

The Challenges of the Internet and Social Media in Public Diplomacy

Matthew Wallin

February 2013

IN BRIEF

- Using the internet and social media for government public diplomacy purposes may be more difficult than many practitioners anticipate.
- Though social media platforms may be free to use, proper use of the medium is both time and labor intensive.
- Engagement through the internet and social media is best when used as a component of real-world public diplomacy.
- Metrics must measure both actual audience and influence.
- Traditional “broadcast” mediums have the potential to be used interactively.

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed an explosion of social media in conjunction with political upheaval around the world, causing many in the international policy community to draw an immediate connection to the perceived power of social media.

Yet the perceived power of social media must be scrutinized, acting more as a facilitator and not as a cause. As a communications medium, the internet (whether the world wide web or social media) must be given credit for what it allows the average person to do: instantly access customized information and engage in *omnidirectional* (all directions) communication on equal footing as other actors.



Matthew Wallin is a Senior Policy Analyst at the American Security Project



The revolution in communication ushered in by the internet is evident not in the medium itself, but in the standards and expectations it has created.

When examining how to best adapt to the challenges presented by the relatively “new” nature of the internet and social media, it is crucial to comprehend that governments have successfully adapted to previous communications revolutions such as the telegraph, radio, and television. Understanding that each of these new mediums had their limits, the use of online tools and social media should not be treated as a panacea. At the core, the goals of traditional diplomacy have not changed with each revolution. The advent of the internet may be making public diplomacy more public and more prominent, but it does not change the basic premise, conduct or goals of statecraft.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the challenges that the use of the internet and social media pose for U.S. public diplomacy, and to provoke thought about better ways to use these or other tools. It is not intended as an argument against the use of social media for public diplomacy purposes, but to encourage a critical look at its practice and encourage those employing it to better analyze its effect.

Challenges

1. Designing Effect

Before employing social media tools, it is imperative that a public diplomacy practitioner must understand the strategic policy objective, and establish a communications goal.¹ This will inform that strategist how these tools can best be used to augment results, or whether they are the appropriate tools for the campaign at hand.

Many may mistake the use of social media as a universally effective tool because it appears comparatively cheap, relatively fast, and it is currently experiencing a certain aura of mysticism around its use and potential. Technology, innovation, and “2.0” are all buzzwords that ignore the fact that much of the world is not as advanced as the United States or other connected regions. Though some point to the vast and growing global number of mobile phone subscriptions, roughly 6 billion,² this number does not explain how many have access to online networks, how many users are literate, or whether those users can keep their phones charged.



Image courtesy ISAF

This is not meant to discount potentially effective uses of social media. For instance, one effective use of social media is as a tool for fortifying existing relationships. It provides a means of regular interaction during times in which parties would not normally converse. Sometimes, this may be due to limitations of time and distance. But this does not suggest that social media is not labor and time intensive. In order to do social media properly, a government must regularly engage and converse with its audiences.

Information vs. Influence

Defining public diplomacy (PD) as *communication with foreign publics for the purpose of achieving a foreign policy objective*,³ PD practitioners should be cognizant that information is different than influence.

Awareness does not imply action. While some policy issues may require the United States to engage in a significant information campaign, the question of what people should do with that information is paramount. Making information available online does not necessarily influence people to do something with that information.

2. Measuring Effect

Audience

How does a government employing social media strategy understand if it is reaching its target audience?

Facebook “likes” and Twitter followers do not necessarily equate a strong connection with an audience. Having a million followers says nothing about whether those tweets are read, nor does that top-line number indicate where a user’s followers reside. Neither does it necessarily indicate whether those followers are undertaking action to support a user’s communications goals. Furthermore, if the number of an organization’s online followers in the target audience is outweighed by the number of followers outside of the target region or audience, what does this signify? However, audience expansion can be a perfectly legitimate goal of particular communication campaigns.

This quantitative analysis provides the basis from which public diplomats can craft better messages to actually understand who they are reaching, and make adjustments accordingly.

As a measure of success, as of January 23, 2013, the State Department claims to have:⁴

- 3.2 Million followers on 308 official Twitter feeds in 10 languages
- 18.5 Million fans, friends and followers on 411 Facebook accounts
- Communication with more than 21 million worldwide

However, these numbers do not explain much, as there is no indication of how many of those followers are based in the U.S., in the corresponding countries for each account, or elsewhere. Interested in this information, ASP inquired to the State Department about obtaining a list of 10 U.S. embassies’ social media accounts and a breakdown of their followers. Of those 10 embassies, the Department of State provided the following breakdown by percentage of its likes and followers across Facebook and Twitter for only the U.S. Embassies in Moscow and Cairo:⁵

Moscow				Cairo			
Facebook		Twitter		Facebook		Twitter	
Russia/non-U.S.	U.S.	Russia/non-U.S.	U.S.	Egypt/non-U.S.	U.S.	Egypt/non-U.S.	U.S.
75%	25%	89%	11%	98.5%	1.5%	61.4%	38.6%

When analyzing the above figures, several considerations must be taken. For instance, the State Department

uses social media to connect with domestic and foreign audiences alike. While an embassy in a foreign country may focus on communicating with the people of that nation, the same social media feeds can be used to connect with American nationals living in or visiting that country. The numbers also cannot take into account the number of people within a country connecting via a proxy server or virtual private network (VPN). Proxies allow a user to connect to a website to by first connecting to another computer or server in a third country, thus allowing the viewer to mask their identity or location, and potentially bypassing online restrictions. In this case, a follower or website visitor in Iran may appear as those they are connecting from Pakistan, or another country. The nature of this ability makes it incredibly difficult to determine with 100% certainty where an organization's online followers live.

As a result, the metrics above cannot be established with 100% certainty. Further adding to the confusion, information provided to ASP by the State Department insisted ASP that the above numbers are based on “self-reported” locations, and claimed:

It is not possible to provide fully accurate geographical location information about social media users, because the only source of information on a user's geographical location is what that user voluntarily chooses to include in his/her profile.⁶

While this may be true for some social media outlets, Facebook indicates that “Location data is based on the geographic location of each person as determined by their browser IP address.”⁷

Yet despite the ambiguities that are evident, metrics can be used to establish a baseline from which general trends can be observed—and although that baseline may be determinable, it is another question altogether as to whether or not the internet baseline is representative of real-world action or behavior. Internet comments and conversation often tends to be extreme⁸ and it is unclear whether or not the postings that people put online are necessarily representative of how they choose to act in person.

Information Longevity

Supposing that information posted via social media is passed on, the attention that information gains generally has little staying power. Research by the link tracking organization “bit.ly” in 2011 indicates that the “half-life” of a link posted in social media is very short. An internet half-life, defined *as the time by which a link will receive half the total clicks of its existence* is approximately 3 hours, while YouTube links tend to last for about 7.⁹ The relative short life of these links may be related to the “news feed” nature of the platforms on which they are posted. As links move farther and farther down a list of “recent posts,” they are more likely to fall off the radar of the average user. Bit.ly proposes that the content of the link itself, as opposed to the medium, has the bigger impact on longevity, as indicated by the wide variance in the lifespans of the links used in its sample study.¹⁰

3. Methods of Effect

Real-Time Communication

A primary challenge of online communication involves the real-time nature in which it occurs. The clearance

process used by the U.S. State Department can often be slow, and is ill-equipped to respond to the demanding nature of social media.

Official government statements, and those made by employees in their official capacity, are often combed over word by word by sometimes dozens of offices and individuals before release. Exploring the impedance of the government clearance process on social media use, former State Department Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley commented at a GWU event on public diplomacy:

...the key is not to have a layer of people looking over your shoulder all the time but to give autonomy to the people who are out there doing the tweeting, otherwise they are not going to do it or it's going to take them a long time to do it...¹¹

Contrary to this, in U.S. public diplomacy, it is vital that messages issued by government representatives be consistent with policy—a necessity which discourages individual action.

However, research indicates that connections are best made online when organizations converse in a less-official tone, making them appear more personable and approachable. Fergus Hanson notes that the State Department's more successful online outreach sites tend to “avoid traditional diplomatic bureaucratese and adopt a less obviously governmental style.”¹² The question for those operating official social media feeds is how to become more informal and conversational using social media while still maintaining the unity and accuracy of message required by the nature of government communications.

When employing social media, the State Department is faced with a seemingly stark choice between safeguards ensuring message accuracy, and allowing its employees the freedom to engage audiences conversationally in a manner that humanizes their efforts. On one hand, using the clearance process ensures that online communication by government employees is consistent with U.S. foreign policy. On the other hand, allowing employees the freedom to respond rapidly in a manner consistent with the nature and discourse of online communities runs the severe risk of enabling those employees to essentially determine policy without the approval of Washington. This holds the potential for disastrous consequences which can't be easily mitigated.

The perceived solution would be to improve and expedite the clearance process—a discussion which in itself is controversial. In December 2012, leaked internal State Department discussions related to reducing the then-current allowance for a 30-day review period to two days caused intense debate on the internet about the premise of such a delay at all for a real-time medium.¹³

In the end, this is an issue that will likely evolve over time as the experience with online tools continues to grow. The U.S. government will have to find a proper balance that gives its employees using social media for official purposes the ability to respond quickly, but only if that quick response is accurate and reflects official U.S. policy.

Getting Noticed

Social media and internet users are faced with a volume of information unprecedented in recorded history.

When governments communicate online, there is no guarantee that the target audience is paying attention. Since the playing field is leveled, and individuals can have the same voice as a government online, the government voice can often be drowned out by “noise.”

The numbers game of social media is simply daunting. To put it into perspective, 72 hours of video are uploaded on Youtube per minute.¹⁴ There are over 400 million tweets per day.¹⁵ With numbers like this, having one’s voice heard can be a challenge, and shouting is hardly a guarantor.

Furthermore, much of the information consumed online requires a user to actively seek out or choose to consume that information in an active manner. Posting content on 300 different feeds hardly guarantees it will be viewed. In many cases, users must choose to click on links, subscribe to feeds, or watch a video, and can face these simple decisions thousands of times a day. Employers of social media must consider what they are doing to make their target audience choose to consume their information over someone else’s. Since the internet provides all users with an equal platform, government messages hardly exercise privilege of access.

Consumers of social media ultimately need a reason to divert their attention from the typical social and entertainment purposes of “social” media. Since outlets like Facebook are purposed to be centered around networks of friends and family, a friend’s or family member’s message is naturally more credible than that of an organization or government. As Clay Shirky notes, the internet is most effective in the second step of the two step influence process (developed by Katz and Lazarfield): that is, that political opinions are formed when family, friends and colleagues circulate information produced by the media.¹⁶ Therefore, in tapping the potential power of social media to carry a message aimed to influence, the United States must exploit the interaction of virtual networks with networks in the real-world.

Going Viral

To surpass the problem of information overload, one method is to employ techniques that cause information to go viral online. Viral distribution can be an effective short-term method to spread information.

Rather than relying on the top down distribution methods of old, viralism relies on either lateral or bottom-up spread, allowing a message to grow not from a single source, but to be replicated instantaneously and distributed across what is essentially a peer-to-peer or electronic word-of-mouth system. Unlike biological viruses or malware, achieving viral status of internet content is entirely dependent on the end-user for every step of growth. It has to be consciously and intentionally spread.

While there are many theories on what causes material to go viral, viral content often thrives on the unusual, humorous/emotional, cute, utterly impressive, or shocking to gain traction and inspire the user to pass it on to their social networks. The common theme between these types of content is that they evoke both positive and negative “high-arousal emotions.”¹⁷ Government messaging often falls short in all of these areas.

Yet America’s adversaries, like al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), have managed notable viral successes achieved through the distribution of shocking content. Furthering AQI’s communication goals, the sheer number of day-to-day attacks captured on video by insurgent groups and spread via the internet became its own spectacle—an

unstoppable message intended specifically to challenge the American narrative of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Those viewing these videos may begin to see that amount of security, money, or military power thrown at this problem could prevent dedicated individuals from planting IEDs, committing suicide attacks, or carrying out assassinations.

It is difficult for the American government to attempt to out-communicate terrorists by using these techniques. Whereas depictions of brutality can spread virally and subsequently work in favor of terrorist recruiting or training goals (though this hasn't always proven to be the case),¹⁸ the often unintentional viral distribution of graphic violence committed by Americans typically proves more harmful than beneficial. Part of the reason for the massive amount of online insurgent and terrorist multimedia stems from the now ubiquitous nature of cell phones, video cameras, and laptops. Unfortunately, this ubiquity also works against the American narrative, as the material captured by Americans using these devices has often produced negative results. Incidents such as the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse photos serve as prime examples of how damaging imagery can be.

On the other hand, none of this necessarily means that governments are incapable of having viral successes. In *The Atlantic Wire*, John Hudson argues that “NASA is the government’s one true viral hit factory.”¹⁹ Indeed, NASA’s primary Twitter account has more followers than all of the State Departments’ 308 Twitter accounts combined. In 2011, the CDC had a notable viral success with its *Zombie Preparedness* campaign,²⁰ as it was something completely unexpected from a government agency and tapped into a prominent pop culture theme at the time.



This image of JPL’s Bobak Ferdowski went viral during coverage of the Mars Curiosity Rover landing

However, going viral also doesn’t necessarily imply that the message is accomplishing its intended purpose with the target audience. There are a variety of reasons that internet content goes viral, and they aren’t always necessarily beneficial for the originator. Case in point, in 2012, the European Commission created a teaser ad that reached viral status called “Science: It’s a Girl Thing.” Yet the ad didn’t reach viral status on the credentials of its quality or message—it did so because of its shockingly sexist content. Featuring images of fashionable women in high heels and makeup with little actual science, the campaign rapidly made the internet rounds as a result of the amount of objection and outrage it generated.²¹



Screen-grab from “Science: It’s a Girl Thing”

PD practitioners should understand that viral status can be reached for reasons of incompetence as well as brilliance. The trick for governments is to be very aware of the social *and* media environments in which they operate, to ensure that incompetence isn’t the impetus for viral distribution.

Getting the Signal Through

When employing a social media strategy, one cannot assume that because information has been put on the web, that the intended audience can actually access it. Aside from questions of internet penetration,

some target audiences cannot be reached due to blocking or censorship technologies put in place by their governments.

While many blocking and censorship techniques can be overcome using methods like anonymity software, virtual private networks (VPN), and proxies, the net effect of blocking techniques is not overcome by using these methods. By their nature, these tools are not able to completely eliminate the total impact of blocking methods, as they require the interest and knowledge of users to a greater extent than unrestricted browsing.

The power of the internet is irrelevant when a host country shuts off the network. Beyond merely restricting access, countries facing protest movements have on more than one occasion simply turned off the internet. In November 2012, the internet in Syria was shut down.²² During the Egyptian Revolution, the internet was shut down on multiple occasions, and the protest movement grew despite its absence.²³ Egypt's restrictive environment, reflected in the presence of only four major internet service providers (ISPs), allowed the government to make a few phone calls to disable service.²⁴ Perhaps indicative of the internet's limited ability to sustain a movement, the protest movement continued its activities, turning to hard copy pamphlets, faxes, and landline phones for communication purposes.²⁵

Even if social media plays a role in the formation of a protest movement, it far from guarantees it will succeed. During the 2009 Iranian Election protests, Twitter played a significant role in enabling communication for the movement. During this time, the State Department requested that Twitter delay planned maintenance in order to allow its continued use during the protests.²⁶ Yet despite the role social media played in enabling the protest movement, it could not defend that protest movement against the hard power tactics employed by the Iranian regime to put it down.

For PD practitioners, it is crucial to see this issue as a primary reason for connecting online engagement to real-world activities. Since the internet is inherently vulnerable to state control, efforts must be made for the connections made online to have resiliency offline. Though the United States should continue to develop technologies and support policies that preserve the ability for people around the world to access information freely online, it cannot assume that the materials it produces will always be accessible to the target audience.

Innovative uses of Social Media

Though this paper focuses on the challenges of using the internet and social media for PD purposes, there are several instances where the State Department has engaged foreign populations using these tools in innovative and appropriate ways. Below are a few examples.

Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications

The Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) poses a direct challenge to the advantages held by insurgent groups and terrorists online. Established in 2010, it is "an interagency effort based in the Department of State and operates under the broad policy direction of the White House and an interagency steering committee."²⁷ It is intended to:

...coordinate, orient, and inform government-wide public communications activities directed at audiences abroad and targeted against violent extremists and terrorist organizations, especially al-Qaida, its affiliates, and its adherents.²⁸

Operating at a budget of \$5 million in FY2012,²⁹ the CSCC is divided into three areas of operation, including intelligence and analysis, plans and operations, and the Digital Outreach Team (DOT).³⁰ The DOT was originally formed in 2006, and was absorbed into the CSCC with the purpose of conducting counterterrorism communications through the internet. To do this, the DOT engages via “written text posted to online forums, Facebook or the comment section of media websites,” and also through the use of graphics and video to ensure that al Qaeda and its supporters do not operate with “impunity” online.³¹

While working to develop extensive metrics for its efforts, the CSCC’s Director, Ambassador Alberto Fernandez, has indicated that initial signs of success are reflected in the irate responses by extremists,³² and the adoption of CSCC’s rhetoric by members of the target audience.³³ This analysis is thus more qualitative than quantitative, as it focuses on action actually taken by the target audience—a primary goal of public diplomacy.



Ambassador Alberto Fernandez testifying before Congress. Image Courtesy: C-SPAN

The CSCC’s strategy appears solid for several reasons. First, it has defined goals. Second, it has an understanding of its limitations, indicated by Ambassador Fernandez’s awareness of his organization’s mission during his congressional testimony.³⁴ Third, it has a nuanced understanding of its target audience. This involves not only the publication of its materials solely in appropriate foreign languages, but a focus on the action of Al Qaeda and its affiliates rather than on a discussion of Islam itself.³⁵

While the results of the CSCC’s work may take years to realize, it addresses the problem of disinformation and presents a counter narrative directly in the areas where those seeking to harm American interests may be otherwise unopposed.

Embassy Jakarta

The case of Embassy Jakarta’s social media efforts represents a primary example of rapid expansion and online success. The Embassy’s efforts have been exemplary of a good understanding of the limits of social media, and an understanding of how it can be used to compliment real world activities.

In a research paper looking into Embassy Jakarta’s success, Melanie Ciolek notes:

Embassy Jakarta has skillfully incorporated Facebook into its public diplomacy efforts by using it within integrated media campaigns that relate to “offline” events and recognizing the audience Facebook allows it to reach.³⁶

For example, by tying in Facebook with President Obama’s then-upcoming visit to Indonesia, Ciolek contends:

...Embassy Jakarta was able to generate significant interest in a real-world event through direct online engagement with users. While Facebook is not a venue for serious policy discussion, Embassy Jakarta has strategically used Facebook to informally but directly connect with an audience about its existing public diplomacy efforts. These interactions are building a community that is oriented around both online and offline opportunities to engage in a dialogue about the United States.³⁷

The Embassy's efforts to expand its social media audience went beyond inserting its voice into internet discussions, and instead actually offered a tangible benefit to its "fans." As Dr. Ralph Wilson notes in his six



A web graphic advertising Embassy Jakarta's Golden Ticket Contest

principles of viral marketing, successful viral endeavors often "give away valuable products or services" to attract attention.³⁸ In the Embassy's case, giveaways included books and other prizes donated by Microsoft and Starbucks.³⁹ As a significant prize, Embassy Jakarta also began a "golden ticket" program for its Facebook followers, featuring "three all expense-paid educational tours of the U.S., where... [the winners] get to visit several of the places in America that had a significant impact on the life of U.S. President Obama."⁴⁰ This type of offering not only provides a chance to attract people to forms of virtual engagement, but also the physical person-to-person contact that occurs as the result of a tour.

The strategy proved successful in increasing the Embassy's online reach by tapping into Indonesia's connection to President Obama, expanding its Facebook likes from 30,000 to 60,000 in a one month period.⁴¹ As of January 2013, the Embassy's Facebook page has over 527,000 likes.⁴²

However, these types of activities aren't the only reasons for the Embassy's success, as the Embassy also made a significant attempt to engage influential bloggers. This included hosting the "largest annual national gathering of bloggers in Indonesia" in 2008 and 2009.⁴³ Engagement with these kinds of strong online personalities not only provides a basic method for gaining an online audience, but also establishes in-person relationships that can be maintained through electronic means.

Applying Online Lessons to Other Mediums

Considering many of the difficulties and challenges of social media use, public diplomacy practitioners should also search for alternative methods to transplant the seemingly unique properties of online communication to other potentially more accessible platforms.

What the internet has taught us is that the public loves to be involved and wants to be heard. This lesson is key in understanding what public diplomacy needs to be in the modern area. How do we engage foreign publics in an interactive manner that enables them to interact or be heard? What would applying these lessons to other forms of communication look like?

These examples provide methods by which audiences themselves can interact and have their voices heard.

They are communications models which may at first appear unidirectional but hold the potential for bi- or omnidirectional content, and create more meaning for users who are no longer satisfied with traditionally unidirectional broadcast.

Radio has the potential to be used as “new media,” even though it is an old technology, as it can be interactive and allow for the input of the population. In Kunar Province, Afghanistan, the U.S. military established a small-scale Afghan-run call-in radio station that operates with one reporter, one microphone, and one telephone line.⁴⁴ The station also has a reputation for impartiality, taking calls from everyone, including Taliban members, and allows discussion on most any topic, including religion, politics, and music. U.S. military members are often featured as guests on the station, answering questions from whoever calls in. The military has also handed out wind-up radios to the population, negating the need for electricity or batteries to listen in.⁴⁵ As a result of small projects like this, the people of Afghanistan are given a voice in similar fashion to the internet. They are able to ask questions directly to Americans, express their concerns, and receive answers in a relatively anonymous manner. Of course, there are other aspects to this as well that cannot be ignored, including phone infrastructure and broadcast equipment, but this is a solution that’s well suited for societies within Afghanistan.

Television also presents opportunities for interactivity. Consider the case of *Pop Idol*, the British television series which has spawned numerous spinoffs worldwide, including *American Idol*. These types of series are widely popular, and encourage interaction in several ways. Not only do these programs encourage audience interaction by including a voting element, but they also allow the public to participate in the production of the show’s content. Since these series draw contestants directly from the public, they provide a very real means for the average person to communicate to wide audiences through culture and music. The numbers are also astounding. In 2008, American Idol’s 7th season, the finale saw 97.5 million votes cast⁴⁶ (it should be noted that viewers are able to vote numerous times). It also important to note that the basic format of these types of shows holds potential for conversion to a radio format in areas where TV is less available.



Iraq Star is an example of interactive television

This format has also been reproduced indigenously in countries like Iraq, where *Iraq Star* drew over 1,200 contestants in 2006. The success of the show piqued the interest of the U.S. Military, which sought options for sponsoring the program with messaging.⁴⁷ While this type of show should draw the interest of Americans with a public diplomacy agenda, they should simultaneously be cautious not to taint the potential of home-grown programs in struggling countries that otherwise have few successes.

Conclusions

The global story of social media has been one of empowerment. As Alec Ross describes, recent years have seen a shift in geopolitical power “from hierarchies, to citizens and networks of citizens,” and the internet has “accelerated the speed and growth of political movements.”⁴⁸ The events of the past several years, from Iran, to Egypt, to Libya and beyond demonstrate that social media is a tool most effectively employed by the public and individuals because it enables them to speak through a popular medium at the same level

as governments. Ultimately, social media practitioners within the State Department should understand that social media naturally diffuses power away from state run institutions, and that the level of influence that can be exerted through these types of tools is subsequently limited.

Doing social media right is actually time, labor, and resource intensive. While creating accounts on many websites is free, the labor to produce content for those sites is not, and the time it takes to actively engage users in real time is considerable.

It may prove that a government's best use of social media might not be to instigate or create, but rather to guide, facilitate and moderate. While a government may often be unable to generate viral content in a manner consistent with its principles, it can still use its influence to help steer conversation, and it can still help provide the tools or forums that allow conversation to happen.

Certainly, social media does have a role in public diplomacy. Nevertheless, the proper use of internet and social media is not as a primary method of communication. Rather, these tools should be *components* of an integrated strategy. On their own, social media campaigns are extremely difficult to generate results from. Those who choose to employ them must keep an eye on the physical in addition to the virtual. How are you communicating in person? What tangible things are you doing? How are you physically engaging your target audience? And *then*, how is your social media component being used to support or augment these efforts?

Matthew Wallin is a Senior Policy Analyst at the American Security Project.



Endnotes

1. Wallin, Matthew, "The New Public Diplomacy Imperative," American Security Project, 2012, p. 21-22 <http://americansecurityproject.org/featured-items/2012/the-new-public-diplomacy-imperative/>
2. BBC, "UN: Six Billion Mobile Phone Subscriptions in the World," 2012, October 12 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-19925506>
3. Wallin, Matthew, "The New Public Diplomacy Imperative," American Security Project, 2012, p. 3 <http://americansecurityproject.org/featured-items/2012/the-new-public-diplomacy-imperative/>
4. U.S. Department of State Official, "Response to Inquiry from Matt Wallin, American Security Project," via email, 2013, January 23.

Previous numbers from November, 2012 can be found here:

U.S. Department of State, "21st Century Statecraft," 2012, <http://www.state.gov/statecraft/overview/index.htm>

5. U.S. Department of State Official, "Response to Inquiry from Matt Wallin, American Security Project," via email, 2013, January 23.
6. Ibid.
7. Facebook Developers, "Insights," <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/insights/>
8. Singal, Jesse, "Most Comments are Horrible—Sites Look for Ways to Make them Better," The Daily Beast, 2012, June 16, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/07/16/most-comments-are-horrible-sites-look-for-ways-to-make-them-better.html>
9. Bit.ly, "You Just Shared a Link. How Long Will People Pay Attention?" 2011, September 6, <http://blog.bitly.com/post/9887686919/you-just-shared-a-link-how-long-will-people-pay>
10. Ibid.
11. Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication, "Public Diplomacy in the Next Four Years," 2012, November 13, http://www.gwu.edu/~ipdgc/events/2012_11_13_PostElectionPD/PDN4Y%20Transcript.cfm
12. Hanson, Fergus, "Baked in and Wired: eDiplomacy at State," Brookings, 2012, October 25, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2012/10/25-ediplomacy-hanson>
13. Labott, Elise, "Tweets gone wrong a concern at State Department," CNN, <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/12/10/tweets-gone-wrong-a-concern-at-state-department/>
14. Murphy, Kate "Catching up with Kevin Allocca of YouTube Trends," The New York Times, 2012, June 9, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/10/opinion/sunday/catching-up-with-kevin-allocca-of-youtube-trends.html>
15. Farber, Dan "Twitter hits 400 million tweets per day, mostly mobile," CNET, 2012, June 6, http://news.cnet.com/8301-1023_3-57448388-93/twitter-hits-400-million-tweets-per-day-mostly-mobile/
16. Shirky, Clay, "The Political Power of Social Media," Foreign Affairs, Jan/Feb2011, Vol. 90 Issue 1, p28-41
17. Berger, Jonah and Milkman, Katherine L., "What Makes Online Content Viral?" *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol 49 Issue 2, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1528077
18. Attack videos proved most popular at driving foreign recruitment for Al Qaeda in Iraq, but ultimately alienated the general Iraqi population. See:

- White, Jeremy, "Virtual Indoctrination and the Digihad: The Evolution of Al-Qaeda's Media Strategy," Small Wars Journal, 2012, November 19, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/print/13534>
19. Hudson, John, "NASA is the Government's One True Viral Hit Factory," The Atlantic Wire, 2012, August 6, <http://www.theatlanticwire.com/politics/2012/08/nasa-governments-one-true-viral-hit-factory/55447/>
 20. Khan, Ali S., "Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse," CDC, 2011, May 16, <http://blogs.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2011/05/preparedness-101-zombie-apocalypse/>
 21. Rice, Curt "Science: It's a girl thing! A Viral Fiasco," The Guardian, 2012, June 29, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/blog/2012/jun/29/science-girl-thing-viral-fiasco>
 22. Fantz, Ashley, "As rebels appear to gain ground, Internet shuts down in Syria," CNN, 2012, November 29, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/11/29/world/syria-civil-war/>
 23. Papic, Marko and Noonan, Sean, "Social Media as a Tool for Protest," Stratfor, 2011, February 3, <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20110202-social-media-tool-protest>
 24. Beam, Christopher, "Block Like an Egyptian: HowHow did the Egyptian Government Turn off the Internet?" Slate, 2011, January 28, http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2011/01/block_like_an_egyptian.html
 25. Ibid.
 26. Landler, Mark and Stelter, Brian, "Washington Taps into a Potent New Force in Diplomacy," The New York Times, 2009, June 16, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/17/world/middleeast/17media.html?_r=0
 27. U.S. Department of State, "Ambassador Alberto Fernandez Appointed Coordinator of the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC)," <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/03/186790.htm>
 28. Ibid.
 29. Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, "The State Department's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications: Mission, Operations and Impact," 2012, August 2, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/75389.pdf> p.5
 30. Ibid. P.7
 31. Ibid. p.13
 32. Ibid. p.7
 33. Ibid. p.21
 34. Ibid. p. 17, 18, 22
 35. Ibid. p.17
 36. Ciolek, Melanie, "Understanding Social Media's Contribution to Public Diplomacy" USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School, 2010, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/mciolek_socialmedia_indonesia.pdf , p8
 37. Ibid, p. 10
 38. Wilson, Ralph F. "The Six Simple Principles of Viral Marketing," WebMarketingToday, 2012, May 10, <http://webmarketing-today.com/articles/viral-principles/>
 39. Embassy of the United States, Jakarta, "U.S. Embassy Looks for Top Facebook Fans Before Obama Visit," 2010, February 10, http://jakarta.usembassy.gov/pr_02122010.html

Building a New American Arsenal

The American Security Project (ASP) is a nonpartisan initiative to educate the American public about the changing nature of national security in the 21st century.

Gone are the days when a nation's strength could be measured by bombers and battleships. Security in this new era requires a New American Arsenal harnessing all of America's strengths: the force of our diplomacy; the might of our military; the vigor of our economy; and the power of our ideals.

We believe that America must lead other nations in the pursuit of our common goals and shared security. We must confront international challenges with all the tools at our disposal. We must address emerging problems before they become security crises. And to do this, we must forge a new bipartisan consensus at home.

ASP brings together prominent American leaders, current and former members of Congress, retired military officers, and former government officials. Staff direct research on a broad range of issues and engages and empowers the American public by taking its findings directly to them.

We live in a time when the threats to our security are as complex and diverse as terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, failed and failing states, disease, and pandemics. The same-old solutions and partisan bickering won't do. America needs an honest dialogue about security that is as robust as it is realistic.

ASP exists to promote that dialogue, to forge consensus, and to spur constructive action so that America meets the challenges to its security while seizing the opportunities the new century offers.



American Security Project

www.americansecurityproject.org