memberships: Examining Political Community and the Attributes of International Organizations. *International Interactions* 34(3) pp. 282 – 309.
- Bnrnd.me (no date) *Sentiment Analysis: Why It's Never 100% Accurate* Available at: <http://bnrd.me/sentiment-analysis-never-accurate/> [accessed 20 June 2015]
- Bronk, C. (2010). Diplomacy Rebooted: Making Digital Statecraft a Reality. *Foreign Service Journal* 87(3): 43-47.
- Burson-Marsteller (2013) How do International Organisations Tweet in 2013? *Twiplomacy* Available at: <http://twiplomacy.com/blog/how-do-international-organisations-tweet/> [accessed 21 June 2015]
- Burson-Marsteller (2015) How do International Organisations Tweet in 2015? *Twiplomacy* Available at: <http://twiplomacy.com/blog/how-do-international-organisations-tweet-2015/> [accessed 21 June 2015]
- Burson-Marsteller (2015a) UNICEF. *Twiplomacy*. Available at: <http://twiplomacy.com/organisation/unicef/> [accessed 21 June 2015]
- Burson-Marsteller (2015b) UN. *Twiplomacy*. Available at: <http://twiplomacy.com/organisation/un/> [accessed 21 June 2015]
- Cabinet Office (2015) FCO's actions in response to the Government Digital Strategy. *Gov.uk*, 16 January. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-and-commonwealth-office-government-digital-strategy-actions/fcos-actions-in-response->



to-the-government-digital-strategy#action-3-all-departments-will-ensure-that-they-have-appropriate-digital-capability-in-house-including-specialist-skills [accessed 21 June 2015]

Chun, R. (2005). Corporate reputation: Meaning and measurement. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7(2), 91-109.

Corrie, K. (2015) The International Criminal Court: using technology in network diplomacy. In Bjola, C and Holmes M [eds] *Digital Diplomacy Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge. pp: 145-163.

Cory, R. (1953). Forging a Public Information Policy for the United Nations. *International Organization*. 7(2) pp. 229-242

Cosenza, V (2014) *World Map of Social Networks: December 2014*. Available at: <http://vincos.it/world-map-of-social-networks/> [accessed 21 June 2015]

Daugirdas, K. (2014). Reputation and the Responsibility of International Organizations. *European Journal of International Law*, 25(4), 991-1018.

Facebook (no date) *Understand your audience to get better results*. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/business/a/page/page-insights> [accessed 20 June 2015]

Facebook (2014) *What's the difference between organic and paid reach?* Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/help/285625061456389> [accessed 20 June 2015]

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2012). Digital Strategy. London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/39629/AB\\_12-11-14\\_Digital\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/39629/AB_12-11-14_Digital_strategy.pdf) [accessed 21 June 2015]

Hanson, F (2012) Public Diplomacy @ State. *E-International Relations*, 26 October. Available at: <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/10/26/public-diplomacy-state/> [accessed 22 June 2015]

Hong, H. (2013). Government websites and social media's influence on government-public relationships. *Public Relations Review*, 39(4), 346-356.

Kalathil, S and Firestone (2014) *Adapting for the Global Diplomatic Arena*. Aspen Institute. Available at: <http://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/documents/2013ADDTechRepFINAL-TEXT.pdf> [accessed 21 June 2015]

Kaneva, N. (2011). Nation branding: Toward an agenda for critical research. *International Journal of Communication*, 5, 25. pp. 117 - 141

Kelly, R (2012) The United States after unipolarity: repairing the American image, one tweet at a time. *IDEAS reports 0-special reports* Kitchen, Nicholas (ed.) SR009. LSE IDEAS, London School of Economics and Political Science. Available at:

[http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43479/1/The%20United%20States%20after%20unipolarity\\_repairing%20the%20American%20image,%20one%20tweet%20at%20a%20time%28Isero%29.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43479/1/The%20United%20States%20after%20unipolarity_repairing%20the%20American%20image,%20one%20tweet%20at%20a%20time%28Isero%29.pdf) [accessed 21 June 2015]

Kelly S *et al* (2014) Tightening the Net: Governments Expand Online Controls. *Freedom House*. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2014/tightening-net-governments> [accessed 21 June 2015]

Kelly, S (2013) Nobel Peace Prize Winner Notified Via Twitter. *Mashable*, 11 October. Available at: <http://mashable.com/2013/10/11/nobel-peace-prize-twitter/> [accessed 21 June 2015]

Khatib, L., Dutton, W., & Thelwall, M. (2012). Public Diplomacy 2.0: A Case Study of the US Digital Outreach Team. *The Middle East Journal*, 66(3), 453-472.

Kotler, P and Pfoertsch, W (2007) Being known or being one of many: the need for brand management for business-to-business (B2B) companies. *Journal Of Business & Industrial Marketing* 22(6), pp.357-362

Laetus in Praesens (no date) *Types of International Organization* Available at: <http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs70s/typeap4.php> [accessed: 20 June 2015]

Lichtenstein, J (2010) Digital Diplomacy. *New York Times*, 16 July. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/18/magazine/18web2-0-t.html> [accessed 21 June 2015]

Marvin, G (2015) Survey: Facebook Video To Overtake YouTube In 2015 Advertising Plans *Marketing Land*, 7 April. Available at: <http://marketingland.com/survey-facebook-video-to-overtake-youtube-in-2015-advertising-plans-124301> [accessed 21 June 2015]

Mace, G. and Loiseau, H. (2005), Cooperative Hegemony and Summitry in the Americas. *Latin American Politics and Society* 47 pp. 107–134.

Marchese, L and Simmons, R. (2005). The United Nations in Crisis: Negative Perceptions Call for Savvy Marketing to Rebuild its Brand. *Prophet.com* Available at: <https://www.prophet.com/thinking/view/38-the-united-nations-in-crisis> [accessed 20 June 2015]

Marrins, K (2015) #HappySoundsLike: a free playlist will not bring change for those in poverty. *The Guardian*, 20 March. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2015/mar/20/international-happiness-day-un-playlist-will-not-bring-change-poverty> [accessed 22 June 2015]

Meier, P (2013) Crisis Maps: Harnessing the Power of Big Data to Deliver Humanitarian Assistance. *Forbes*, 5 February. Available at: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/skollworldforum/2013/05/02/crisis-maps-harnessing-the-power-of-big-data-to-deliver-humanitarian-assistance/> [accessed 21 June 2015]

- Milam, L and Avery, E J (2012). Apps4Africa: A new State Department public diplomacy initiative. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2) pp. 328-335.
- Morse, J (2012) Effective Public Diplomacy Needs Social Media. State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP), 15 October. Available at: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2012/10/20121015137488.html#axzz3WK8Oxjj> [accessed 22 June 2015]
- Ong, J (2012) Report: Twitter's most active country is China (where it is blocked) [Updated]. *The Next Web*, 26 September. Available at: <http://thenextweb.com/asia/2012/09/26/surprise-twiters-active-country-china-where-blocked/> [accessed 21 June 2015]
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] (2005) *Organisation*. Available at: <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=4367> [accessed: 20 June 2015]
- Pew Research Center (2012) *Chapter 4. Rating Countries and Institutions*. Available at: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/06/13/chapter-4-rating-countries-and-institutions/#un-gets-mostly-favorable-marks> [Accessed 20 June 2015]
- Ramzy, A (2012) Conflict in the Air: U.S. Vows to Keep Reporting on Pollution in China. *Time*, 6 June. Available at: <http://world.time.com/2012/06/06/conflict-in-the-air-u-s-will-keep-reporting-on-pollution-in-china/> [accessed 21 June 2015]
- Rittberger, V *et al* (2012) *International Organization*, 2nd ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rouse, M (no date) Social Media Listening. *TechTarget.com* Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/help/285625061456389> [accessed 20 June 2015]
- Sandre, S. (2015). *Digital Diplomacy: Conversations on Innovations in Foreign Policy*. London: Rowman & Littlefield. Kindle Edition
- Schweidel, D, and Moe, W. (2014) 'Listening In on Social Media: A Joint Model of Sentiment and Venue Format Choice', *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)* 51( 4) pp. 387-402.
- Seib, P (2012). *Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Kindle Edition
- Shezi, L (2015) This Android app lets people in Twitter-blocked countries secretly tweet from their phones. *HTXT.Africa*, 29 May. Available at: <http://www.htxt.co.za/2015/05/29/this-android-app-lets-people-in-twitter-blocked-countries-secretly-tweet-from-their-phones/> [accessed 21 June 2015]
- Simons, M. (2013) To Ousted Boss, Arms Watchdog Was Seen as an Obstacle in Iraq *The New York Times*, 13 October. Available at:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/14/world/to-ousted-boss-arms-watchdog-was-seen-as-an-obstacle-in-iraq.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/14/world/to-ousted-boss-arms-watchdog-was-seen-as-an-obstacle-in-iraq.html?_r=0) [accessed 20 June 2015]

TrendsLondon (2015) *#2030now is now trending in #London*. Available at: <https://twitter.com/TrendsLondon/status/581419327896715264> 27 March [accessed 21 June 2015]

Twitter (no date) *Tweet activity dashboard*. Available at: <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20171990-tweet-activity-dashboard> [accessed 21 June 2015]

Twitter (no date) *Twitter Cards*. Available at: <https://dev.twitter.com/cards/overview> [accessed 20 June 2015]

United Nations: #HappySoundsLike: UN launches social media campaign to create world's happiest playlist. *UN News Centre*, 16 March. Available at: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50335#.VSJVMvnLfMs> [accessed 22 June 2015]

United Nations (2015) Recap from UN Social Media Day. *United Nations Blog*, 3 February. Available at: <http://blogs.un.org/blog/2015/02/03/recap-from-un-social-media-day/#sthash.teDmTy9t.dpbs> [accessed 22 June 2015]

UNDP (no date) *Overview*. Available at: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/overview.html> [accessed 22 June 2015]

United Nations General Assembly [UNGA] (2013) *Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015\*\**, Part VII Public information, Section 28 Public information (A/68/6 (Sect. 28)\*) Available at: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/6\(Sect.28\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/6(Sect.28)) [accessed 20 June 2015]

United Nations General Assembly [UNGA] (2013) *Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015\*\**, Foreword and introduction (A/68/6 (Introduction)\*) Available at: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/6%20%28Introduction%29](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/6%20%28Introduction%29) [accessed 20 June 2015]

United Nations General Assembly [UNGA] (1946) Resolution 13(1). *Organisation of the Secretariat (A/RES/13(1))* Available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/032/64/IMG/NR003264.pdf?OpenElement> [accessed 20 June 2015]

UN Global Pulse (no date) *About*. Available at: <http://www.unglobalpulse.org/about-new> [accessed 21 June 2015]

UN Global Pulse (2015) *Analysing Seasonal Mobility Patterns Using Mobile Phone Data*. Available at:

[http://www.unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/UNGP%20Case%20Study\\_D4D%20Mobility\\_2015.pdf](http://www.unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/UNGP%20Case%20Study_D4D%20Mobility_2015.pdf) [accessed 21 June 2015]

UNHCR (no date) *About Us*. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c2.html> [accessed 22 June 2015]

UN Women (no date) *About UN Women*. Available at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women> [accessed 22 June 2015]

Wæraas, A. (2008). Can public sector organizations be coherent corporate brands?. *Marketing Theory*, 8(2), 205-221.

Wæraas, A., & Byrkjeflot, H. (2012). Public sector organizations and reputation management: Five problems. *International Public Management Journal*, 15(2), 186-206.

West, D (2015) Digital divide: Improving Internet access in the developing world through affordable services and diverse content. *Center for Technology Innovation at Brookings*, 13 February. Available at: [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/02/13-digital-divide-developing-world-west/west\\_internet-access.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/02/13-digital-divide-developing-world-west/west_internet-access.pdf) [accessed 21 June 2015]

Wichowski, A. (2013) Social Diplomacy, Or How Diplomats Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Tweet. *Foreign Affairs*, 5 April. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2013-04-05/social-diplomacy> [Accessed 20 June 2015]

Xiguang, L. and Wang, J. (2010) Web-based public diplomacy. *The Journal of International Communication*, 16(1) pp. 7-22

Yates, D. and Pacquette, S. (2011). Emergency knowledge management and social media technologies: A case study of the 2010 Haitian earthquake. *International Journal of Information Management* (31) pp. 6-13

## **Annex A: Survey Questions**

**1. Name of Organisation:**

**2. When did you start using social media**

**3. What Platforms do you use? Please check all that apply:**

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Google Plus
- Instagram

**Other (please specify)**

**4. What types of postings do you produce?**

- Awareness of particular issues
- Outreach to Targeted Groups
- Outreach to diaspora communities
- Activities of your leadership
- Interaction with Media

**Other (please specify)**

**5. Do your senior management have any official social media accounts?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**6. If yes, who produces the postings?**

**7. When you launched your social media channels, did you require formal approval from senior management?**

- Yes

- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**8. Was there a formal risk assessment on social media done for the organization?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**9. If yes, did this affect your ability to post? What were the identified risks and how were they overcome?**

**10. Was there a formal legal assessment of social media done for your organization?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**11. If yes, did this affect your ability to post? What were the identified legal issues and how were they overcome?**

**12. What kind of decision tree is required for any individual post? (please explain)**

**13. Do you have formal guidelines for social media on: (check all that apply)**

- General usage of official platforms
- Crisis communications
- Staff use of social media
- Dealing with bad behaviour (abuse, trolls, etc)

**Please indicate any other:**

**14. Do you give training to staff on their use of social media?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**15. Have you had a major “incident” on social media that resulted in negative media coverage or response by a Member State?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**16. If yes, did this result in a change of policy or how social media is managed and please explain this change.**

**17. Do you engage directly with people on social media (@ replies, replying to posts, etc)**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**18. Do you engage with other stakeholders on social media? For example, affected populations, civil society, etc. Please explain**

**19. Do you track users and create influencer networks using social media? If so please explain how:**

**20. Do you engage with member states on your postings.? If yes, Please explain**

**21. How do you measure social media?**

- Analytics
- Click-through Tracking
- Engagement Rate
- Reach

**Other (Please Indicate)**

**22. Do you do sentiment analysis?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**23. If yes, please answer the following**



- Do you track trends over time?
- Have you noticed sentiment changing over time? If so how?
- Do you create strategies surrounding how you are perceived?

**24. In your opinion, does your organisation have a Brand Identity?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**25. Do you have Brand Guidelines you must follow when putting together social media campaigns?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Can't Answer

**26. In your opinion, what are the strengths or weaknesses of your organisation as a "brand"?**

**27. Do you have any other comments on how social media or digital diplomacy is used at your organisation?**

**28. Would you be available for a follow-up interview to discuss your answers further? If yes, please enter your e-mail address:**

## Annex B: Survey Responses

### 1. Name of Organisation: 12 Responses

**Note:** With the exception of the case studies, other organisations were promised not to be identified.

### 2. When did you start using social media?

- 2013
- 2010-2011
- 2010
- 2008
- We will in late 2015
- 2011
- 2009
- October 2013
- 2014
- 3 years ago
- 2006

### 3. What Platforms do you use? Please check all that apply:

Facebook	9
Twitter	12
YouTube	9
Google Plus	3
Instagram	6

Other Answers:

- SlideShare
- Flickr
- LinkedIn
- FB + YouTube will come later

- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Flickr"
- LinkedIn, Flickr
- LinkedIn
- Some of our Country Offices use regional/national social media channels, depending on target audience & objectives, e.g. Weibo

4. What types of postings do you produce?

Awareness of particular issues	11
Outreach to Targeted Groups	7
Outreach to diaspora communities	2
Activities of your leadership	9
Interaction with Media	7

Other Answers:

- very basic approach (aim = 5 tweets per month)
- Engagement/Dialog (live chats, replies, favorites, etc.)

5. Do your senior management have any official social media accounts?

Yes	7
No	5
Don't Know/Can't Answer	0

6. If yes, who produces the postings?

- The staff members themselves.
- Themselves
- Social media intern
- Mostly our ED herself, but Social Media Manager also has access.
- Communication staff
- Communications team

- Our head for example is completely independent with their postings, so are most of our other senior colleagues.

7. When you launched your social media channels, did you require formal approval from senior management?

Yes	9
No	2
Don't Know/Can't Answer	1

8. Was there a formal risk assessment on social media done for the organization?

Yes	4
No	6
Don't Know/Can't Answer	2

9. If yes, did this affect your ability to post? What were the identified risks and how were they overcome?

- By adopting a "prudent and measured" approach + drafting a very comprehensive disclaimer mentioning the fact that the organization does not interact on social media, but rather uses them as a outbound feed (and not as a way to gain feedback from external users)
- No
- No

10. Was there a formal legal assessment of social media done for your organization?

Yes	1
No	8
Don't Know/Can't Answer	3

11. If yes, did this affect your ability to post? What were the identified legal issues and how were they overcome?

This question has no responses

12. What kind of decision tree is required for any individual post? (please explain)

- Many staff are empowered to speak to the media. Our guidance is that we should not tweet anything we would not say live on TV.
- Posts are done by social media officer. No special approval is required.
- Communications unit has final call on all posts
- team in charge of Social Media writes general posts without further approval; posts about more complex issues require approval from senior management
- No decision tree
- Approval is done by the web content manager. Sometimes for more complicated issues I will pass wording on to the Branch Head.
- List of tweets to be submitted to highest ranking official within the organization
- Interns and contractors draft messages, Social Media Manager approves before it can be scheduled.
- Idea for post proposed, sent to supervisor, supervisor agrees, post is written up, supervisor approval, POST. Sometimes, especially with simple postings, Idea for post, discussed with supervisor verbally, post written up, supervisor approval, POST.
- Communication division is in charge of posting from IFAD official accounts
- Communications Lead clears all content
- We use Hootsuite for managing content on our corporate channels - any unit and regional office can schedule messages but the ultimate responsibility for editing, approving and publishing them rests with the Head of social media and French and Spanish Webeditors for respective languages.

13. Do you have formal guidelines for social media on: (check all that apply)

General usage of official platforms	11
Crisis communications	4
Staff use of social media	8
Dealing with bad behaviour (abuse, trolls, etc)	6

Other Response:

- No, but this is certainly coming too: we will need help from other IOs to learn from their experiences

14. Do you give training to staff on their use of social media?

Yes	7
No	5
Don't Know/Can't Answer	0

15. Have you had a major “incident” on social media that resulted in negative media coverage or response by a Member State?

Yes	0
No	12
Don't Know/Can't Answer	0

16. If yes, did this result in a change of policy or how social media is managed and please explain this change.

This question has no responses

17. Do you engage directly with people on social media (@ replies, replying to posts, etc)

Yes	11
No	1
Don't Know/Can't Answer	0

18. Do you engage with other stakeholders on social media? For example, affected populations, civil society, etc. Please explain;

- no
- Media, students, other UN agencies
- by following/retweeting/quoting/replying
- No: we only push messages out
- Yes, civil society and women's rights organizations
- Not really. Only if they asks for some documents, which are then shared with them from the website.
- sometimes

- yes, many of our country offices use social media as platforms for communication 4 development - especially for engagement and outreach with youth. We also host livechats on our social media channels so stakeholders can engage directly with our senior management.

19. Do you track users and create influencer networks using social media? If so please explain how:

- We have social metrics on our institutional accounts. We use Klout for our individual accounts.
- no
- no
- no
- No (maybe in a more Advanced stage, in 2016 ?)
- Tracking as best as possible, and creating Twitter lists with influencers
- sometimes
- yes, we create lists that we filter on hootsuite by key words and kloutscore and we interact with them. we also use crowdangle to engage with influencers on Facebook.

20. Do you engage with member states on your postings.? If yes, Please explain

- Only when they are engaged in a particular activity.
- not really.
- no
- by following/retweeting/quoting/replying
- Not really. We retweet their messages
- No
- Yes, through RTs, mentions and thank you messages.
- sometimes
- We invite our member states to join our social media campaigns, we mention them whenever possible to highlight their contribution to our work and we sometimes host livechats together. We have received a lot of positive feedback from UN representations regarding our social media channels, especially since we have active channels in French, Spanish and Arabic.

21. How do you measure social media?

Analytics	11
Click-through Tracking	8
Engagement Rate	11

Reach	11
-------	----

Other Answers:

- TBD
- Quality of followers (e.g. kloutscore, if they are decision-makers/part of our target audience)

22. Do you do sentiment analysis?

Yes	1
No	8
Don't Know/Can't Answer	3

23. If yes, please answer the following: Do you track trends over time? Have you noticed sentiment changing over time? If so how? Do you create strategies surrounding how you are perceived?

- This is done by the social media team.
- Unknown territory so far
- Not Formally
- This doesn't work at all in our area of work (violence against women etc.).

24. In your opinion, does your organisation have a Brand Identity?

Yes	9
No	3
Don't Know/Can't Answer	0

25. Do you have Brand Guidelines you must follow when putting together social media campaigns?

Yes	8
No	4
Don't Know/Can't Answer	0



26.) In your opinion, what are the strengths or weaknesses of your organisation as a "brand"?

- That the organisation's brand is unclear is a weakness. It is also siloed between different departments
- Not visible enough, not proactive (only vaguely responsive). Not clearly identified as UN institution. So far, no media strategy, in fact.
- "Strength: THE UN organization on gender equality and women's empowerment  
Weakness: newest UN organization, very small, very small budget, hard to ever reach the brand exposure of for example UNICEF..."
- Historically perceived very negatively; steep hill to climb in changing the reputation
- We are engaged in a wide range of development activities, many of them rather abstract and technical topics such as capacity building, drafting policies and advising governments. It's sometimes a challenge to create engaging, compelling social media updates on these issues. Since social media is all about visuals, we are always looking for compelling photos to tell our stories. On the other side our large pool of experts on these topics - a lot of who use social media channels for professional reasons - helps us to show the depth of knowledge and expertise UNDP has to offer. This supports the building of UNDP's brand as provider of technical expertise in development. Our strength is certainly that we systematically empower our staff through trainings and guidance to use social media channels for professional objectives, to connect with peers, share best practices, collaborate online and advocate for development. Helen Clark and other senior managers are leading by example, using social media to engage in a direct conversation with our stakeholders around the world, making UNDP transparent and easy accessible.
- We have a difficult acronym

27. Do you have any other comments on how social media or digital diplomacy is used at your organisation?

- Our staff are encouraged to use social media, using their good judgement.
- We're starting from scratch.
- "We use social media: 1. as an additional channel of information; 2. to engage our online (which is a new) audience; 3. for advocacy"