

Social Media Strategy:

Bringing Public Diplomacy 2.0 to the next level

Research paper conducted during an internship at the Consulate General of
The Netherlands in San Francisco, United States

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14 March 2011



Summary

This report explores public diplomacy 2.0 for the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands and its various Consulates in the United States. The use of new media both for personal use and private industries is intensifying. Engagement on social media is potentially enlarging the effectiveness of public diplomacy too. Public diplomacy 2.0 includes a government's presence on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs. The Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington DC and the Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco, United States have prioritized digitalization and engagement on social media in 2010. Adding to the ongoing development and implementation of the social media strategy by the Department of Public Diplomacy, Press and Culture, I conducted a meta research on public diplomacy 2.0. This paper explores the structure, organization, objectives, audience, regulation and evaluation of effective web 2.0 practices. Social media asks for an hybridization of open and closed communication practices. Based on my experiences and research at the Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco, I have composed a Public diplomacy 2.0 report. This report is primarily focused on public diplomacy practices from the Netherlands and the United States. Public diplomacy 2.0 offers the Foreign Service a new way to connect with foreign audiences. Horizontal engagement is the key principle in the execution of an effective pd2.0.

Keywords: public diplomacy 2.0, social media

Acknowledgements

I had the privilege to work as an intern for six months at the Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco during May 2010 and November 2010. During this period I supported the Department of Public Diplomacy, Press and Culture with the organization of a Design Week (www.seeing-orange.com). In addition I had the opportunity to research public diplomacy 2.0. I reported on my findings to the Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco and the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington D.C.

With particular thanks to Bart van Bolhuis, Consul-General of the Netherlands in San Francisco and Jennifer Katell, Senior Officer, Public Diplomacy, Press and Culture for giving me this opportunity, for support and inspiration.

During six months I had the opportunity to gain experience in the daily activities of the Department of Public Diplomacy, Press and Culture. The research complemented the active approach of the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington D.C. for digitalization and engagement on social media platforms. Therefore it was an inspirational task to research the intersection between new media and public diplomacy.

Royal Embassy of the Netherlands 2.0

Links to online presence on social media platforms by the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington DC, and its various Consulates in the United States:

http://dc.the-netherlands.org/the_Embassy/Follow_us

http://sanfrancisco.the-netherlands.org/the_Consulate/Follow_us

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Introduction

The goal of this paper is to re-imagine public diplomacy in the 21st century. The thrust to do so coincides with Daryl Copeland's vision of 'Guerilla Diplomacy'. Copeland argues for a new kind of diplomacy:

The guerilla diplomat's ears will always be to the ground and his or her eyes on the horizon – but the success of any endeavor will turn especially on the collection of strategic intelligence, the development of alternative networks, and the production of demonstrable results. It may involve relying on technology and especially the new media as a force multiplier; on taking a less formal approach to representation; and, probably most importantly, on thinking outside the box and innovating relentlessly. ¹

The severe economic crisis that hit the world globally in 2008 has burdened the Foreign Service too. In line with state wide budget cuts, there is a quest to lower the costs for public diplomacy efforts. It means better demonstrable results, for lesser costs. The Dutch Foreign Service in the United States has devoted among other Western countries such as the United States and Great Britain, great attention to the digitalization of communication and the development and implementation of social media. To engage with foreign audiences through social media services, diplomacy has to innovate itself. The social media services ask for openness and transparency, which contradicts traditional closed communication practices in diplomacy.

In line with Copeland's vision: "[...] relevance, effectiveness, transformation – for the reinvention of the foreign ministry, diplomacy, and the foreign service."², public diplomacy must re-imagine and adapt itself to be effective. The need to talk is evident; the defense budgets have reached unprecedentedly high levels worldwide. It is time for coercive 'hard power' methods to step aside for 'soft power' strategies to address the global problems which the world is facing. Horizontal engagement is necessary for effective foreign policy in the 21st century. Social media is the newest method in the toolkit of public diplomacy departments. Public diplomacy departments should recognize the technological development of social media services and the increase of social engagements with these tools at home

¹ Copeland, Daryl. *Guerrilla Diplomacy: Rethinking International Relations*. P. 207.

² Copeland, Daryl. P. 14.

and abroad. The use of new media for public diplomacy purposes is called public diplomacy 2.0. To understand the role and functioning of public diplomacy 2.0, I will research the following:

How may a Foreign Service organize its public diplomacy 2.0 practices, with regards to its structure, objectives, communication practices, audience, regulation and evaluation?

In addition to the research and development of a social media strategy conducted by the Public Diplomacy Department of the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington D.C., I have researched how social media could benefit the Foreign Service. This paper is a composition of interviews, surveys and important newspaper articles that have been published about public diplomacy 2.0 in 2010. The development of a social media strategy is coordinated at the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington D.C. The central coordination contributes to the effectively and consistency of the implementation of social media. This paper contributes to the research that is undertaken on pd2.0 by the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington DC.

I have reached out to a broad range of resources. This includes research papers by well known diplomacy schools such as *Clingendael* and *USC Center on Public Diplomacy*; editors of important public diplomacy blogs such as *Mountainrunner* and *Whirled View*; public diplomacy experts and retired foreign service officers; the International New Media Strategy, Office of Innovative Engagement, which is an International Information Program of the US Department of State; public diplomacy departments of other European Consulates; new media experts such as Ali Fischer; students at various schools worldwide researching the potentials of social media for diplomacy purposes; collaborating colleagues at the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington D.C. and London; and the social media services themselves, including Facebook and Twitter.

Internet has developed extensively since its introduction on the market. Daryl Copeland clarifies the different stages as follow:

Since its popular inception in the early 1990s, the epicenter of the Internet has continually shifted, migrating from Web 1.0, which can be thought of as read/write/broadcast mode, to Web 2.0, which today is

dominant and is characterized by interaction and exchange, and now on the early stages of Web 3.0, which features a spectrum of new possibilities related to emotion, sensation (through haptic technologies), the simulation of real life experience, and the construction of parallel, virtual worlds.³

While Web 3.0 is still in its development stage, diplomacy is emerged in Web 2.0 practices. I argue the following in my paper: public diplomacy 2.0 will take a leading role in the Foreign Service if its practices are re-imagined in terms of real engagement with foreign audiences. Authenticity and credibility are the key words for this transformation.

This paper addresses the different views and opinions on social media services for public diplomacy 2.0 purposes. I have acquired this data through interviews, a digital survey⁴, and literature research. This report is mainly functional as a composition of the main arguments, struggles and practices of public diplomacy 2.0. I would recommend public diplomacy officers and academics to use the report as a frame of reference for the development of more effective public diplomacy 2.0 efforts.

This report was written in 2010. Given the recent developments in North Africa, and the role of social media in supporting these revolutions, research on new media within the realm of international relations is extremely valuable. Despite the distinction between public diplomacy 2.0 and the role of social media in the quest of democratization and development; they both appreciate the network for its power to change, assemble and influence.

³ Copland, Daryl. 'Virtuality, diplomacy, and the foreign ministry: does foreign affairs and international trade canada need a "V Tower"?' p. 3-4.

⁴ Noort, Carolijn van. 'Online Social Media Survey.'

Key terminology

Public Diplomacy 2.0

Public diplomacy 2.0 is the use of new media (web 2.0, social media) to listen, engage and influence foreign publics, either by a government (public diplomacy) or by citizens (citizen diplomacy) in order to create a favorable environment for achieving national security, political, cultural and economic objectives.⁵

Digital Diplomacy & 21st century Statecraft

These terms are catch words for the foreign policy of US Secretary, Hillary Clinton: 'Development & Diplomacy'. Secretary Clinton is known as the 'godmother' of digital diplomacy, in ways that she advocates for internet freedom and the free flow of information. Hillary Clinton spoke recently in San Francisco, where she devoted most of her time advocating for 21st century statecraft.⁶ The following information explains her foreign policy in more detail:

Secretary Clinton emphasized a commitment to defending the freedom of expression and the free flow of information in the 21st century. The free flow of information and ideas over digital technologies is in our national and global interests: it is important for economic growth; for U.S. diplomatic relationships; for building sustainable democratic societies; and for meeting global challenges in the years and decades ahead.

The State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are working with a wide range of partners outside of government to support these principles. They are pursuing an active agenda to promote Internet freedom, to boost online access across the developing world and to train civil society activists in online organizing.

Many U.S. Government development and public diplomacy programs emphasize to our partners the communication benefits of new technologies. In addition, the State Department and USAID are planning the following initiatives:

- The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor will soon be launching a series of projects that assist users in using mobile

⁵ Armstrong, Matt. 'Defining Public Diplomacy.'

⁶ US. Department of State. 'Remarks on Innovation and American Leadership to the Commonwealth Club.'

communications safely; increase access to uncensored content on the Internet; or assist organizations in protecting their data and communications systems.

- USAID is launching a public-private partnership with the Knight Foundation to implement the MATADOR (Media Assistance utilizing Technological Advancements and Direct Online Response) program, which trains and supports civil society groups and non-governmental organizations in the use of new media technologies. The first MATADOR projects, scheduled for implementation in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa, will focus on election monitoring, distribution of unbiased election news and information, encouraging youth participation in politics, getting out the vote, and engaging the public in monitoring corruption.
- The Middle East Partnership Initiative will support a series of pilot projects that will use new media to connect people—particularly young people—to expand civic participation and increase the capabilities of civil society in the Middle East and North Africa.
- In 2010, the State Department will begin working in partnership with industry, academia, and non-governmental organizations on harnessing the power of connection technologies to advance the United States' foreign policy agenda. This effort will leverage tools such as mobile phone applications and social media to help strengthen civil society, promote good governance, and encourage people-to-people contacts.⁷

⁷ Bureau of Public Affairs US. 'Internet Freedom in the 21st Century: Integrating New Technologies into Diplomacy and Development.'

Report on Public Diplomacy 2.0

Structure

Digitalization

It is important that Embassies and Consulates devote attention to the digitalization of its communication practices, due to its open and immediate character. Embassies and Consulates are representing the interests of the home country. Therefore, badly conducted public diplomacy 2.0 can backfire immensely. The Foreign Service has higher levels of accountability than the private industry does. The development of the digitalization of the Dutch Mission in the United States has made significant progress. New blogs, twitter accounts and Facebook pages are set up by both the Embassy and its Consulates in the United States. The Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington D.C. prioritized the development of a social media strategy in 2010. Due to this vast attention on the digitalization of communication efforts, a social media strategy was presented in October 2010 in Washington D.C. The Public Diplomacy Department is currently involved in the implementation of its strategy and concrete tactics.

Smith-Mundt Modernization Act

The development of social media engagement can be constrained due to various reasons, among others; bureaucracy, lack of resources, and the law. The United States is currently involved in reforming the Smith-Mundt act. This act maintains an artificial wall between audiences in the United States and abroad. Matt Armstrong, president and publisher at the *Mountainrunner* blog, explains the outdated act as follow:

But one rarely examined element is the true impact of the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, which for all practical purposes labels U.S. public diplomacy and government broadcasting as propaganda. The law imposes a geographic segregation of audiences between those inside the U.S. and those outside it, based on the fear that content aimed at audiences abroad might “spill over” into the U.S. This not only shows a lack of confidence and understanding of U.S. public diplomacy and international broadcasting, it also ignores the ways in which information and people now move across porous, often non-existent

borders with incredible speed and ease, to both create and empower dynamic diasporas.⁸

The United States is one of the only countries in the world that maintains two different official websites; one for domestic audiences and one for foreign audiences (State.gov & America.gov). The Smith-Mundt act is drafted during the Cold War, before the revolution of the Internet and the technological developments in communication. Even if the United States is a modern and progressive country; their public diplomacy practices are lacking behind. While Congress is debating the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act, opportunities in the digital space are lost or postponed in the mean time.

Structural support: US Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton

Prioritizing digitalization and social media involvement, relies on the approval of higher officials. If there is actual support of public diplomacy 2.0, there will be more budget allocated to its effectiveness. If budget is spent well, it means more specialists working on effective and demonstrable results.

The United States has an exceptional high political figure, supporting public diplomacy 2.0: Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State. Secretary Clinton made a major speech on internet freedom in January 2010. The Bureau of Public Affairs explains her approach as follow:

Secretary Clinton emphasized a commitment to defending the freedom of expression and the free flow of information in the 21st century. The free flow of information and ideas over digital technologies is in our national and global interests: it is important for economic growth; for U.S. diplomatic relationships; for building sustainable democratic societies; and for meeting global challenges in the years and decades ahead.⁹

Bureau of Public Affairs of the U.S. Department of State summarizes the five key freedoms of the Internet Age:

Freedom of Speech: Blogs, emails, text messages have opened up new forums for the exchange of ideas.

⁸ Armstrong, Matt. 'Reforming Smith-Mundt: Making American Public Diplomacy Safe for Americans.'

⁹ Bureau of Public Affairs. 'Internet Freedom in the 21st Century: Integrating New Technologies into Diplomacy and Development.'

Freedom of Worship: The Internet enhances people's ability to worship as they see fit.

Freedom from Want: Online connections expand people's knowledge and economic opportunities including locating new markets.

Freedom from Fear: Those who disrupt the free flow of information threaten individual liberties and the world's economy and civil society.

Freedom to Connect: Connecting with others near and far offers unprecedented opportunities for human cooperation.¹⁰

Clinton's commitment to support internet freedom has led to the development and growth of the International New Media Strategy, Office of Innovative Engagement, which is an international information program by the U.S. State Department.

21st century statecraft

The two most important people that elevated Hillary Clinton's foreign policy to the next level are Jared Cohen and Alec Ross. Their goal is to bring diplomacy in the digital arena. The new strategy by the US State Department is called 21st-century statecraft. Cohen and Ross were high profiled in New York Times article 'Digital Diplomacy' by Jesse Lichtenstein in July 2010. Jesse Lichtenstein explains it as follow:

Traditional forms of diplomacy still dominate, but 21st-century statecraft is not mere corporate rebranding –swapping tweets for broadcasts. It represents a shift in form and in strategy – a way to amplify traditional diplomatic efforts, develop tech-based policy solutions and encourage cyberactivism.¹¹

21st-century statecraft acknowledges the role of new communication technologies to reach diplomatic goals. Civic officers who lead and support the digitalization are important. Jared Cohen is no longer working at the Council on Foreign Relations. He has started a new job as director of Google Ideas in October 2010.

¹⁰ Bureau of Public Affairs. 'Internet Freedom in the 21st Century: Integrating New Technologies into Diplomacy and Development.'

¹¹ Lichtenstein, Jesse. 'Digital Diplomacy'.

Emphasizing the role of leaders that advocate for public diplomacy 2.0 is necessary for its ultimate effectiveness. Despite innovations in information and communication technology; real change and progress is only made by human beings. This view is similarly expressed by Jared Cohen, in an interview in the Foreign Policy magazine:

So here's what frustrates me. There are two common misperceptions about the technology aspect of 21st-century statecraft. The first is that the technology side of 21st-century statecraft is just about State Department officials using Twitter and blogging more – in other words, that embracing technology is just about more effectively and innovatively communicating and advocating our policy. I think technology is a valuable tool for that, but to me that's public diplomacy 2.0.

When I think about 21st century statecraft, I think about technology being used as a tool to empower citizens, to promote greater accountability and transparency, to do capacity building. At its core, what technology does is it connects people to information, which is new media; it connects people to each other, which is social media; and then there's a far more exciting path that we're going down now, which is that technology is a tool to connect people to actual resources – like mobile banking or mobile money transfers or telemedicine.¹²

His comment emphasizes the distinction between public diplomacy 2.0 and 21st-century statecraft. The latter entices a much greater strategy and commitment for social change. In terms of structure and organization, the Public Diplomacy department is in charge of public diplomacy 2.0. The development of 21st-century statecraft would be a task of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This paper researches public diplomacy 2.0 for the Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco. It would however be advisable for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to research and develop programs in line with the five key principles of Clinton's speech on internet freedom.

Free flow of information

The potential of social media for public diplomacy 2.0 purposes is only possible if the government is supporting a free flow of information. There is

¹² Larson, Christina. 'State Department Innovator Goes to Google'.

the assumption that internet freedom is only threatened in authoritarian and communist countries. This is not entirely the case according to a report by the New Policy institute:

And in France, Italy, Australia, and many other free, open, democratic societies, governments have shown less commitment to protecting freedom of expression on the internet than they have offline, setting a dangerous precedent.

As countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia face a choice between developing as open, free-market democracies, or as closed, statist autocracies, these more-developed countries send the unfortunate message that censorship has a place in a democratic society. If this trend continues, there is a danger that countries will selectively censor out a great deal of foreign content, creating a series of national intranets, rather than a "single global knowledge commons," as Secretary Clinton called it.¹³

For internet freedom to be truly effective, each country must protect the free flow of information. When every country is setting up different conditions for the use of internet, national intranets may appear. Therefore, the Foreign Service can only be effective if internet freedom is guaranteed both at the home country and the guest country. This will result in a free flow of information.

Horizontal engagement

To develop public diplomacy 2.0 it is necessary to address the political structure of the Dutch government. Vertical decision making should step aside for a more horizontal approach. Innovation and improvements in public diplomacy 2.0 are made best by young people, native to the digital world. In addition, skills for future public diplomacy officers should be adjusted. Skills should combine knowledge and expertise in information technology, communication and international relations. In addition, young talented people should have the possibility to work aside with more experienced foreign officers. The mix of old and new is tremendously beneficial for the Foreign Service to innovate and more important be effective.

¹³ DuPont, Sam. 'Connection Technologies in U.S. foreign Policy: An Overview of "'21st Century Statecraft" & "Internet Freedom". P. 13

The need for innovation through alternative ways of communication is also written in the report 'Public Diplomacy: Moving From Policy to Practice'. This report states:

One of the problems with public Diplomacy today is not a lack of theory but a lack of imagination in how to successfully implement campaigns. Practitioners have to keep in mind that the essence of Public Diplomacy is to connect the message with the overall strategic outlook of government.¹⁴

The ability to re-imagine public diplomacy is for some foreign officers a difficult task. They are convinced of the old, static approach towards communication, and find themselves estranged from new principles that come along with social media services. While their diplomatic experience is tremendously valuable; an open minded view on new ways to perform public diplomacy is constructive for the future of diplomacy. This horizontal approach is nevertheless critical on new approaches. It does however enable people from a range of expertise to discuss and implement new policies and technologies.

Responsibility & management

An important question that is hardly touched upon in newspaper articles and literature that discusses social media for governmental use, is the question of responsibility. Who is responsible? Do we need social media training? Do all employees working for the Foreign Service need to complete social media training? Should we centralize or decentralize the social media? I have raised these and other related questions during my interviews. The majority of the interviewees responded as follow:

Question: Which voice should represent the government in the social media sphere?

Answer: I'd use the same criteria as I'd use for an Embassy spokesperson. For the US this traditionally means the chief of mission, the public affairs officer and the information officer. Otherwise, I'd be very selective unless the embassy doesn't care about conflicting messages and staff free-lancing.¹⁵

¹⁴ Report on Wilton Park Conference 1034. 'Public Diplomacy: Moving From Policy to Practice.' P. 3

¹⁵ Noort, Carolijn van. 'Online social media survey'. Anonymous response.

Regarding the question of responsibility and management of social media, most of the interviewees favored a centralized approach. A few of the answers will illustrate this perspective:

Divisions between traditional media officers and new media offices are already starting to form. This is destructive. Media relations should encompass all forms of media interaction.

Social media is simply an extension (or another tool) in an information, or public affairs officer's tool box. To separate it out into a new administrative entity doesn't make good fiscal or policy sense. It just creates more potential for problems.¹⁶

This approach is very traditional, in terms of organization and responsibility. Public diplomacy officers and information officers are specialized in communications. However, they are just partly informed about specific policies the Foreign Office is addressing.

When talking about social media, the word engagement should be prioritized. In terms of horizontal engagement, other departments at the Embassy have generally more in dept knowledge about science, sustainable industry, economic ventures, human rights and so on. They also know who the important target groups, organizations and institutions are in these specific fields. Public diplomacy 2.0 is in that sense every foreign officer's duty to implement in their daily practices.

Opportunities

Taken in account the advices given at the various interviews and the online social media survey, public diplomacy 2.0 can be executed in four different ways:

1. Centralized at PD department. All communications to foreign audiences are coordinated by one department. The PD department maintains a constant contact with the other Consulates. Each department at every Consulate (economic, science, political etc.) should inform the PD department about events, publications, delegations etc.
2. Decentralized at the different departments. Each department, i.e. Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency, Netherlands Business Support Office, Netherlands Office of Science and Technology, should

¹⁶ Noort, Carolijn van. 'Online social media survey'. Anonymous response.

set up and manage a blog/Facebook/Twitter page to inform, listen, and engage with foreign audiences.

3. Individual foreign officers/diplomats have a personal responsibility to perform public diplomacy 2.0. on specific fields of diplomatic interests.
4. Combination of centralized communications by the public diplomacy department and decentralization of social media presence by the separate departments and foreign officers.

New media is another tool in the toolkit for executing public diplomacy. It is up to the public diplomacy department to maintain a key role in the execution of social media presence. In addition, I would argue for a collaborative responsibility of all employees to succeed in effective public diplomacy 2.0.

Communication

News consumption

Developments in communication and information technology presume a shift in information consumption. Messages on social media services are generally short. This could entail a shift in the consumption of information. The Pew Research Center has however concluded that Americans are spending more, instead of less time following the news.

There are many more ways to get the news these days, and as a consequence Americans are spending more time with the news than over much of the past decade. Digital platforms are playing a larger role in news consumption, and they seem to be more than making up for modest declines in the audience for traditional platforms. As a result, the average time Americans spend with the news on a given day is as high as it was in the mid-1990s, when audiences for traditional news sources were much larger.¹⁷

With the expansion of new medium outlets, including the social media services, more information is generated. Consumers develop specific ways to consume information from each medium. While social media services are equally capable as television and radio to broadcast news; it is not necessarily responding to the demand of the audience. A key finding of the research agrees with this idea:

Most Facebook and Twitter users say they hardly ever or never get news there.¹⁸

This is an important finding to acknowledge in the social media strategy for the Foreign Service. If the people are not looking for the latest news on social media services, the Foreign Service should not waste time and manpower doing so. When consumers prefer to read their news on digital newspapers or traditional media outlets, it is more effective to have an updated resource list on the official website which redirects users to valuable sources. The social media strategy should respond to the demands of its audiences.

¹⁷ Pew Research Center. 'Americans Spending More Time Following the News.' P. 1

¹⁸ Pew Research Center. 'Americans Spending More Time Following the News.' P. 5

Responding to the demand of the audience

Foreign Services around the world have been experimenting with public diplomacy 2.0. Triinu Rajasalu who is the Director General, Department of Public Diplomacy and Media Relations at the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reflects on the work of e-diplomacy:

For domestic audience, consular information has become the most popular type of information. This is especially evident during a crisis. Our network in Facebook doubled during the recent “ashcloud crisis”. We used our FB page as a marketplace for people looking for ways to return home. The consular hotline simply could not take so many phone calls, so we started putting up information on our FB page, inviting people to share information. In addition, we cooperated with travel agencies and shared their info as well. [...] On an ordinary day we usually post information about travel updates, travel warnings, visa info, notifications about recent blog posts, etc.¹⁹

During the several interviews I have conducted, both oral and written, none of the interviewees have argued for consular information on social media services. Triinu Rajasalu argued that their presence on social media is responsive to the needs and wants of the audience. This argument means a weakness of this paper. I have consulted a range of experts in public diplomacy and social media. I did not contact the general audience however for their opinion and input. To have a complete picture of the most effective social media use, it is necessary to include their opinion.

Sources

Rajasalu’s experience with social media emphasizes the potential collaboration between the Foreign Service and the private sector. During the ash cloud crisis, the Estonian Foreign Service worked together with travel agencies to share information about flights, visas and delays. The message composed by travel agencies is different from the standard messages in the Foreign Service. There is a different style and formality involved. The audience responded however positively on the active engagement of the Estonian Foreign Service to inform and respond while using second hand sources. This is an important case to take in consideration when formulating a social media strategy. According to this example, it is not necessary for the Foreign Service to formulate and generate content themselves all the

¹⁹ Diplofoundation. ‘Reflections From E-diplomats.’

time. If other peers in the field are providing useful and accurate content, there is no need to re-formulate it. This is time consuming, and the audience is not demanding it. It also helps in terms of time constraint; many Public Diplomacy departments are busy with other activities. This case study shows that it is not necessary to produce new content every day. Ultimately, social media services are not standard broadcasting channels. If there is a demand for news, the Foreign Service should respond to that. If this is not the case, it is better to use the medium outlet for two-way interactive communications.

One-way versus two-way dialogue

In every interview, news article or diplomacy paper I read the importance of dialogue and two-way communication. An article in the Vanity Fair discussed the social media outreach of Sarah Palin. Sarah Palin employs a very effective one-way communication. Michael Joseph Gross writes the following in 'Sarah Palin: The Sound and the Fury':

She injects herself in to the news almost every day, but on a strictly one-way basis, through a steady stream of messages on Twitter and Facebook. The press plays along. Palin is the only politician whose tweets are regularly reported as news by TV networks. She is the only one who has been able to significantly change the course of debate on a major national issue (health-care reform) with a single Facebook posting (in which she accused the Obama administration, falsely, of wanting to set up a "death panel").²⁰

Although Sarah Palin is not following the principles of social media, her messages are multiplied on mainstream media. It shows that her one-way communication on social media has a mass scale outreach. It responds to the needs or wants of the audience. When visiting a Tea Party Conference in Boston, I understood the wrong interpretation of ideas and intentions in mass scale media. Mass media does not always make a clear distinction between Sarah Palin and the Tea Party in the United States. A visit to a Tea Party conference in Boston made me understand the subtlety between ideas, that is often lacking in mainstream media. The communication practices of Sarah Palin is exceptional and not exemplary for mainstream politicians. I would advice the Foreign Service to aim for two-way dialogues. However, it is interesting to research how her message is disseminated by the media.

²⁰ Gross, Michael Joseph. 'Sarah Palin: The Sound and The Fury.' Vanity Fair. P. 4

Continuation

When the Foreign Service is committed to be actively involved on the social media services, it is important to manage a continuity of messages. If time constraints or a lack of authorized staff is limiting the use of social media services, the Embassy or foreign officers should include this in their social media strategy. City officials at all levels of government are dealing with time constraints. For example, the new Prime Minister of the Netherlands has closed his Hyves (social media platform in the Netherlands) account when he became Prime Minister of the Netherlands in 2010. Mark Rutte is in addition in-active on Facebook and Twitter.²¹ His reason to close his account is time constraint. Rutte's spokes person wrote on his behalf in the last months leading up to his new function. Not continuing his presence online emphasizes the importance of authenticity.

Recognizing the temporary placement of foreign officers abroad, it is important for the Foreign Service to establish independent accounts in name of the Embassy. It is vital that the highest officers are involved in social media. However, a continuing online presence of the Embassy is needed too. The contacts of the Public Diplomacy department may not always overlap with the contacts of the individual foreign officers. For horizontal engagement and networking purposes, it is good to utilize both presences.

Authenticity

Authenticity of the person behind the messages is essential. If the identity on the social media services is an individual person, it would be preferable if this person is managing his account himself. In terms of employees in the Foreign Service, accounts in name of the Consul General, Ambassador or Public Diplomacy officer, should be managed by the man/woman him self. It shows a personal connection with audiences they don't know. And for networking purposes, it shows real commitment and horizontal engagement. In some cases, foreign officers have shown hesitance for certain long time commitment. This hesitance, shaped through time constraint, lack of experience with new media or skepticism, is noticed. Individual presence on social media services is not crucial to succeed as a foreign officer in this stage. It may however become in the future. If an officer is not familiar with the rules and principles of the new medium, he or she may face difficulties performing public diplomacy in certain countries in the future. Public diplomacy 2.0 is gradually growing. The right social media strategy will only

²¹ Lier, Heleen van. 'Mark Rutte stopt met Hyves.'

be known through experimenting and development. Social media services are now a perfect way for foreign officers to inform and connect with colleagues in other places, in addition to networking, crisis management and short and long term reputation management. The use of social media services can and will change and transform over time. It is important for the government to adapt to these changes.

Is public diplomacy 2.0 a valuable investment?

Questions have been raised if the Foreign Office should invest this amount of time in social media services. It is not certain that these services are there to last for years. One of the PD experts I contacted argued the following:

And there is this concern: It may be that, by the time we have come to some conclusions about how to use social media, the technology will have evolved and something new and unexpected will have rendered them anachronistic. This begs the question – what level of investment do we want to make in this new technology?²²

This question was similarly raised at the conference 'Social Media and Social Technologies: Changing Personal and Civic Conversations' at Stanford University.²³ One of the presenters discussed the introduction of the printing press in Europe in the 1800s. Many people, who had access or money, printed their ideas on paper during the first years of the new invention. After a few years, the numbers of publications drastically lowered. Ultimately, only the ones that have something interesting to write will remain. The decrease of publications can be explained as follow: First of all, only a few writers draw attention from a mass audience over a long time period. And second, it is not possible to read everything that is out there. The second argument coincides with the information blast of the 21st century; there is just too much information out there. The audience has to choose between the various media outlets. It is important for the Foreign Service to maintain the role of an important, credible and effective outlet. While I don't foresee for a drastic decrease of media outlets in the 21st century, quite the contrary actually, I do predict the advancement of narrowing down the medium use. For public diplomacy 2.0 to be most effective, it must aim at remaining an important source of information.

²² Social media interview with Public Diplomacy officer. Anonymous response.

²³ Media X conference.

Risk versus benefits

Once a message is posted on a social media service, it will always remain there. The internet has an eternal memory. Even if posted messages are deleted, exposure may not be prevented. The media has the ability to track this and expose this to the general public. In July the newspaper *Volkskrant* wrote about a website called Politwoops.nl.²⁴ This website collects deleted Twitter message by politicians. Due to the immediacy of social media services, new messages are not as closely examined as press releases are. Hesitance for social media services are therefore grounded and sustained. The principles of the social media services, and the consumers' expectations are however different.

A few public diplomacy experts have mentioned the tradeoff between risk and benefit. One of them responded as follow:

And there is risk. If an official says something wrong, for example, about Middle East peace, on Facebook, it can cause uproar. We need balance and considering risk compared to benefit.²⁵

It is important to recognize the tension between risk and benefits, when participating in social media. Although the general perception of public diplomacy 2.0 is not to simply 'jump on the bandwagon'; it is however important to define what risks there are. What is the Foreign Service possibly risking with their participation on social media services? One of the major challenges of the United States last year were the publications of the Afghan War and the Iraq War diaries by WikiLeaks. And the problem of exposing diplomatic papers by Wikileaks still continues in 2011. Ultimately, the great risk of participating on social media is the failure to represent your own country's interest. What is written on social media outlets should be promoting and supporting your country. To define the risks of foreign officers to participate on social media, it could be useful to research social media presence of important CEO's. Their experiences of successful adaptation, or their negative incidences may be useful in the formulation of risks versus benefits.

Diplomacy is a sensitive toolkit in international relations. Certain information should not be accessible to the general public. It may jeopardize the safety

²⁴ Kolk, Thomas van der. *Volkskrant*. 'Website verzamelt verwijderde tweets politici.'

²⁵ Social media interview with Public Diplomacy officer. Anonymous response.

of people, soldiers and government officials. It can also create unrest or uproar by the people. Therefore, it is important to specify what kind of dialogues are permitted online. Based on the knowledge I've acquired from the survey and interviews, the majority recommended political topics in the dialogue. While they wouldn't encourage political discussions; there is no absolute certainty that they can be avoided. Therefore, a well informed and capable person has to be appointed for this kind of communication. Trust and integrity are key principles. Although the website remains the key portal for official press releases and political related content, it is important to respond on these topics at web 2.0 platforms too.

Objectives

Realistic approach to public diplomacy 2.0

Public diplomacy is there to engage with opinion leaders, groups and organizations, outside the official government realm. An effective network is crucial in the exercise of public diplomacy. The expansion of social media use in the United States cannot be overlooked in terms of effective networking. We have to be realistic though. Social media demands time. Although most Foreign Officers acknowledge the growth of social media, some of them need incentives to participate on a continuing basis. What are effective incentives? What are realistic goals for executing public diplomacy 2.0?

The Foreign Service cannot assume that they are the key players in international relations. The role of NGO's, international organizations, multinational corporations, transnational civic activist groups and other organized groups are equally involved in worldwide communications. There is no network centralized around the Embassy, and this is not something we should aim for. The people have the freedom to choose between different communications outlets. What the goal of the Public Diplomacy department should be is to become a recognized and credible voice for their target audiences. If there is a good track record of informing, discussion and response, the network of the Foreign Service on social media services will expand and more important be effective.

New mode of thinking

The following article by the New Policy Institute emphasizes the role of the network in the increasingly globalized world:

The ambition of "21st Century Statecraft" is greater than all these disparate projects: it is part of a mode of thinking at the State Department that understands the world as a network not just of states, but of individuals, organizations and associations.²⁶

For both pd2.0 and 21st century statecraft is the centrality of the network vital. It highlights the interconnection between the different involving parties. Developing public diplomacy 2.0 is part of a greater strategy of the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington DC. If for example the Foreign Service is promoting sustainable energy, it involves both online and

²⁶ DuPont, Sam. 'Connection Technologies in U.S. Foreign Policy: an overview of "21st Century Statecraft" & "Internet Freedom".' P. 9

offline multipliers of information within the public and the private sector. This may result in greater dissemination of the message and implementation of their strategy.

An article that was previously posted in *The New Yorker* (magazine), underlined the over estimation of social media. The article was called: 'Small Change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted'²⁷. It criticized the idea that social media are tools for social activism. Reports in the media have not acknowledged the whole picture of social activism through new technology. According to the writer, it is mainly the West that carries this kind of social activism. This article looks critically at the foreign policy of Hillary Clinton. His argument is applicable to public diplomacy 2.0 too. The existence of social media will not guarantee great success rates for engagement with foreign audiences. The ambitions for executing pd2.0 should acknowledge the limitations of the specific economic, political, social and cultural context. Public diplomacy is combining old and new communication technologies. It means hybridization of old and new strategies. Public diplomacy 2.0 is executed along the lines of Web 1.0 and printed materials. Recent developments in North Africa may question the arguments written in this article. (March 2011)

Networking

Social media services are especially useful for extended network users. These services enable individuals to share content and connect with others. The social media tools are there to establish relationships with people you know, but also to generate new contacts. The outreach of social media became clear throughout the four months of my research. I had formulated a range of questions regarding the use of social media for the Foreign Service, and send these forward to former professors at San Francisco State University, European consulates and social media corporations. The questions were within a week posted on two important diplomacy blogs in the US²⁸; within a month the US Department of State had contacted me; and in another month my digital survey on social media was posted on the social media hub of the US Department of State (Social Media Hub). The use of the right network is evident, especially in terms of public diplomacy practices.

²⁷ Gladwell, Malcolm. 'Small change: why the revolution will not be tweeted.'

²⁸ Lee, Renee. 'Twitter's impact on public diplomacy.'

Kushlis, Patricia H. 'Public Diplomacy and the Social Media: Diplomacy Professionals Your Views Needed.'

Engage in existing networks

Ali Fischer, who is a well known new media specialist, emphasized the necessity to engage with the networks that already exist.²⁹ The Foreign Service should engage in horizontal engagement. Foreign officers are not specialists in every industry; draw on the expertise that already exists. Non-governmental organizations are honored to share information, and help to reach diplomacy goals as joined projects. Real change can only be organized through human based collaboration. People, who are sympathetic to the causes of the Foreign Service, are great multipliers of diplomatic goals.

The non-governmental individuals and organizations are equally important to disseminate the public diplomacy content, as the ability of the PD department to do it themselves. In general, diplomats are sent abroad for short periods of time. During these four years, diplomats will build upon the network of former officers and built in addition new relations. The depth of these relations is different from local based organizations. The Embassy may have similar long-term objectives, as the local organizations do, but the latter are much more tapped into society. Public diplomacy departments should work with these established relations and partnerships. Collaborative communication will create effective change.

I would like to draw on one of the key findings of Dr Ali Fisher's article 'Monitoring social media and networks; identifying keys to unlock collaboration and innovation':

One key finding is the value of the edge; for an organization to be dynamic, it needs to be able to integrate a core of strong links with a large heterogeneous periphery of weaker ties. This network architecture allows the organisation to draw on the strengths of both core and periphery to drive innovation.³⁰

The core links in a network are the 'usual suspects'; the target audiences specified in the communications strategy. This group consists of journalists, non-profit organizations, city departments, and related industries. The weaker ties within the same network are less involved in the same industry, but share common values/approaches/goals/colleagues etc. These weaker ties are useful in establishing new relations with other networks.

²⁹ Social media interview with Public Diplomacy officer. Anonymous response.

³⁰ Fisher, Ali. 'Monitoring social media and networks; identifying keys to unlock collaboration and innovation.' P. 1.

Identify key players in social media

Ali Fisher makes a distinction between alternative networks and mainstream networks. The latter has a much greater outreach. For public diplomacy 2.0 to become more effective, he argues for an analysis that identifies the key players within the network;

Analysing the network allows an organization to identify nodes key to dispersing information. It presents the possibility of targeting nodes whose content tends to be spread through RT numerous times. This information can be used both to counter negative stories and for planning future information releases, as it identifies people who self select to pass on information and those who have the ability to trigger chains of information dispersal.³¹

It would be great if this kind of network analysis would be executed for the Embassies and Consulates. Although your target audience will be an extension of your offline public diplomacy efforts, it is useful to identify key individuals/organizations for spreading information.

Mapping out important networks of already established collaborations with online software, is an important development for the future. For public diplomacy to be more effective, it is useful to have different groups and institutions in discussion on a same platform. A company from the Netherlands has recently launched software for companies to work together on a certain issue with other companies/institutions at an online platform. (Worknets.com). This kind of development can be of great value for future effectiveness of public diplomacy. It for example enables different institutions, groups and individuals working in the creative industries, to work together on the same platform while organizing a collaborative event. When the public diplomacy department provides and stimulates these kinds of platforms, it performs effective diplomacy.

Participatory diplomacy

This idea of using stronger and weaker links, ties in with Daryl Copeland's vision on guerrilla diplomacy. Copeland emphasizes the strong ties of the Foreign Service:

The establishment of Web-based social networking sites within foreign ministries could be particularly useful in providing a venue for the

³¹ Fisher, Ali. 'The world of Wikileaks Part 2: A means of evaluating Public Diplomacy.' P. 2

sharing of experiences and best practices, thereby fostering more vibrant communities of contemporary diplomatic practice.³²

Daryl Copeland writes also about the use value of alternative networks. The communication and dialogue practices between government departments; between government to government; and between government and civic society are not updated to the new principles that apply to social media services, and the openness and transparency of the digital space. Copeland asks the following question:

Why not bring the principles of *wikinomics* to diplomacy, leveraging knowledge by posting selected international policy issues and problems online for comment and proposed solution?³³

The idea of a *wikinomics* is a rarely put in practice. The perception of empowerment, agency and appreciation are however important principles for non-governmental organizations and individuals to engage actively and working together with the Foreign Service. The response of peers is especially interesting. This form of engagement can lead to knowledge exchange, collaboration and partnerships. If the PD department is able to connect the feedback to a CRM generator, social media pages can function as a front desk. Social media is in that sense just another tool like phone and email are, for the general audience to reach out to the Foreign Service.

It is important for the Foreign Service to engage with foreign audiences on social media services. The following quote from the article 'The Democratisation of Diplomacy: Negotiating with the Internet' says it well:

In these circumstances, a more informed international community, linked by greater and faster information flows, provides a better stage on which diplomats can operate than one where information is restricted, and where others who can be involved have recognized knowledge and, possibly, the trust of the public.³⁴

This article emphasizes the need for greater and faster information flows. While its recommendations are mainly addressed to governmental websites, it could apply on social media services too.

³² Copeland, Daryl. P. 200

³³ Copeland, Daryl. P. 197

³⁴ Grant, Richard. 'The Democratisation of Diplomacy: Negotiating with the Internet'. P.

Government's presence on social media enables better representation, easy access, and visibility for all segments of society. A lot of people are unclear about the functionality of Embassies and Consulates. These platforms facilitate awareness and understanding of diplomatic practices for both domestic and foreign audiences.

Collaboration public & private industry

It can be useful for public diplomacy efforts to hire the private industry for media research and media outreach. Local publicists have established large networks in specific industries. In terms of horizontal engagement; the Embassy should use their expertise for short term publicity. Partnerships between the Foreign Service and the private industry can be highly effective. The approach is not new to Foreign Office practices. The article 'Consuls for hire: Private actors, public diplomacy' discusses the collaboration of the Foreign Service with private firms specialized in political communications.³⁵ Corporations that develop communications tools are experts in the field of software, technology and outreach. It is up to the Foreign Service to use these tools for optimization of public diplomacy. These corporations are generally not experts in the field of international development, social activism or diplomacy. The Foreign Service should propose a strategy, and work together with the private sector when this is beneficial for its outcome.

Reputation management

Charlotte Huygens references an important perception of Western media in the article 'The Art of Diplomacy, the Diplomacy of Art':

Today the media, even more than transport mobility, play a growing role in interactions between societies and cultures. In this context, the large media conglomerates are persistently criticized by those in other cultures who see them as instruments for promoting Western values and establishing a profoundly unequal 'dialogue'.³⁶

Large media corporations from the West are in certain parts of the world partly or entirely forbidden (i.e. countries like China, India or Russia). This is the case for social media services too. If they are allowed, they are perfect instruments for the Foreign Service to represent the country on an accessible and personal platform. The expansion and popularity of social media use, contributes to the equalization of the conversation. The social

³⁵ Pigman, Geoffrey Allen & Anthony Deos. 'Consuls for hire: Private actors, public diplomacy.' P. 1.

³⁶ Berger, Maurits and others. 'Bridge the Gap, or Mind the Gap? Culture in Western-Arab Relations.'

media services should therefore not be applied for promotion and branding; it is much more linked to reputation management. With the latter I mean a conversation based on understanding, explanation, improvement and innovation. The dialogue is there to ultimately listen and respond.

Interactivity

Different Embassies and Consulates around the world have started a social media presence. An useful example to look at is the US Embassy in Jakarta. Melanie Ciolek wrote an article that illustrates the great success of this US Embassy with their social media practices. Within one year, the Embassy increased its Facebook page from 3000 fans in 2009 to 130.000 fans in 2010.³⁷ Important reasons of their effective outreach are the use of interactive games, quizzes and prizes. This is a very new game for the Foreign Service. It demands much more human resources, budget allocation and above all, creativity to do this kind of work. I would certainly recommend this kind of interactivity. On the other hand, their success was generated through an upcoming visit of President Obama to Jakarta. This is rather an exceptional event, than a daily routine for normal Embassies. Therefore, we must be critical about the use value of interactive games for a social media strategy. The target audience in this specific example is not necessarily the target audience in their offline communications. It is important to specify what the opportunities are (increase of 127.000 followers) or interactivity with specified target audiences online (perhaps 1000 followers).

FCO

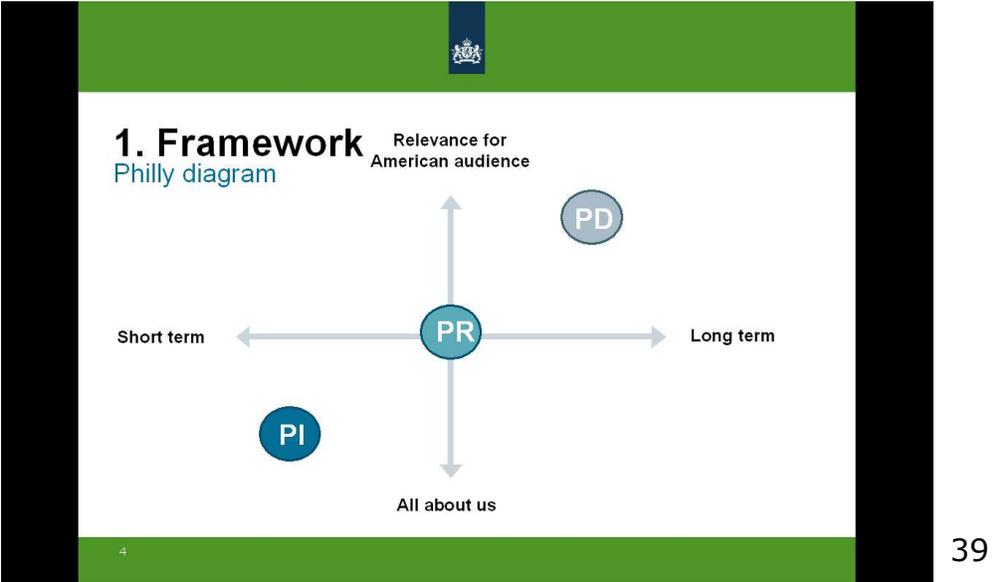
Another great example of social media use is the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office. The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office has structured their digital diplomacy activities at the website 'Digital Diplomacy: Communication Directorate'³⁸. One of their objectives is formulating a social media strategy. It is very useful that the site distinguishes between 'intensive campaigns', 'post-led campaigns' and 'long-term campaigns'. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office has been credited for its innovative approach.

Three categories of communication by the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands
The Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington DC have made a

³⁷ Ciolek, Melanie. 'Understanding Social Media's Contribution to Public Diplomacy.' P. 11.

³⁸ British Foreign & Commonwealth Office. 'Digital Diplomacy: Communication Directorate'.

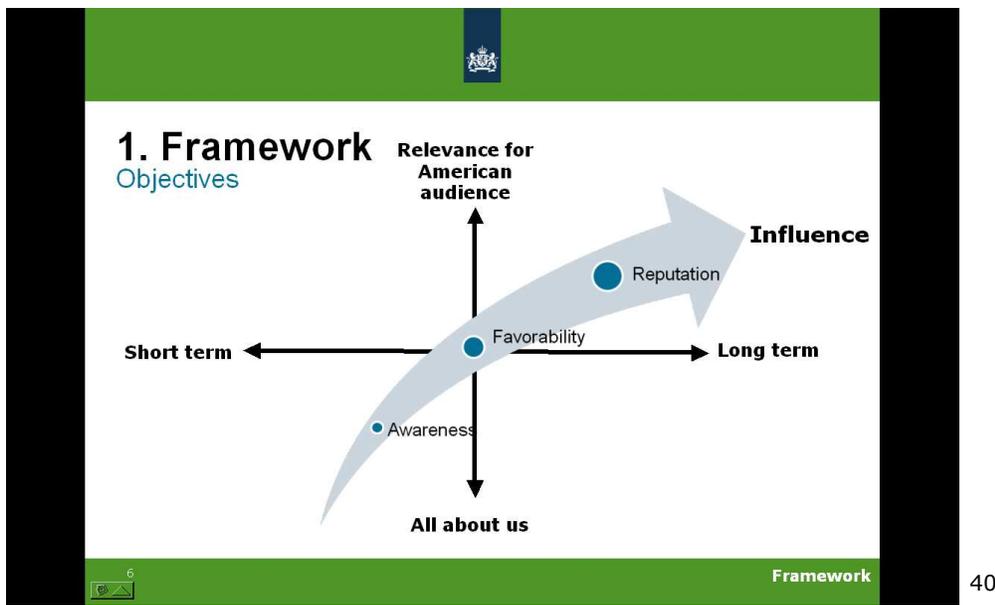
distinction between three categories of communication in their digital communications strategy: public information (PI), Public Relations (PR), and Public Diplomacy (PD). The following diagram shows the position of the communication category within a framework of short and long term results, and type of audience.



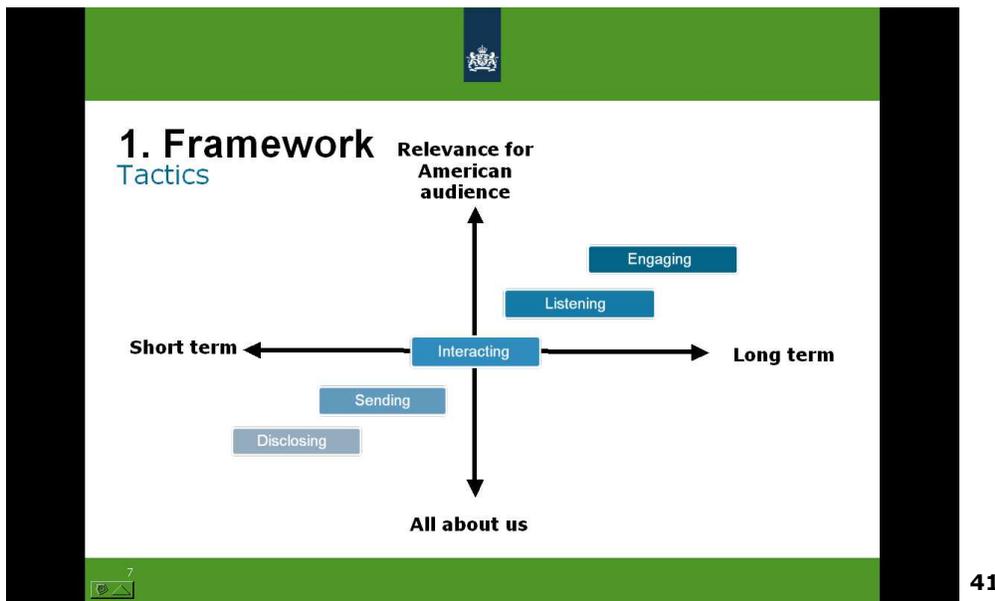
This diagram positions public diplomacy within the realm of 'relevance for American audience' and 'long term'. Public diplomacy 2.0 should therefore expand on this greater strategy.

The following diagram clarifies the objectives within this framework of communication practices. The key objectives of public diplomacy are influence and reputation management. Participation on social media must benefit these purposes.

³⁹ Royal Embassy of the Netherlands, Washington D.C. Department of Public Diplomacy. Used by permission.



The following diagram emphasizes the tactics, to reach the communication objectives. Engagement is the most important criteria for executing public diplomacy.



Given the active devotion by the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington D.C. for developing a digital communications strategy in 2010, many things have changed. This is visible in the consolidation of media

⁴⁰ Royal Embassy of the Netherlands, Washington D.C. Department of Public Diplomacy. Used by permission.

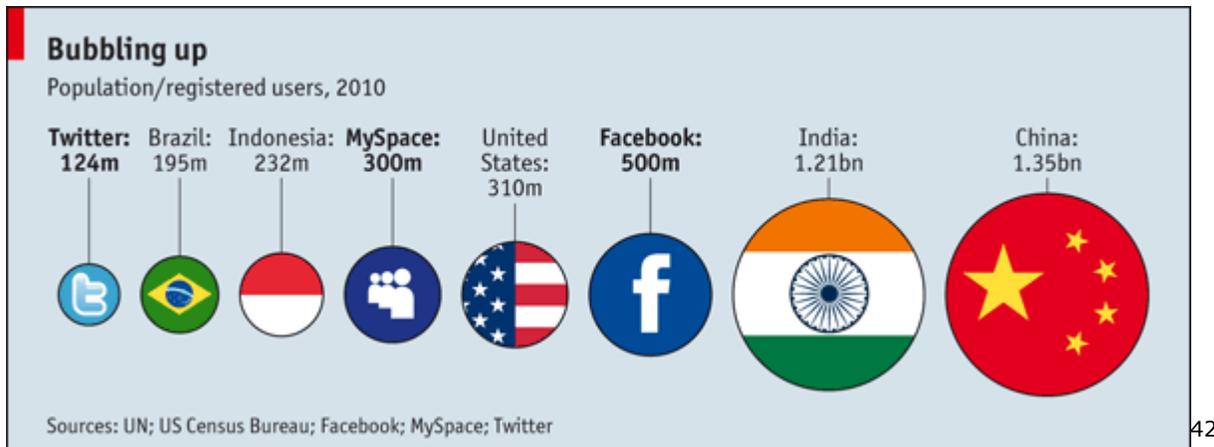
⁴¹ Royal Embassy of the Netherlands, Washington D.C. Department of Public Diplomacy. Used by permission.

efforts, active participation by Foreign Service officers online, formulation of clear strategy, tactics and objectives, plans for the future and more.

Audience

Power elite or mass audience

Social media services expand the outreach of public diplomacy beyond the territorial boundaries through the openness of the internet. The following diagram shows the scale of the social media services:



Facebook is the third biggest state in the world, if members are counted as citizens.

What audience does the Foreign Service want to reach with their presence on social media services? Social media services enable the Foreign Service to communicate with a mass audience. One of the interviewees however argued for a continuing communication with the power elites. One of the public diplomacy experts argued the following:

But for our embassies, I would argue that the first audiences is still an elite – journalists, government officials, academics, think tanks – who can influence broader public. [...] Technology can extend our reach. But power elites are still important, and we have to be careful we don't get swept up in enthusiasm for New Media and forget to consider what we are trying to say, to whom and how most effectively.⁴³

This is an interesting view to consider when discussing a niche or mass strategy for social media services. Effective outreach is the main objective of public diplomacy. It is however confusing what effective Public Diplomacy

⁴² The Economist. 'Social networks and statehood: the Future is another Country.'

⁴³ Social media interview with Public Diplomacy officer. Anonymous response.

2.0 entails; persuading the elite or the mass audience? Traditionally, public diplomacy was aimed at the power elite. Should we maintain this strategy or address a larger audience? The social media strategy of the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands specifies the continuation of target (niche) audiences online.

Democratization versus participation gap

The general assumption of the internet revolution is that it resulted in the democratization of society. People from all segments all society are able to participate in politics through internet. Despite the broadening of possibilities, the society is employing these tools disproportionately. Alan K. Henrikson argues about this participation gap in terms of addressing global issues in the article 'The Future of Diplomacy? Five Projective Visions' the following:

There is, as Kaul and her UNDP team point out, a 'participation gap' that prevents global problems from being adequately understood and addressed. Despite 'the spread of democracy', there still are 'marginal and voiceless groups'. By expanding the role of 'civil society' and also of the 'private sector' in international negotiations, they suggest, governments will 'enhance their leverage over policy outcomes while promoting pluralism and diversity'.⁴⁴

This idea is argued by Inge Kaul at the UN Development Programme. It is however applicable too for public diplomacy 2.0. The Foreign Service addresses global issues through a targeted group of individuals, public and private sectors. The role of civil society is generally excluded to the most engaged and publicly involved people. Public diplomacy 2.0 offers the possibility for the Foreign Service to reach beyond the power elite. Question is, if this is effective in the short and long term. The optimism for new media is perhaps masking the real change by audiences. The kind of audience we want to reach out to is ultimately linked to the overall strategy of the Department of Public Diplomacy.

⁴⁴ Henrikson, Alan K. 'The Future of Diplomacy? Five Projective Visions.' P. 10

Regulation

Government regulation

Active participation of Embassies and Consulates on social media services demand a hybridization of open and closed communication practices. What was previously only discussed and disseminated in the private scene, is now more and more available to a wider audience. Different government, some more than others, have discussed the regulation of the new medium for the purpose of safety, control and monitoring conversations.

The political party CDA in the Netherlands for example, argued for more control and regulation of social media sites. The Telegraaf reports that the CDA in the European Parliament aims at a policy that obligates social media sites such as Hyves and Facebook for people under 18 to be private.⁴⁵ This kind of moderation is grounded in the belief that the youth should be protected for negative exterior influences. Protecting young children from pornography, pedophilia, and other forms of abuse is logical. It is questionable however if regulating the source, that is social media, is most effective. The openness and transparency of the internet demands for new tactics. Public diplomacy departments should equally address social media regulation, with a real estimate of the possibilities and limitations of the new medium.

The social context determines the interpretation and effectiveness of the message. As mentioned before, human beings determine the outcome of the technological innovations. The active engagement of a government to interfere in the digital space, is spoken of in the article 'Russia: From 'Sovereign Democracy' to 'Sovereign Internet'.

[...] it intensifies internal communication and supports the role of the government as a nerve center, a hub of the system. Being a hub in such a context, together with maintaining common denominator, means protection of the state's sovereignty. However, the most unique characteristics of 'sovereign Internet' is that its control model is based on free will of the Internet users. Consequently, it can't be bypassed through technological means. In this case, the change is not about the

⁴⁵ Stam, Herman. 'Verplicht slot op Facebook.'

technology but primarily about the people and the social environment.⁴⁶

Despite restrictions imposed by the government to control and regulate the digital space in Russia, there is a much greater power on the recipient end through the model of the internet. Even though the Netherlands has different laws in terms of regulation, freedom of speech and censure measures, being the central hub of information, is desirable. The Foreign Service is much more effective if it is perceived as the most credible voice in areas of politics and economics. The ambition to control the message is comprehensible. It may support the role, strength and leverage of diplomacy in the international sphere. Regulation is however questionable. Is it really possible to do so? And does it coincide with the intrinsic qualities of the medium? Research and practical experience will provide answers in the future.

Good versus perfect content

In my research there has a twofold emerged between good versus perfect content. Traditional communication of public diplomacy aims at perfect content. The Foreign Service is after all representing the home country. Every message is therefore thoroughly investigated and analyzed before publication. Social media services have generally limited space for content (i.e. Twitter). Or in other cases, the message will be shortened for others to see (i.e. Facebook). The limited space constraints long bureaucratic language and in dept elaboration. If the Foreign Service makes use of these social media services, they are forced to adapt their public diplomacy practices when communicating online. Social media does not demand perfect content. Press releases and official website publications demand this. For social media to work, it needs accurate, timely and clear (good) content.

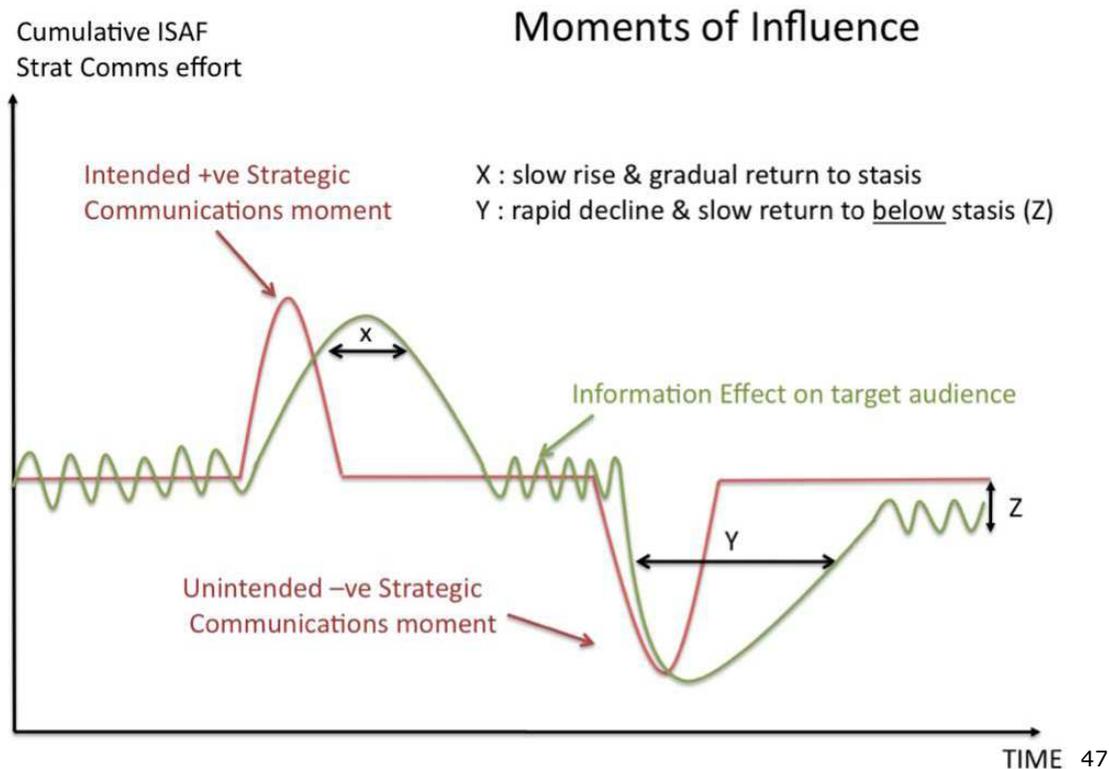
One of the main goals for the Foreign Service to use social media is engagement. The social media services enable for content to be multiplied, beyond the scale and reach of the PD department. It is true that the message can be distorted when the message is beyond the control of the PD department, but this is the case for web 1.0 outreach too.

Intended communications versus unintended communications

The following diagram from the article 'Strategic Communication & Influence

⁴⁶ Asmolov, Gregory. 'Russia: From "Sovereign Democracy" to "Sovereign Internet"?'

Operations: Do We Really Get 'It'? is also valid for social media impact. Even though the article is focusing on strategic communication for military objectives, the military needs to deal with sensitive content, long term engagement, and the representing role of a government too.



Intended communications have a better time span than unintended communications do. If public diplomacy 2.0 is wrongly executed, it may result in quick decline of the information effect on the target audience. In contrast with intended communications, it takes much more time to re-adjust to a base line of information effect. Therefore an intended communications strategy is needed.

Social media guidelines on the other hand are questionable. Intended communications can mean a variety of things. Which ones are applicable to execute social media?

1. Social media strategy
2. Social media tactics
3. Social media training

⁴⁷ Rowland, Dr. Lee & Cdr Steve Tatham RN. 'Strategic Communication & Influence Operations: Do We Really Get 'It'?

4. Incentives

My research has generated a mixture of different responses; both loose and tied approaches of social media. Practice and future research may tell the right approach.

Short & long term promotion

In the social media strategy it is important to define between short and long term objectives. It is advisable that the media outreach overlaps. Social media is often used for 'shock' attention; it creates temporarily a buzz around a certain event, and then its attention fades away. Continuity of engagement is however much more difficult to generate.

I have raised the following question in the social media survey:

Question: 'How can social media as a tool of public diplomacy be used to support foreign policy goals?'

Answer: For users of new and social media, embassies and institutions become (or appear to become) more accessible and less intimidating. What is later done with those connections still takes skill and personal efforts.⁴⁸

In that sense the Department of Public Diplomacy must facilitate a transition between short term promotion to long term engagement. It is one thing to start a social media presence. It entails however a long time commitment to uphold this presence. This again emphasizes the importance of human based action, structural support and budget allocation for staff, software and training.

Social media guidelines

The expansion of social media services have led to the development of Public Diplomacy 2.0. The new communication tools demand for new guidelines. During my research I have asked a variety of sources for important social media guidelines. The most interesting responses are obviously from the social media corporations themselves. I had the opportunity to ask Twitter co-founders Ev Williams and Biz Stone about social media guidelines for public diplomacy purposes during an interview at the Commonwealth Club. I emphasized the public diplomacy's task to work with political sensitive content. Ev's response was: "Rip it!". This means, no moderation, no

⁴⁸ Noort, Carolijn van. 'Online social media survey.' Anonymous response.

regulation, no social media guidelines. Biz responded after this that political figures have to use social media services that fit with their needs and wants. It is important to send messages in the world, but more importantly is to respond and raise questions. To build a general strategy is more appropriate than guidelines are. Foreign officers will use social services for what they need or want from them. Their Twitter presence could be for news acquiring purposes. It could also be used to highlight projects undertaken by the department. The strategy must recognize the difference between individual accounts of foreign officers and accounts managed by the PD department, that represent the Consulate as a whole.

Several corporations have posted their social media guidelines online. I would like to emphasize the official guideline of Intel.⁴⁹ Their document suggests the following guidelines:

- Stick to your area of expertise and provide unique, individual perspectives on what's going on at Intel and in the world.
- Post meaningful, respectful comments – in other words, no spam and no remarks that are off-topic or offensive.
- Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
- Respect proprietary information and content, and confidentiality.
- When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.
- Know and follow the Intel Code of Conduct and the Intel Privacy Policy.⁵⁰

According to my experience of the Foreign Service, these guidelines are already in place. There are guidelines written out in Den Hague and provided to civil servants working abroad. The same applies for these rules; they are an extension of the normal code of conduct. In that respect, the Twitter founders are right. Guidelines are not necessary if they match the usual code of conduct of foreign officers.

Regarding the content, Intel advices:

Balanced online dialogue. Whether content is pre-moderated or community moderated, follow these three principles: the Good, the

⁴⁹ Intel. 'Social Media Guidelines'.

⁵⁰ Intel. 'Social Media Guidelines'.

Bad, but not the Ugly. If the content is positive or negative and in context to the conversation, then we approve the content, regardless of whether it's favorable or unfavorable to Intel. But if the content is ugly, offensive, denigrating and completely out of context, then we reject the content.⁵¹

Allowing bad content and responding appropriately is challenging. It has to be clear what bad and ugly is. It also demands a constant moderation of the debate. In addition, it demands well informed and trusted employees in charge of the communication.

My visit at Facebook's department of International Communications and Public Affairs, confirmed the missing collaboration between most government institutions and its social media presence. In terms of social media guidelines, she referred to the necessity of follow-up. If the audience is asking questions, it is important to respond in a timely manner. The following phrase would be useful for the Embassy: 'I'm a representative of the Embassy, and I've seen your comment.'⁵² Dialogue should be encouraged. Due to the newness of the company, collaboration between government institutions and social media companies could be intensified in the future.

My recent visit at the first Social Media Bees Awards in San Francisco emphasized the excellence of unregulated social media presence. One of the companies were disqualified for moderating negative comments (Ikea). This is an interesting decision for the jury to make. It underlines the necessity to define what the 'ugly' is precisely and if non-regulation is at all possible.

Posted comments policy

In terms of regulation, the following was suggested during a presentation by Facebook:

We encourage you to have a posted comments policy. Their policy lays out clearly what can and cannot happen. [...] I think generally, the army, the White House and other high profile pages have had very positive experiences. You see less of these really terrible comments because Facebook is a real world –real name culture so that people are

⁵¹ Intel. 'Social Media Guidelines'.

⁵² Conversation at Facebook. Department of International Communication and Public Affairs.

posting with their real name and photo there and they can be held responsible.⁵³

Facebook is not encouraging regulation or moderation of content. A posted comments policy should be sufficient to moderate the messages.

I have asked the following question both during my interviews and through the social media survey:

Question: What are the most important principles/guidelines to keep in mind when using social media platforms?

Answer: 1) Importance depends on the local media environment and audience internet accessibility; 2) should be seen as part of a public affairs officer's tool box – more or less applicable to the situation; 3) not all mission personnel should be the public face of an embassy or consulate or you'll end up with conflicting and garbled messages; 4) social media is time consuming and staff intensive – and if you're going to do it well you need people who can handle it technically and substantively; 5) don't tell a busy chief of mission he or she has to write a blog or Tweet – and then require everything that goes out to be cleared by the home office; 6) obey policy guidance from headquarters – but what the social media can do is provide additional context and background relevant to the country and audience in a timely fashion.⁵⁴

These guidelines are important to include in the strategy; they were given by a highly experienced US public diplomacy expert. It emphasizes the centrality of web 2.0 efforts, the need of structural support and budget allocation and the need of trusted and educated personnel.

⁵³ Facebook for military 101: written text of PowerPoint presentation.

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⁵⁴ Noort, Carolijn van. 'Online social media survey.' Anonymous responses.

Evaluation

Measuring effectiveness

Traditional public diplomacy is difficult to evaluate, because engagement of foreign audiences is difficult to measure. The evaluation of social media is believed to be different. Tools like Google Analytics make quantitative research straightforward. The use value of these findings is questionable however. A report by the United States Government Accountability Office assessing Public Diplomacy platforms describes the lack of evaluation of social media. The report describes a variety of Public Diplomacy Platforms including social media to engage with foreign audiences. The report concludes:

However, State lacks comprehensive information on the relative effectiveness of its platforms, such as how each platform has expanded U.S. engagement with foreign audiences. Without such information, it is difficult for policy makers to make an accurate assessment of the relative benefits of each type of outreach platform and effectively allocate scarce resources.⁵⁵

While evaluation tools like Google Analytics are useful to record quantitative traffic on the website, it is unclear how the message has multiplied and distributed, both online and offline. Ali Fischer argues this as follow:

The same is true online, if you look at largely traffic flow to your site, it is hard to see who else is important within the same 'ecosphere' of information. Instead you end up with information on the 'egosphere' that which is thought to be directly relevant to you."⁵⁶

PD experts have referenced a variety of systems that do analysis: Crimson Hexagon, Parature, HootSuite, Shoutlet, Statcounter, Statmeter and Quantcast. While the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington D.C. has formulated concrete tactics to evaluate their public diplomacy efforts, it would be advisable to keep researching other possibilities to research real offline engagement with foreign audiences.

⁵⁵ GAO. 'Engaging Foreign Audiences: Assessment of Public Diplomacy Platforms Could help Improve State Department Plans to Expand Engagement.' P. 31.

⁵⁶ Written response by Ali Fisher on social media survey.

Online and offline engagement

In the article 'Strategic Communication & Influence Operations: Do We Really Get 'It'?' the writers make an important point:

Remember the process of influence is not necessarily to make a particular group like 'us' or 'our' ideas – although this is always an extra 'bonus.' Influence is designed to affect behavior.⁵⁷

Online efforts of public diplomacy must have an offline response, for public diplomacy 2.0 to be truly effective. If the Embassy is maintaining a page that informs about sustainable energy and clean technology, the platform is only useful when it engages organizations, cities and general audiences to act upon it. When the Foreign Service develops a evaluation strategy, it should include that notion.

Feedback

An evaluation is not sustainable when there is no feedback given to the policy makers at home. Analysis based on both quantitative and qualitative research of online and offline behavior should be reported to the home country. Public Diplomacy 2.0 adds a whole new dimension of interactivity with the public. Information gained from this interactivity on social media platforms should be processed and send to the government at home. If the information is appropriately processed, it can be seen as valuable intelligence for policy makers. Linking back new policies to the Foreign Service, will make the communication circle complete. The policies may give direction in all sorts of ways; define important economic sectors, shared interests, adjust misperceptions etc. In collaboration with the home country, the Foreign Service may adjust their strategy or their tactics. Public diplomacy 2.0 is therefore another method of engagement abroad, that could support the ultimate effectiveness of the Foreign Service.

⁵⁷ Rowland, Dr. Lee & Cdr Steve Tatham RN. 'Strategic Communication & Influence Operations: Do We Really Get 'It'?' p. 3.

Conclusion

Horizontal collaboration

In my introduction I argued that my findings are useful in a more generic way. To develop a social media strategy for the Foreign Service, we deal with the same challenges as other governmental institutions do. How will we structure the agency's presence on social media? Who is responsible for the content, the management and the regulation? Do we need social media training? What kind of content is interesting to discuss online? How do we evaluate the social media presence? What platforms are most valuable? How do we start 'listening'? What kinds of incentives are useful to stimulate employees' participation? These and other questions are shared on different governmental levels.

Horizontal engagement is an important principle when we discuss the development of public diplomacy in the 21st century. Municipalities, governmental branches, Ministries, Foreign Officers and other public agencies are initiating and expanding their presence on social media. The Foreign Service deals with the same kind of questions as other branches of governments do. It is therefore important to share knowledge. Ultimately, all governmental branches aim for effective information and engagement of their audiences. Important key words for government's participation on social media platforms are: imagination, innovation, authenticity, continuity, immediacy and collaboration.

More research required

I composed the following research question in the introduction:

How may a Foreign Service organize its public diplomacy 2.0 practices, with regards to its structure, objectives, communication practices, audience, regulation and evaluation?

There are numerous possibilities to organise public diplomacy 2.0. Possibilities are enlarged due to opportunities in dissemination, interaction and audience expansion. But they are in the same time constrained due to time, budget resources, context, regulation, people and skills. This research paper was more a composition of possibilities, rather than a concrete social media strategy for the Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco. Given the attention of the US State Department to expand on their public diplomacy 2.0 activities, it is important for the Dutch Foreign

Service in the United States to devote attention to digitalisation and social media too. New media is an important tool to engage with the public, especially in the United States.

In the section 'Structure' I have distinguished two activities, namely public diplomacy 2.0 and 21st century statecraft. It is important to highlight that the latter is something that the United States is pushing forward. Every country develops its own foreign policy based on their own objectives and interests. Currently, the Dutch Foreign Service in the United States has placed public diplomacy 2.0 as an important objective to develop.

As the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington D.C. has emphasized in their digital communications strategy; public diplomacy 2.0 is an extension of public diplomacy. New media may give the Public Diplomacy Department the opportunity to expand on their target group. Given the recent cuts in governmental expenditure however, there is not much room to hire new personnel to accommodate a bigger audience online. The social media strategy must be pragmatic, and realistic. Therefore, a general recommendation could be misleading. Every Embassy and its Consulates should therefore formulate its own strategy and tactics. Two important factors will increase its effectiveness: 1) if public diplomacy 2.0 is not only practiced by the Public Diplomacy Department, but by all diplomats and other senior staff, 2) if the home government is similarly engaged in making public diplomacy 2.0 an important practice. The second argument may be of great value for a complete communication circle, as well as world wide engagement of Dutch Foreign Services online.

Despite the popularity of Facebook and Twitter internationally, there are other social networks that are expanding worldwide. Examples are QQ, which is China's largest social network site and Orkut, a social networking site owned and operated by Google and mainly used in Brazil and India. Due to the vast expansion of social media world wide, I would argue for regional research to develop a customized public diplomacy 2.0 strategy for each Embassy.

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