



INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC & CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

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FOREWORD

This newsletter is aimed at providing Public Affairs practitioners with a short selection of recently published stories, papers, etc. which may be useful to remain abreast of new trends or to stimulate a debate on the opinion expressed by the authors. All sources are published on the web and any copyright remains with the authors.

Spot light on:

Citizen Journalism: Who is a Journalist Today?

Posted by Sally Falkow
<http://www.proactivereport.com>

People today are always on the look out for new and faster ways to get their news. According to the 2011 State of the Media report, not only do they want to be able to find it and get it fast, they also want to contribute to, and participate in, reporting the news. This can be a boon to PR people looking for more coverage for their stories. Opportunities to act as a citizen journalist abound...

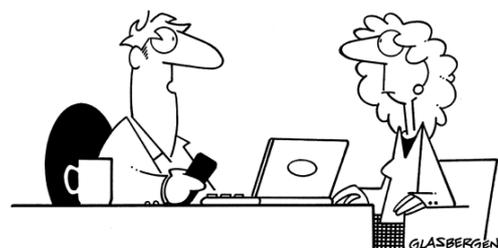
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EDITORIAL DEPT.



"We'd like you to condense your novel into something that younger people will want to read...in 140 characters or less."



Citizen Journalism: Who is a Journalist Today?

By Sally Falkow, posted on <http://www.proactivereport.com>

People today are always on the look out for new and faster ways to get their news. According the 2011 State of the Media report, not only do they want to be able to find it and get it fast, they also want to contribute to, and participate in, reporting the news. This can be a boon to PR people looking for more coverage for their stories. Opportunities to act as a citizen journalist abound.

Technology advances have provided the tools that allow us to contribute and participate. Almost half of all Americans (47%) now get some form of local news on a mobile device.

Apple released the first iPad in April of 2010 and sold 3 million within 80 days. In January 2011, 7% of Americans reported owning some kind of electronic tablet – nearly double the number that owned tablets just four months earlier. 3 out of 5 tablet owners consume news on their tablets and many news publications have created a tablet app.

Digital cameras are shrinking in size yet their capability is improving. What would have taken a crew of at least 3 to 4 to do lighting and sound equipment, as well as post-production and editing can now be done on a smart phone and a laptop.

With apps for different film techniques, and edit software available on phones as well as tablets, the world of media has changed forever. People on the ground who witness events are sending images and video to the news stations. The Tsunami in Japan, the London bombings and the recent Norway massacre come to mind.

As musician and author Gil Scott-Heron said, "The revolution will not be televised." And we certainly saw that as the Arab Spring of 2011 was tweeted and streamed live online, even as the authorities tried to clamp down on the media.

Citizen journalism doesn't only apply to major political events or disasters. Citizen journalism is

one of the hottest buzzwords in the news business right now. Many newsrooms are implementing some sort of citizen-journalism initiative. On the evening news you regularly see these words: "If you witness news in your area send us images and video."

A citizen is not a journalist, simply because she uses Twitter and Facebook to talk about current events, but because when she does come across an unusual event, she acts in a journalistic manner. What does that mean? You have to find corroborating evidence, interview people involved, vet your sources, confirm information before sharing it, analyze what happened and provide context. then you need to capture good images and video and send it to a relevant news station as soon as possible.

As PR people we've been schooled in how to do this. We analyze news and craft news releases every day. If you do it right, tie your release to a current news item the media is interested in and then present it in the right format, you're likely to see your news content on the evening news, in print or on a media website.

One example is a company that offers temporary office space. They saw a sudden spike in demand for their services during the severe winter storms blanketing Europe and the UK over the Christmas period in 2010. Thousands of business travelers were stranded on both sides of the Atlantic and they needed a place to continue working while stuck in a foreign country. The company cleverly correlated the data, and presented the information in a news release that emphasized the statistics and the trend tied into a major news event. Their story got picked up and covered by the mainstream media.

Newsrooms are under financial pressure. Some newsrooms, like Gannet newspapers, have recently placed news staff on furlough



to cut expenses. That means there are gaps in the newsroom and news reporting. This creates a plethora of opportunities for citizen journalists and corporate communicators who craft good news releases and manage an online pressroom.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting understands the value of citizen journalists – they are funding a \$4.1 million grant to American Public Media to expand its network of “citizen sources” that help provide local news coverage across the country.

An intelligent PR strategy would be to cultivate this “citizen journalist” mindset among your fans and advocates. Help your loyal supporters contribute to and participate in the reporting of the news around your brand.

An energy drink discovered that a young man who was one of the top ‘diggers’ – people who post news to the social news site digg.com – is a huge fan of their brand and their Xtreme Sports events. They invited him to their next event, gave him access to behind-the-scenes information and allowed him to meet and interview some of his favorite Xtreme Sports heroes. This resulted in a flood of coverage on the Digg homepage. A start-up in Los Angeles discovered that two of the top diggers have a podcast that reaches college kids. Getting covered on this podcast is now high on their wishlist so they can get buzz going in relevant social networks that reach their target audience.

A list of the most popular news sites based on traffic figures from Alexa, a website that tracks traffic on most websites and reports on their statistics, ranks Digg at #8 with over 25 million visitors a month.

Another online news outlet that is climbing up the ranks fast is the Huffington Post. They’re right on Google News’ heels with 54 million visitors a month. A well-crafted [social media news story with good images and video attached](#) will find favor with bloggers, online journalists and editors.

At the Media Relations Summit in New York City the editor of The Daily Beast, Tina Brown,

highlighted the fact that there are many online opportunities for PR news coverage, but says she rarely gets well crafted, interesting news releases she can use. Her advice? Partner with news websites looking for content.

A savvy supplement company that has a customer base of seniors reached out to social websites aimed at the over 50 demographic. They found that several of these sites needed regular health content aimed at seniors and the supplement company was delighted to provide them with articles by excellent health writers that focused on using supplements and vitamins to improve your quality of life. Almost every news release they crafted specifically for these sites was published.

Another avenue for citizen journalism is to write for an online news outlet – KPCC, the local NPR station allows local citizens to blog on their site. The Examiner allows people to start a column on their site. Of course the content has to be relevant, interesting and newsworthy – not promotional. Valerie Simon of Burrelle’s Luce writes the PR Examiner column.

About.com has guides for subjects – although it has been in existence for so long now there are not too many subjects available anymore. But it is possible to find a gap – for example there is no guide for Alzheimer’s disease. This would be a perfect opportunity for the Alzheimer’s Foundation to gain excellent exposure for their cause. There is currently no guide for senior health either. That supplement company could expand their online news footprint by taking on this citizen journalist position.

Learn to think like a citizen journalist. Discover all the ways your news releases could be used to “report the news”, become a resource for bloggers and media websites and if possible, report the news yourself.





What is strategic communications?

Posted on <http://www.idea.org/>

The term “strategic communications” has become popular over the last two decades. It means infusing communications efforts with an agenda and a master plan. Typically, that master plan involves promoting the brand of an organization, urging people to do specific actions, or advocating particular legislation.

It can refer to both a process, and to a specific job title.

Why strategic communications?

The field of ‘communications’ is broad, encompassing professionals who *create* news or want to *push* information to the public (public relations, public information, marketing), people who *deliver* news and media to the public (journalists, audio and video producers, public speakers, educators), and people who *study* the interplay of media and society (researchers).

Strategic communications fuses the “pushing” and the “delivering.” According to Shayna Englin, who teaches public relations and corporate communications at Georgetown, “being strategic means communicating the best message, through the right channels, measured against well-considered organizational and communications-specific goals. It’s the difference between doing communications stuff, and doing the *right* communications stuff.”

Several factors spawned the field:

- *New methods of outreach* — There are now many more avenues available to reach the public than the now-crumbling empires of advertiser-sponsored newspapers, magazines, and television. For example, a scientific or arts organization might simultaneously pitch stories to journalists, write a blog for the public, and post to Facebook and Twitter.
- *Consistency & coordination* — There is a greater need for consistency between departments, since the public can easily Google anything online. More coordination is also needed, as the same communication channels (e.g., Facebook) are useful for education, marketing, education, advocacy, fundraising, etc, and organizations need to strike a balance between getting out important messages and also attracting readers.
- *More professionalism* — Also, there is a problem of amateurs running amok. Just as desktop publishing allowed anyone with a PC to make a newsletter or magazine; the Internet de-professionalized communications. The first generation of web sites in the 1990’ s were created by tech departments and kids (not communications professionals), and the first generation of Tweets and blog posts were typically made by young staffers. (‘Let’s have the intern start our Facebook page!’)

Against this ever expanding variety of media, and low barriers to entry, it was easy to waste resources or embarrass an organization. **Un**strategic communication became more common. Sure you got a lot of hits, impressions or followers, but so what? Executive management wanted their communications to accomplish more concrete goals.

According to Tom Kelleher, chair of the School of Communications at the University of Hawaii, the opposite of strategic communications is “seat of the pants” communications. He says that cranking out press releases and seeking media coverage can feel productive, but without a master plan, there’s a risk of misallocating effort. This is particularly a problem for junior staff or people who come from an advertising background, because they can be too focused on media impressions (e.g., how many people listened to our advertisement on the radio) instead of concrete outcomes (e.g., how many people got flu shots, or how many people learned about the melting arctic).

Depending on the nature of an organization, strategic communications can range from marketing to policy. According to Emily Tynes, Director of Communications for ACLU, and coauthor of a



guidebook for nonprofits, “In the world of nonprofits, strategic communications is an orchestrated use of channels of communication to move and influence public policy or to promote an agenda. By comparison, strategic communications planning in corporations is mainly geared towards the promotion of products.”

Karen Green, manager of communication and outreach at the Renaissance Computing Institute at UNC, says it’s about having a plan, not “simply reacting and responding.” For her, it’s about “framing a discussion on topics and issues that are important to my organization in a way that gets the organization’s name out there. This in turn builds the organization’s reputation and street credibility.” As an example, with the recent explosions at the nuclear reactors in Japan, since her organization is involved in high-end computing, she promoted her organization’s director to journalists as an expert on computer modeling of the inner workings of nuclear reactors.

The importance of branding is echoed by Rena Pederson, the communications director for the National Math and Science Initiative. She says, strategic communications “includes tactical steps like branding so that the public image is a good one, positioning yourself in all materials and media outreach to maximize your impact, all with an eye to where you want to be not just this month, but next year and five years from now.”

Other definitions

Warren Mason a professor of business and communication studies at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire, says that in his course, strategic communication is about dealing with “issues that might jeopardize an organization’s very survival” and nothing to do with marketing.

To Mason, it’s about ‘Issues Management/Planning’ and is an effort to anticipate problems and crises before they occur. Mason says, “For example, with an internal audience, such as employees, this planning could include planning for a potential layoff by management or a strike by employees. As to external threats, this could be anything from a fire or explosion at a place of employment, to an oil spill improperly handled by a large oil company, or workplace violence anytime, anywhere.” These issues can be internally or externally driven, and call for planning, meticulous planning, and diplomatic followup. “Proper media relations, both during and after these scenarios, will drive perceptions in the court of public opinion and greatly impact the organization’s image and reputation.”

Speaking of diplomacy, in diplomatic/military contexts, strategic communication is a process for delivering a unified message through public diplomatic channels, public affairs (government spokespeople) and information/psychological operations.

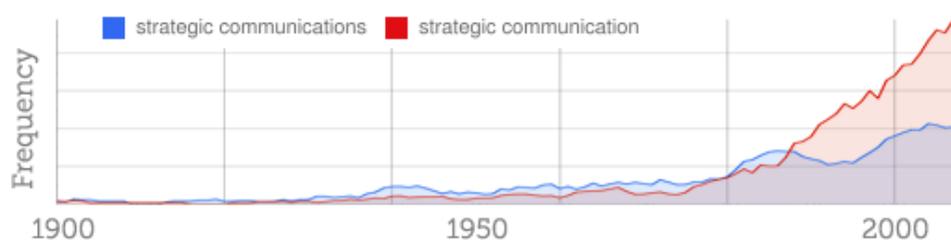
A profitable adjective

According to Simply Hired, the average U.S. salary for a ‘communications director’ is \$65,000. But for a ‘strategic communications director,’ it jumps 17%, to \$76,000. (Includes all sectors, not just nonprofits; salaries are higher in major metropolitan areas.)

An increasingly common phrase

On idealist.org, a leading web site for posting job listings in the nonprofit sector, there are currently 72 full time job listings that contain the phrase “strategic communication,” and more generally, 1208 full time job listings that include both the words “strategic” and “communication.”

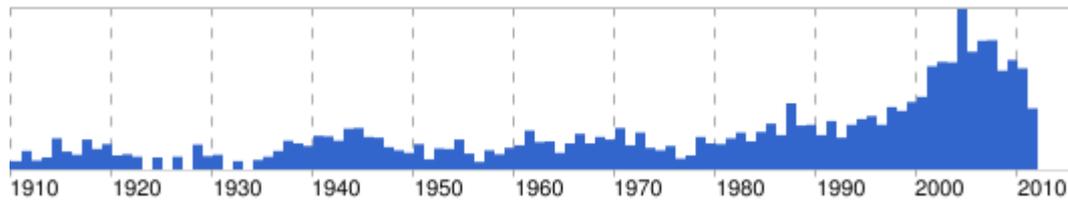
The phrase “strategic communications” became more commonly used in the 1990s. The following graph shows how often the phrase appears among all the books in a given year scanned by





Google's books project:

For another view, this is a timeline of the number of occurrences of "strategic communication(s)" in web pages indexed by Google. In this frequency graph, use of the phrase takes off more in 2001. Google's algorithm looks at the dates in context. For example, the sentence in a 2005 press release, "Founded in 1908, the Missouri School of Journalism has set the standards for journalism and strategic communication training for almost a century" appears on the graph for 1908:



Strategic Communication Model

By Cristian Guerrero-Castro - <http://strategic-communication-model.com/>

The professionals from various fields are working on what they call Strategic Communication, which has generated a number of people who speak about "their science", express their observations and dictate norms that are trying to establish something like a structure in a non-existent science. I say "non-existent science" because it has not been established as such, having neither a definite conceptualization, nor a current or a systematic and unified lineament.

There are several disciplines that claim the Strategic Communication, such as public relations, journalism, visual communication, advertising, marketing and others. Therefore clarifying questions arise, such as: which discipline does strategic communication belong to? Or: Can every discipline communicate strategically? Now my question is: how can a discipline confirm to communicate strategically without knowledge about strategy?

If we analyze the diverse theories of communication, we can mention the theory of mass communication by Harold Dwight Lasswell that defines it as "structure and function", which means communication is the supervision or surveillance of the environment, the

correlation of different parts of the society responding to the environment that leads to communicate.

We could name many communication theorists, such as David Berlo who analyzed the objective of mass communication by emphasizing the simplest: "So that there is communication between the sender and the receptor, they must speak the same language and understand the same signs in order to make the process of communication perfect", or perhaps renowned theorists who contributed significantly to the science of communication like Gerhard Maletzke, Warren Weaver, among many others.

Herewith we clarify that the communication is established as a science, since it has theories and scientific lineaments. But what happened with the strategy? In this point the "autopoiesis" (MATURANA¹) or unification of

¹ An autopoietic machine is a machine organized (defined as a unity) as a network of processes of production (transformation and destruction) of components which: (i) through their interactions and transformations continuously regenerate and realize the network of processes (relations) that produced them; and (ii) constitute it (the machine) as a concrete unity in space in which they (the components) exist by specifying the topological domain of its realization as such a network.



communication and strategy does not get established for those who do not understand the "logic of action" of strategy. However, later I will prove that the strategy is both a science and art.

So, what are the theories of strategy? What are its main theorists? What are the methods of strategy? How does the strategy work? Or a very simple question like: what is strategy? Questions that paralyze all the alleged "experts" of the so-called "strategic communication" that we see nowadays with innocent and illusory publications on something they do not have an accurate knowledge about and have not analyzed thoroughly. Knowledge of the communication theories yes, but no knowledge of the theory of strategy and its implementation.

Strategic Communication today, as we have already stated, is a mixture of diverse activities, each of which has to a higher or lower degree structured its procedures of analysis, evaluation and control, a situation that is not defined in the real scenario of strategic communication.

This methodology, that we are missing, must contain the vital objectives of the entity, which are the basis of the strategic process in its three dimensions (strategic, operational and tactical).

This methodology must also include a structured analysis of the factors of the scenario with the pertinent qualitative and quantitative instruments of analysis, considering the characteristics of the scenario, the origin of the conflict, the odds, measures, percentages, courses of action, the direct and indirect actors, the intervening factors in every stage of the scenario, and the behavior of the actors in the past, present and future.

Article Source:
<http://EzineArticles.com/6559999>

The lack of a methodology to define the strategic communication has as result that in practice each entity, company, institution or organization develops these activities according to how it is interpreted by who is in charge of this area. That results in wrong, incomplete or definitely inapplicable communication management.

Without a precise knowledge of the theories of the strategy as a tool, method, discipline and as science, those don't unify. This leads to one of the previously indicated problems where many people from different disciplines irresponsibly call strategic communication what they consider "communicating strategically", backed by their experiences, cases, or sometimes by their "enlightened gift of smell"

They confuse social communication with strategic communication.

This is highly important because without a structured methodology where the sciences communication and strategy work, we fail to develop strategic communication, we only communicate, because strategy is the science of conceiving, activating, deciding, planning, executing, using and guiding the media at a particular time, place and space to achieve and / or maintain the set goals in a particular scenario.

This theory, based on a thorough 5-year research proposes a methodology for defining communication strategies, considering that the strategy is the nucleus and the motor driving the communication with an integration of Mass communication and Strategy sciences.

In conclusion;

$S+A = (S-rf + C.rf) = S = (S^*) + M+C = (Sig1, chn, cod, sn, sig2) = C = (C^*) + [Mng] \Sigma S.C$

"Without strategy we can only communicate. Only with strategy we can communicate strategically."





A Conversation in Conflict; Understanding the Narrative

Interview: Rear Adm. Greg Smith (USN-Ret.)

Written by: [Edward.H.Lundquist](#) on November 16, 2011



Warfare is a hard science, but different social science disciplines can also be useful to equip or enable warfighters to have a better awareness of their surroundings in terms of how people think and feel about their presence, and how that sentiment might result in cooperation or adversity.

There is both an art and a science to being able to sense and understand the collective conversations in the societal environment that surrounds warfighters. How do they plug into the psyche of the individuals most affected by the war in Afghanistan – the people of Afghanistan – who are trying to figure out what the future holds for them with these competing narratives of actions and words? It is important to listen, understand, and participate in the conversation, said Rear Adm. Greg Smith, USN, who retired in October. Smith was the chief of public affairs for U.S. Central Command, and before that the director of public affairs for Gen. Stanley McChrystal and Gen. David Petraeus, with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. He spoke with Edward Lundquist about understanding the narrative, and why it is so important.

Edward Lundquist: What is the “narrative,” and why is it important at the theater, regional, and tactical levels?

Rear Adm. Greg Smith: You’re dealing with people who are in the middle of an argument between the government – [which is] trying to represent those people – and insurgent groups who want to replace that government with what they claim to be a better form of governance. And in that argument are many different narratives. There is the narrative of the insurgent group, in this case the Taliban, [which claims] Afghanistan is being misled by foreign infidels who are destroying the culture and [are] un-Islamic in the way we operate here, and ... claim that the Taliban would restore all that is Islamic back to Afghanistan and kick out the infidels. The government, on the other hand, is saying, ‘Wait a minute. We’re a constitutionally mandated nation of law. We have a free – although ... not altogether perfect – election process; we do have an elected representation of your interest in the form of a government; and while we’ve got lots of issues and things that we’re trying to work on, we certainly don’t want to return to the days of Taliban rule, those five ugly years of rights being stolen away from women and children.’ The Islamic narrative that the Taliban imported – and its strict set of what they claim to be Islamic law – would be imported again.

And the government is saying, “We are not un-Islamic,” right?

That’s right. In fact, they use the Islamic voice here to the official religious structure – the Mullahs, who are the religious elite of the country – to remind people that ... the way in which they are being governed is under Islam, is the way which it is written in the Quran, and is the right of a representative government; ... that this government represents and what it stands for is ... purely on the side of Islam, and therefore they align themselves very strongly to Islam in that regard.

Then you’ve got, of course, a coalition built around a NATO structure that’s trying to weave a narrative of “why we’re here in the first place.” Remember, we’re not part of that argument. We’re neither the government nor the insurgents, but we are here because, as an international



community, we don't want the insurgents to win this argument. We recognize that from our own self-interests, not the interest of the Afghans themselves. We do not want to return to a point where pre-2001 Taliban rules allowed for transnational terrorists to occupy Afghanistan. All of the individuals who eventually ended [up] flying airplanes into buildings in the United States on that fateful day of 9/11/2001 began their training right here in Kandahar.

Recognizing that the international community has a security interest in maintaining regional stability, more specifically here in Afghanistan, we begin to weave that narrative of why we are here. ... over time, our conduct on the ground feeds into that narrative.

So it's not just what we're saying – or only what the insurgents are saying, or only what the government says, or only what the international community says – that has the biggest impact on the narrative. At the end of the day, the people are witnessing all this activity around them, by those that claim to be representative of the government, or claim to be here to help that government, or these insurgent groups. What they're witnessing is – over time – a pattern of behavior that is really the greatest formulation of their judgment about the true intent of all three parties.

Is that something that you and the ISAF leadership considered in the same way that you would consider troop strength and logistics levels and training levels and readiness at staff meetings?

What we are trying to manage and to understand is this narrative argument and where we stand. Is our narrative becoming the dominant or [the] supporting narrative – because obviously here we are trying to support the Afghan government? Or, are we losing that narrative? Are people making choices about the future – because they both witnessed and heard things – that they ... will then side with the government, or are they aiding and abetting the insurgencies because they have lost trust in the narrative of their own government? We think that we are seeing a tremendous amount of indicators of growing confidence by the Afghan people that the Afghan government is largely on the right track. Confidence in the government being on the right path is growing. But the discussion isn't being held as intimately in all parts of the country. There are many part[s] of the country that have never seen an ISAF soldier, or seen the government of Afghanistan in action. They may have heard about the government through local radio and through word of mouth, and that's about it. While in another part of the country, there are people who have literally in the last 24 hours seen everything from ISAF breaking down the door to their compound, arresting bad guys, protecting women and children, and everything in between. It depends on where you stand on the effect of the narrative on you, personally, inside Afghanistan.

Is this "narrative" something that can be measured qualitatively and quantitatively?

We could argue that you could measure the strength of understanding of the narrative. Illiteracy rates here are astronomically high, some of the highest in the world. We don't have a population which is easy to have a qualitative discussion with. It's very challenging in that regard. What we can do, though, is quantitatively measure their attitudes toward certain behavior and one of those would be "do they support our efforts on the ground by turning in bad guys, telling us where the IEDs are, and truly becoming partners in the security of their own villages?" Or, do they go and shut their doors, lie to us ... support a guy hiding in their home, knowing full well that he's likely tomorrow to plant an IED that could ... kill their own children if they stumbled into it?

You could measure those quantitative things, and we certainly do, as a way of seeing where the people's attitudes are shifting. What we can't do is truly get inside the minds of the people to – with any great confidence – predict which way this thing will actually go, because this is a nation of survival. They've had 30 years of war, and they've seen and have been promised a great deal. There are some that would tell you that, even during the bad time of the Soviet era, as ugly as that was – ... hundreds of thousands of Afghans ... died during that period – there were some things that the Russians delivered that they liked. They delivered a lot of local support. A lot of projects were built.



But when things got kinetic, the Soviets went pretty heavy-handed and a lot of people got caught in the middle. So, it's really been 30 years of back and forth.

Like a chameleon, the Afghan people are not going to change their colors completely, because they don't have a lot of confidence in a future that's not well understood or well known to them such that they can actually pick sides at this point. You won't be able to predict that necessarily.

How can you measure sentiment and represent that in a graphic way so that a Marine or a soldier has something on a handheld device as he faces a village, giving him some idea about "should we go in there or not?" We're talking about tools and methods.

Here's the problem with that, I think, from a practical point of view: If you haven't been somewhere, and you're trying to figure out what to do when you get there, you're not likely to have real reliable information. In other words, you don't have a presence there and therefore it's impossible to measure or collect data. Without data, it's difficult to build a database that would go behind the search engine that would be pulled up on a handheld that would present to you what you could expect when you go there. Over time, we can get the atmospheric collection teams and human terrain teams on the ground and into an area, and they can begin to build that database to see where we're at on that glide slope ... You could see the attitudinal changes, and perception changes that are measurable. But it's pretty spotty. It's a little bit like doing any kind of polling. You just don't have the manpower or the resources to be able to get much beyond small sample sizes, and no two villages in this country are the same, let alone valleys, districts, provinces, and regions. I think you might get a slice of the feeling of the 600 people that live in this valley if you could spend enough time living with them, among them. You could get both quantitative and qualitative data from that. But that would be a huge investment.

Are there tools or systems that seem promising that might be able to help with collection? Can you measure and try to qualify some things – like cell phone traffic, social media, emails – to gather sentiment or to look for increases in traffic, or focal points of conversation, or terms used for certain people, that might indicate that this person is an important person or this person is respected or this person is leading some kind of nefarious activity?

I have not been exposed to any of those tools since I have been here for a year and a half. I suspect there may be some of that being engineered, in someone's human terrain teams. It sounds like sort of a noble effort but not one that I am aware of actually happening on the ground here. Two years ago I made a community investment in the collection of raw atmospheric data. It's now shifted over to the intel community. It's starting to get pretty mature. A small number of analysts sit at major hubs around the country, and then below them are teams that are born with one individual that actually works directly below us as sort of an overseer or supervisor. But what he really does, he goes into villages and he develops relationships with 20 to 30 people in an area, and those individuals, in essence, come back and report to him how things are going: Are the markets open like they are supposed to be? Are women allowed to walk down the street? What do they say during the Friday prayers? Is there a university in the area, and what are the university students talking about?

These are attitudinal metrics, a collection of local criteria so we can give them a bit of a focus. And then all that information is rolled up and collected at a regional level, so that you can get a bit of a sense of things. It's a huge human capital requirement in order to have enough collection nodes out there, with enough sophistication, to roll that meaningful data quantitatively so you can display it.

I wanted to build a model where we could overlay layers on a map of social aspects. You lay on a map over a village so we can collectively figure out if this is a peaceful tribe, ethnic background, economic status, who their allegiances and alliances are with, and then work in the attitudes, perceptions, behavior patterns, and lay that on top in layers, so you could sort of visibly weave your way down through those layers to find out what you're dealing with and what are the roadblocks that are keeping our narrative from getting into that village.



That's a model that was in my head ... a year and a half ago, but I have not seen it really demonstrated other than really basic raw data being regurgitated back out with anecdotal quotes from people who say this or say that. It was an ambitious undertaking and I'm not certain we would go about doing that with a country the size of Afghanistan, as poor, rural, and unconnected as it is technology-wise. If we were trying to figure out the Chinese psyche and where they're at, there's so much stuff out there that you can data mine electronically, and use tools to sort and segregate those kinds of things. But in a very unsophisticated environment, it's just a human capital challenge to be able to collect enough meaningful data to make it worthwhile.

Maj. Gen. Michael T. Flynn was the deputy chief of staff, intelligence (CJ2), for the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and one of the authors of "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan," published by the Center for a New American Security. He spoke to a conference that the Department of Defense and the Office of Naval Research sponsored, called "Unifying Social Frameworks." In that conversation, one of the things he said was, "Hey, I'm used to bringing intelligence to be able to find and provide and bring kinetics to enemies, and now we're trying to use intelligence to find and help people." It's a fundamental shift, as he explained it.

Absolutely. This is the "white" side of intel, which is understanding the people on the ground – not the enemy, but the people that are in this argument. The success of that effort is still very much in incubator status because of the sophistication of the collection means and even the data when you get it – how to really manage that data and then display it for decision makers. I have yet to see anything other than narrative and analytical papers. You can read a thousand of those. But can I look up on a wall and see things happening over time in a visual way, some sort of a common operational picture of the human dimension? That I have not seen or done here. And, again, I don't know what lifetime that will occur in, but I think it's something that everyone has an ambition to try to do.

That's the issue. How can you collect something that is meaningful, and then be able to display it so it can be used? That means taking something that is definitely a qualifiable thing and trying to turn it into something that can be displayed graphically, which means quantifiably.

I agree. There is a lot of research. But in terms of producing meaningful kinds of display materials, I just have not seen it.

When I start talking to people about "human terrain," they get a little nervous. What is the real definition of human terrain? And is it a good thing?

There are some who feel the human terrain teams [are] not really predicting a whole lot. That might be the case more than the term itself. I think everybody understands that there is a need to understand the human terrain; it is the terrain, here in Afghanistan.

Human terrain, as explained to me, is sort of a social science approach. You have social scientists on the ground with warfighters.

Inside the community of human terrain anthropologists, it's a "church and state" issue for them. There are a lot of professions that are caught in that quandary, such as a journalist – who is supposed to be neutral – who's out covering a story and finds out something that he thinks may be helpful for us to know because he believes that we are going to be attacked by the enemy. What do you do with that information? I think the human terrain guys are caught in the middle of being used in a capacity that they get uncomfortable with once they get out of here because they recognize that the human terrain that we're talking about here is in the middle of the fight. Because where we're going to go, and what we care about [is] not the village or the people; we're trying to figure out the stuff that is out of control and figure out how to get it back into control, and kill only the right guys, and hurt no civilians – that's the ultimate goal. But getting into the middle of that debate or that discussion ... is pretty challenging for them.



NATO trains ISAF officers at the Joint Warfare Center in Stavanger, Norway, for duty in Afghanistan. How would you qualify the training they receive there? When they come over to take up a position in country, are they ready to go and are they ready to contribute?

It's worth the investment, but it's still a sterile classroom setting. It doesn't replace being on the ground. Every bit of professional development that they get raises their game a little bit and that's helpful. You're dealing with 48 nations that contribute to this fight. These are staff-level positions, not the warfighters going in unit level support. The course allows them to re-baseline from a native perspective [of] how we actually operate here at the NATO headquarters – which is not the same as any other headquarters in the world, no matter what nation you're from.

How do you get the Afghan people to, in their psyche, make it unacceptable to allow someone to dig a hole in a road and put an IED in there; so that people will just not tolerate it and will not let it stand, and either report it or do something about that person?

I think all of it comes down to their own personal safety. People know what "right" looks like, but they also know that they are very vulnerable after 30 years of war, of trying to choose sides in the middle of the fight. I think it's less about supporting the Taliban than it is enabling the Taliban. That's a nuanced word, but I think it's important in this particular context. Only about 8 percent or less of the people actually would tell you they believe the Taliban is the right future for Afghanistan. Yet, many, many more people in this country are enabling the Taliban by not doing certain things or, in some cases, actually directly supporting them. For them it's a matter of economics. If a family has nine boys running around a farm that really can't produce enough wheat to feed the family, there are stories of a father who sends one son into the army and another to join the Taliban, splitting his bets. It's not something you or I might understand from a Western point of view, but it is what the reality on the ground teaches us every day.

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Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882)





Never Call Reporters Back By Their Deadlines

Written by Brad Phillips @MrMediaTraining

Many media trainers offer their clients this straightforward tip for interacting with journalists: “Return a reporter’s call before his deadline.”

It’s terrible advice.

Let’s say a reporter calls you at 9 a.m. He tells you he’s working on a story about your organization for tomorrow’s paper and needs a quote by 4 p.m. today.

If you return his call at 3:50 p.m., he’s likely already written most of the story. In fact, 95 percent of his story is probably completed, and he’ll just drop your quote into the article to make sure you were represented in the piece.

But you’ve done absolutely nothing to help shape his story angle, increase his understanding of your issues, or refer him to your allies (and less vehement opponents) for their comments. As a result, the story will be comprised of the reporter’s perspective and that of everyone else he’s spoken to – and your quote will have minimal impact.

Instead, tell the reporter you’ll call him back by 10 a.m. Since he knows he’ll get a comment from you early in the day, he won’t feel as compelled to scramble for alternate sources.

Spend that hour drafting a few talking points, and support them with compelling stories and statistics. You may even have time to develop a sound bite that summarizes your main point in a memorable phrase.

Calling him back by 10 a.m means you’ve probably reached him before he’s written the article’s first word, which gives you a terrific opportunity to help shape his perspective and influence his final story into one that more fully represents your viewpoints.

Returning his call early in the day may also change the questions the reporter asks other sources later in the day. He’ll ask them to react to your quotes, meaning they’re talking about your issues through *your* perspective, not theirs.

Finally, returning the reporter’s call early allows you to offer a follow-up phone call later in the day to react to what he learned throughout his reporting. Many journalists will take you up on that, meaning you get two bites at the apple instead of one inconsequential nibble. Here’s the correct advice: “Return a reporter’s call as quickly as possible after his original call, well before his deadline.”





The Political Power of Social Media

Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change

By [Clay Shirky](#)

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Discussion of the political impact of social media has focused on the power of mass protests to topple governments. In fact, social media's real potential lies in supporting civil society and the public sphere -- which will produce change over years and decades, not weeks or months.

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On January 17, 2001, during the impeachment trial of Philippine President Joseph Estrada, loyalists in the Philippine Congress voted to set aside key evidence against him. Less than two hours after the decision was announced, thousands of Filipinos, angry that their corrupt president might be let off the hook, converged on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, a major crossroads in Manila. The protest was arranged, in part, by forwarded text messages reading, "Go 2 EDSA. Wear blk." The crowd quickly swelled, and in the next few days, over a million people arrived, choking traffic in downtown Manila.

The public's ability to coordinate such a massive and rapid response -- close to seven million text messages were sent that week -- so alarmed the country's legislators that they reversed course and allowed the evidence to be presented. Estrada's fate was sealed; by January 20, he was gone. The event marked the first time that social media had helped force out a national leader. Estrada himself blamed "the text-messaging generation" for his downfall. Since the rise of the Internet in the early 1990s, the world's networked population has grown from the low millions to the low billions. Over the same period, social media have become a fact of life for civil society worldwide, involving many actors -- regular citizens, activists, nongovernmental organizations, telecommunications firms, software providers, governments. This raises an obvious question

for the U.S. government: How does the ubiquity of social media affect U.S. interests, and how should U.S. policy respond to it?

As the communications landscape gets denser, more complex, and more participatory, the networked population is gaining greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action. In the political arena, as the protests in Manila demonstrated, these increased freedoms can help loosely coordinated publics demand change.

The Philippine strategy has been adopted many times since. In some cases, the protesters ultimately succeeded, as in Spain in 2004, when demonstrations organized by text messaging led to the quick ouster of Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar, who had inaccurately blamed the Madrid transit bombings on Basque separatists. The Communist Party lost power in Moldova in 2009 when massive protests coordinated in part by text message, Facebook, and Twitter broke out after an obviously fraudulent election. Around the world, the Catholic Church has faced lawsuits over its harboring of child rapists, a process that started when *The Boston Globe's* 2002 exposé of sexual abuse in the church went viral online in a matter of hours.

There are, however, many examples of the activists failing, as in Belarus in March 2006, when street protests (arranged in part by e-mail) against President Aleksandr Lukashenko's alleged vote rigging swelled, then faltered, leaving Lukashenko more determined than ever to control social media. During the June 2009 uprising of the Green Movement in Iran, activists used every possible technological coordinating tool to protest the miscount of votes for Mir Hossein Mousavi but were ultimately brought to heel by a violent crackdown. The Red Shirt uprising in Thailand in 2010 followed a similar but quicker path:



protesters savvy with social media occupied downtown Bangkok until the Thai government dispersed the protesters, killing dozens.

The potential of social media lies mainly in their support of civil society and the public

The use of social media tools -- text messaging, e-mail, photo sharing, social networking, and the like -- does not have a single preordained outcome. Therefore, attempts to outline their effects on political action are too often reduced to dueling anecdotes. If you regard the failure of the Belarusian protests to oust Lukashenko as paradigmatic, you will regard the Moldovan experience as an outlier, and vice versa. Empirical work on the subject is also hard to come by, in part because these tools are so new and in part because relevant examples are so rare. The safest characterization of recent quantitative attempts to answer the question, Do digital tools enhance democracy? (such as those by Jacob Groshek and Philip Howard) is that these tools probably do not hurt in the short run and might help in the long run -- and that they have the most dramatic effects in states where a public sphere already constrains the actions of the government.

Despite this mixed record, social media have become coordinating tools for nearly all of the world's political movements, just as most of the world's authoritarian governments (and, alarmingly, an increasing number of democratic ones) are trying to limit access to it. In response, the U.S. State Department has committed itself to "Internet freedom" as a specific policy aim. Arguing for the right of people to use the Internet freely is an appropriate policy for the United States, both because it aligns with the strategic goal of strengthening civil society worldwide and because it resonates with American beliefs about freedom of expression. But attempts to yoke the idea of Internet freedom to short-term goals -- particularly ones that are country-specific or are intended to help particular dissident groups or encourage regime change -- are likely to be ineffective on average. And when they fail, the consequences can be serious.

Although the story of Estrada's ouster and other similar events have led observers to focus on the power of mass protests to topple governments, the potential of social media lies mainly in their support of civil society and the public sphere -- change measured in years and decades rather than weeks or months. The U.S. government should maintain Internet freedom as a goal to be pursued in a principled and regime-neutral fashion, not as a tool for effecting immediate policy aims country by country. It should likewise assume that progress will be incremental and, unsurprisingly, slowest in the most authoritarian regimes.

THE PERILS OF INTERNET FREEDOM

In January 2010, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outlined how the United States would promote Internet freedom abroad. She emphasized several kinds of freedom, including the freedom to access information (such as the ability to use Wikipedia and Google inside Iran), the freedom of ordinary citizens to produce their own public media (such as the rights of Burmese activists to blog), and the freedom of citizens to converse with one another (such as the Chinese public's capacity to use instant messaging without interference).

Most notably, Clinton announced funding for the development of tools designed to reopen access to the Internet in countries that restrict it. This "instrumental" approach to Internet freedom concentrates on preventing states from censoring outside Web sites, such as Google, YouTube, or that of *The New York Times*. It focuses only secondarily on public speech by citizens and least of all on private or social uses of digital media. According to this vision, Washington can and should deliver rapid, directed responses to censorship by authoritarian regimes.

The instrumental view is politically appealing, action-oriented, and almost certainly wrong. It overestimates the value of broadcast media while underestimating the value of media that allow citizens to communicate privately among themselves. It overestimates the value of access to information, particularly information hosted in the West, while underestimating the value of tools for local coordination. And it overestimates the importance of computers



while underestimating the importance of simpler tools, such as cell phones.

The instrumental approach can also be dangerous. Consider the debacle around the proposed censorship-circumvention software known as Haystack, which, according to its developer, was meant to be a "one-to-one match for how the [Iranian] regime implements censorship." The tool was widely praised in Washington; the U.S. government even granted it an export license. But the program was never carefully vetted, and when security experts examined it, it turned out that it not only failed at its goal of hiding messages from governments but also made it, in the words of one analyst, "possible for an adversary to specifically pinpoint individual users." In contrast, one of the most successful anti-censorship software programs, Freagate, has received little support from the United States, partly because of ordinary bureaucratic delays and partly because the U.S. government is wary of damaging U.S.-Chinese relations: the tool was originally created by Falun Gong, the spiritual movement that the Chinese government has called "an evil cult." The challenges of Freagate and Haystack demonstrate how difficult it is to weaponize social media to pursue country-specific and near-term policy goals.

New media conducive to fostering participation can indeed increase the freedoms Clinton outlined, just as the printing press, the postal service, the telegraph, and the telephone did before. One complaint about the idea of new media as a political force is that most people simply use these tools for commerce, social life, or self-distraction, but this is common to all forms of media. Far more people in the 1500s were reading erotic novels than Martin Luther's "Ninety-five Theses," and far more people before the American Revolution were reading *Poor Richard's Almanack* than the work of the Committees of Correspondence. But those political works still had an enormous political effect.

Access to information is far less important, politically, than access to conversation.

Just as Luther adopted the newly practical printing press to protest against the Catholic Church, and the American revolutionaries

synchronized their beliefs using the postal service that Benjamin Franklin had designed, today's dissident movements will use any means possible to frame their views and coordinate their actions; it would be impossible to describe the Moldovan Communist Party's loss of Parliament after the 2009 elections without discussing the use of cell phones and online tools by its opponents to mobilize. Authoritarian governments stifle communication among their citizens because they fear, correctly, that a better-coordinated populace would constrain their ability to act without oversight.

Despite this basic truth -- that communicative freedom is good for political freedom -- the instrumental mode of Internet statecraft is still problematic. It is difficult for outsiders to understand the local conditions of dissent. External support runs the risk of tainting even peaceful opposition as being directed by foreign elements. Dissidents can be exposed by the unintended effects of novel tools. A government's demands for Internet freedom abroad can vary from country to country, depending on the importance of the relationship, leading to cynicism about its motives.

The more promising way to think about social media is as long-term tools that can strengthen civil society and the public sphere. In contrast to the instrumental view of Internet freedom, this can be called the "environmental" view. According to this conception, positive changes in the life of a country, including pro-democratic regime change, follow, rather than precede, the development of a strong public sphere. This is not to say that popular movements will not successfully use these tools to discipline or even oust their governments, but rather that U.S. attempts to direct such uses are likely to do more harm than good. Considered in this light, Internet freedom is a long game, to be conceived of and supported not as a separate agenda but merely as an important input to the more fundamental political freedoms.

THE THEATER OF COLLAPSE

Any discussion of political action in repressive regimes must take into account the astonishing fall of communism in 1989 in eastern Europe and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet



Union in 1991. Throughout the Cold War, the United States invested in a variety of communications tools, including broadcasting the Voice of America radio station, hosting an American pavilion in Moscow (home of the famous Nixon-Khrushchev "kitchen debate"), and smuggling Xerox machines behind the Iron Curtain to aid the underground press, or samizdat. Yet despite this emphasis on communications, the end of the Cold War was triggered not by a defiant uprising of Voice of America listeners but by economic change. As the price of oil fell while that of wheat spiked, the Soviet model of selling expensive oil to buy cheap wheat stopped working. As a result, the Kremlin was forced to secure loans from the West, loans that would have been put at risk had the government intervened militarily in the affairs of non-Russian states. In 1989, one could argue, the ability of citizens to communicate, considered against the background of macroeconomic forces, was largely irrelevant.

But why, then, did the states behind the Iron Curtain not just let their people starve? After all, the old saying that every country is three meals away from revolution turned out to be sadly incorrect in the twentieth century; it is possible for leaders to survive even when millions die. Stalin did it in the 1930s, Mao did it in the 1960s, and Kim Jong Il has done it more than once in the last two decades. But the difference between those cases and the 1989 revolutions was that the leaders of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the rest faced civil societies strong enough to resist. The weekly demonstrations in East Germany, the Charter 77 civic movement in Czechoslovakia, and the Solidarity movement in Poland all provided visible governments in waiting.

The ability of these groups to create and disseminate literature and political documents, even with simple photocopiers, provided a visible alternative to the communist regimes. For large groups of citizens in these countries, the political and, even more important, economic bankruptcy of the government was no longer an open secret but a public fact. This made it difficult and then impossible for the regimes to order their troops to take on such large groups.

Thus, it was a shift in the balance of power between the state and civil society that led to the largely peaceful collapse of communist control. The state's ability to use violence had been weakened, and the civil society that would have borne the brunt of its violence had grown stronger. When civil society triumphed, many of the people who had articulated opposition to the communist regimes -- such as Tadeusz Mazowiecki in Poland and Václav Havel in Czechoslovakia -- became the new political leaders of those countries. Communications tools during the Cold War did not cause governments to collapse, but they helped the people take power from the state when it was weak.

The idea that media, from the Voice of America to samizdat, play a supporting role in social change by strengthening the public sphere echoes the historical role of the printing press. As the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas argued in his 1962 book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, the printing press helped democratize Europe by providing space for discussion and agreement among politically engaged citizens, often before the state had fully democratized, an argument extended by later scholars, such as Asa Briggs, Elizabeth Eisenstein, and Paul Starr.

Political freedom has to be accompanied by a civil society literate enough and densely connected enough to discuss the issues presented to the public. In a famous study of political opinion after the 1948 U.S. presidential election, the sociologists Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld discovered that mass media alone do not change people's minds; instead, there is a two-step process. Opinions are first transmitted by the media, and then they get echoed by friends, family members, and colleagues. It is in this second, social step that political opinions are formed. This is the step in which the Internet in general, and social media in particular, can make a difference. As with the printing press, the Internet spreads not just media consumption but media production as well -- it allows people to privately and publicly articulate and debate a welter of conflicting views.

A slowly developing public sphere, where public opinion relies on both media and conversation,



is the core of the environmental view of Internet freedom. As opposed to the self-aggrandizing view that the West holds the source code for democracy -- and if it were only made accessible, the remaining autocratic states would crumble -- the environmental view assumes that little political change happens without the dissemination and adoption of ideas and opinions in the public sphere. Access to information is far less important, politically, than access to conversation. Moreover, a public sphere is more likely to emerge in a society as a result of people's dissatisfaction with matters of economics or day-to-day governance than from their embrace of abstract political ideals.

To take a contemporary example, the Chinese government today is in more danger of being forced to adopt democratic norms by middle-class members of the ethnic Han majority demanding less corrupt local governments than it is by Uighurs or Tibetans demanding autonomy. Similarly, the One Million Signatures Campaign, an Iranian women's rights movement that focuses on the repeal of laws inimical to women, has been more successful in liberalizing the behavior of the Iranian government than the more confrontational Green Movement.

For optimistic observers of public demonstrations, this is weak tea, but both the empirical and the theoretical work suggest that protests, when effective, are the end of a long process, rather than a replacement for it. Any real commitment by the United States to improving political freedom worldwide should concentrate on that process -- which can only occur when there is a strong public sphere.

THE CONSERVATIVE DILEMMA

Disciplined and coordinated groups, whether businesses or governments, have always had an advantage over undisciplined ones: they have an easier time engaging in collective action because they have an orderly way of directing the action of their members. Social media can compensate for the disadvantages of undisciplined groups by reducing the costs of coordination. The anti-Estrada movement in the Philippines used the ease of sending and forwarding text messages to organize a massive group with no need (and no time) for standard managerial control. As a result, larger, looser

groups can now take on some kinds of coordinated action, such as protest movements and public media campaigns, that were previously reserved for formal organizations. For political movements, one of the main forms of coordination is what the military calls "shared awareness," the ability of each member of a group to not only understand the situation at hand but also understand that everyone else does, too. Social media increase shared awareness by propagating messages through social networks. The anti-Aznar protests in Spain gained momentum so quickly precisely because the millions of people spreading the message were not part of a hierarchical organization.

The Chinese anticorruption protests that broke out in the aftermath of the devastating May 2008 earthquake in Sichuan are another example of such ad hoc synchronization. The protesters were parents, particularly mothers, who had lost their only children in the collapse of shoddily built schools, the result of collusion between construction firms and the local government. Before the earthquake, corruption in the country's construction industry was an open secret. But when the schools collapsed, citizens began sharing documentation of the damage and of their protests through social media tools. The consequences of government corruption were made broadly visible, and it went from being an open secret to a public truth.

Social media tools are not a replacement for real-world action but a way to coordinate it.

The Chinese government originally allowed reporting on the post-earthquake protests, but abruptly reversed itself in June. Security forces began arresting protesters and threatening journalists when it became clear that the protesters were demanding real local reform and not merely state reparations. From the government's perspective, the threat was not that citizens were aware of the corruption, which the state could do nothing about in the short run. Beijing was afraid of the possible effects if this awareness became shared: it would have to either enact reforms or respond in a way that would alarm more citizens. After



all, the prevalence of camera phones has made it harder to carry out a widespread but undocumented crackdown.

This condition of shared awareness -- which is increasingly evident in all modern states -- creates what is commonly called "the dictator's dilemma" but that might more accurately be described by the phrase coined by the media theorist Briggs: "the conservative dilemma," so named because it applies not only to autocrats but also to democratic governments and to religious and business leaders. The dilemma is created by new media that increase public access to speech or assembly; with the spread of such media, whether photocopiers or Web browsers, a state accustomed to having a monopoly on public speech finds itself called to account for anomalies between its view of events and the public's. The two responses to the conservative dilemma are censorship and propaganda. But neither of these is as effective a source of control as the enforced silence of the citizens. The state will censor critics or produce propaganda as it needs to, but both of those actions have higher costs than simply not having any critics to silence or reply to in the first place. But if a government were to shut down Internet access or ban cell phones, it would risk radicalizing otherwise pro-regime citizens or harming the economy.

The conservative dilemma exists in part because political speech and apolitical speech are not mutually exclusive. Many of the South Korean teenage girls who turned out in Seoul's Cheonggyecheon Park in 2008 to protest U.S. beef imports were radicalized in the discussion section of a Web site dedicated to Dong Bang Shin Ki, a South Korean boy band. DBSK is not a political group, and the protesters were not typical political actors. But that online community, with around 800,000 active members, amplified the second step of Katz and Lazarsfeld's two-step process by allowing members to form political opinions through conversation.

Popular culture also heightens the conservative dilemma by providing cover for more political uses of social media. Tools specifically designed for dissident use are politically easy for the state to shut down, whereas tools in broad use become much harder to censor without risking

politicizing the larger group of otherwise apolitical actors. Ethan Zuckerman of Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society calls this "the cute cat theory of digital activism." Specific tools designed to defeat state censorship (such as proxy servers) can be shut down with little political penalty, but broader tools that the larger population uses to, say, share pictures of cute cats are harder to shut down.

For these reasons, it makes more sense to invest in social media as general, rather than specifically political, tools to promote self-governance. The norm of free speech is inherently political and far from universally shared. To the degree that the United States makes free speech a first-order goal, it should expect that goal to work relatively well in democratic countries that are allies, less well in undemocratic countries that are allies, and least of all in undemocratic countries that are not allies. But nearly every country in the world desires economic growth. Since governments jeopardize that growth when they ban technologies that can be used for both political and economic coordination, the United States should rely on countries' economic incentives to allow widespread media use. In other words, the U.S. government should work for conditions that increase the conservative dilemma, appealing to states' self-interest rather than the contentious virtue of freedom, as a way to create or strengthen countries' public spheres.

SOCIAL MEDIA SKEPTICISM

There are, broadly speaking, two arguments against the idea that social media will make a difference in national politics. The first is that the tools are themselves ineffective, and the second is that they produce as much harm to democratization as good, because repressive governments are becoming better at using these tools to suppress dissent.

The critique of ineffectiveness, most recently offered by Malcolm Gladwell in *The New Yorker*, concentrates on examples of what has been termed "slacktivism," whereby casual participants seek social change through low-cost activities, such as joining Facebook's "Save Darfur" group, that are long on bumper-sticker sentiment and short on any useful action. The critique is correct but not central to the



question of social media's power; the fact that barely committed actors cannot click their way to a better world does not mean that committed actors cannot use social media effectively. Recent protest movements -- including a movement against fundamentalist vigilantes in India in 2009, the beef protests in South Korea in 2008, and protests against education laws in Chile in 2006 -- have used social media not as a replacement for real-world action but as a way to coordinate it. As a result, all of those protests exposed participants to the threat of violence, and in some cases its actual use. In fact, the adoption of these tools (especially cell phones) as a way to coordinate and document real-world action is so ubiquitous that it will probably be a part of all future political movements.

This obviously does not mean that every political movement that uses these tools will succeed, because the state has not lost the power to react. This points to the second, and much more serious, critique of social media as tools for political improvement -- namely, that the state is gaining increasingly sophisticated means of monitoring, interdicting, or co-opting these tools. The use of social media, the scholars Rebecca MacKinnon of the New America Foundation and Evgeny Morozov of the Open Society Institute have argued, is just as likely to strengthen authoritarian regimes as it is to weaken them. The Chinese government has spent considerable effort perfecting several systems for controlling political threats from social media. The least important of these is its censorship and surveillance program. Increasingly, the government recognizes that threats to its legitimacy are coming from inside the state and that blocking the Web site of *The New York Times* does little to prevent grieving mothers from airing their complaints about corruption.

The Chinese system has evolved from a relatively simple filter of incoming Internet traffic in the mid-1990s to a sophisticated operation that not only limits outside information but also uses arguments about nationalism and public morals to encourage operators of Chinese Web services to censor their users and users to censor themselves. Because its goal is to prevent information from having politically synchronizing effects, the

state does not need to censor the Internet comprehensively; rather, it just needs to minimize access to information.

Authoritarian states are increasingly shutting down their communications grids to deny dissidents the ability to coordinate in real time and broadcast documentation of an event. This strategy also activates the conservative dilemma, creating a short-term risk of alerting the population at large to political conflict. When the government of Bahrain banned Google Earth after an annotated map of the royal family's annexation of public land began circulating, the effect was to alert far more Bahrainis to the offending map than knew about it originally. So widely did the news spread that the government relented and reopened access after four days.

Such shutdowns become more problematic for governments if they are long-lived. When antigovernment protesters occupied Bangkok in the summer of 2010, their physical presence disrupted Bangkok's shopping district, but the state's reaction, cutting off significant parts of the Thai telecommunications infrastructure, affected people far from the capital. The approach creates an additional dilemma for the state -- there can be no modern economy without working phones -- and so its ability to shut down communications over large areas or long periods is constrained.

In the most extreme cases, the use of social media tools is a matter of life and death, as with the proposed death sentence for the blogger Hossein Derakhshan in Iran (since commuted to 19 and a half years in prison) or the suspicious hanging death of Oleg Bebenin, the founder of the Belarusian opposition Web site Charter 97. Indeed, the best practical reason to think that social media can help bring political change is that both dissidents and governments think they can. All over the world, activists believe in the utility of these tools and take steps to use them accordingly. And the governments they contend with think social media tools are powerful, too, and are willing to harass, arrest, exile, or kill users in response. One way the United States can heighten the conservative dilemma without running afoul of as many political complications is to demand the release of citizens imprisoned for using media in these



ways. Anything that constrains the worst threats of violence by the state against citizens using these tools also increases the conservative dilemma.

LOOKING AT THE LONG RUN

To the degree that the United States pursues Internet freedom as a tool of statecraft, it should de-emphasize anti-censorship tools, particularly those aimed at specific regimes, and increase its support for local public speech and assembly more generally. Access to information is not unimportant, of course, but it is not the primary way social media constrain autocratic rulers or benefit citizens of a democracy. Direct, U.S. government-sponsored support for specific tools or campaigns targeted at specific regimes risk creating backlash that a more patient and global application of principles will not.

This entails reordering the State Department's Internet freedom goals. Securing the freedom of personal and social communication among a state's population should be the highest priority, closely followed by securing individual citizens' ability to speak in public. This reordering would reflect the reality that it is a strong civil society -- one in which citizens have freedom of assembly -- rather than access to Google or YouTube, that does the most to force governments to serve their citizens.

As a practical example of this, the United States should be at least as worried about Egypt's recent controls on the mandatory licensing of group-oriented text-messaging services as it is about Egypt's attempts to add new restrictions on press freedom. The freedom of assembly that such text-messaging services support is as central to American democratic ideals as is freedom of the press. Similarly, South Korea's requirement that citizens register with their real names for certain Internet services is an attempt to reduce their ability to surprise the state with the kind of coordinated action that took place during the 2008 protest in Seoul. If the United States does not complain as directly about this policy as it does about Chinese censorship, it risks compromising its ability to argue for Internet freedom as a global ideal.

More difficult, but also essential, will be for the U.S. government to articulate a policy of

engagement with the private companies and organizations that host the networked public sphere. Services based in the United States, such as Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, and YouTube, and those based overseas, such as QQ (a Chinese instant-messaging service), WikiLeaks (a repository of leaked documents whose servers are in Sweden), Tuenti (a Spanish social network), and Naver (a Korean one), are among the sites used most for political speech, conversation, and coordination. And the world's wireless carriers transmit text messages, photos, and videos from cell phones through those sites. How much can these entities be expected to support freedom of speech and assembly for their users?

The issue here is analogous to the questions about freedom of speech in the United States in private but commercial environments, such as those regarding what kind of protests can be conducted in shopping malls. For good or ill, the platforms supporting the networked public sphere are privately held and run; Clinton committed the United States to working with those companies, but it is unlikely that without some legal framework, as exists for real-world speech and action, moral suasion will be enough to convince commercial actors to support freedom of speech and assembly.

It would be nice to have a flexible set of short-term digital tactics that could be used against different regimes at different times. But the requirements of real-world statecraft mean that what is desirable may not be likely. Activists in both repressive and democratic regimes will use the Internet and related tools to try to effect change in their countries, but Washington's ability to shape or target these changes is limited. Instead, Washington should adopt a more general approach, promoting freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly everywhere. And it should understand that progress will be slow. Only by switching from an instrumental to an environmental view of the effects of social media on the public sphere will the United States be able to take advantage of the long-term benefits these tools promise -- even though that may mean accepting short-term disappointment.



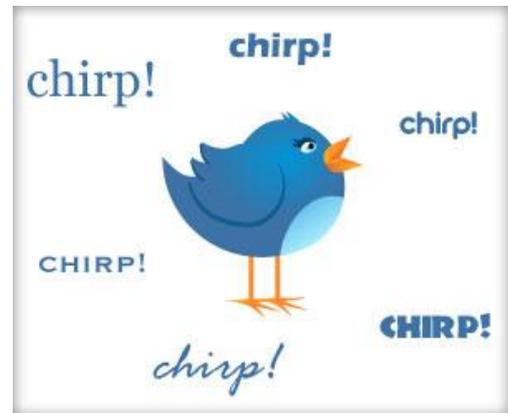


7 Reasons You're Not Generating Leads From Social Media

Posted on <http://socialmediatoday.com/>

Social media is a great inbound marketing tool that allows businesses and marketing teams to interact with prospects, cater to customers, promote their content, and yes, **generate leads**. When a business uses social media right, prospective customers have the opportunity to access great content and information via a platform they already populate and actually *want* to gather said content and information.

Additionally, when prospects do “bite,” many of them are willing to provide their contact information, click to obtain more valuable content, and then come back for more, illustrating the concept of effective use of social media for lead generation beautifully. And a good chunk of B2B marketers are on top of this: According to BtoB Magazine, 48.9% of B2B marketers who use social media say use it for lead generation, making lead generation one of the top applications for the use of social media. Unfortunately for some brands, they don't always realize there are true tactics in order to use social media effectively for lead gen, and they approach their social media presence blindly.



To make sure you're business is appropriately using social media to boost its lead gen efforts, check out the following list to ensure you're not making any of these rookie mistakes.

7 Ineffective Ways to Generate Leads From Social Media

- 1. Not being where your target customers are.** It's not important to maintain a presence on just any social media network in order to engage with potential and current consumers; you have to be where they actually are. If you are posting content and updates blindly to Twitter, but members of your target market aren't present there, what's the point? The first step in effective use of social media for lead generation is to research and determine which social media sites your target audience is active on a regular basis. That way when you do share content and information, you can know you're working to build awareness for your blog, product, service, and other types of content you offer on a regular basis. Awareness is a key preliminary stepping stone for lead generation, since prospects likely go through a period of learning more about your business and deciding whether or not they should research your company further.
- 2. Not providing valuable content.** If you're just pushing out content about your product and why it's so “awesome,” more than likely, people will not want to share or engage with it. If someone is following your brand on Facebook, it's probably to see what valuable content and offers you can offer them. Rather than product-focused content, focus on content rich with tips and tricks which can help to relieve your target customers' pain points. When you target the content you're offering to the different marketing personas you have defined for your business, then your prospects will be much more likely to engage with your brand and therefore, more likely to complete a lead-capture form for a piece of your content. In short, providing targeted, useful content will help you generate more qualified leads who may genuinely be interested in what you have to offer.
- 3. Not using calls-to-action or sharing targeted links to landing pages.** I could have sworn the most effective use of social media for lead gen is the ability to share links to your content, blog, and cool offers? Don't just *say* you have a great blog or that your fans should check out your awesome new ebook, link to it, and use an enticing call-to-action to do so. You'd be surprised how



commonly businesses neglect to do this. Furthermore, share targeted links. Don't talk about how your followers should register for your upcoming webinar and link to your website's homepage that has no mention of the webinar. Instead, link to a **targeted landing page** where visitors to register. Even better, target specific content to different platforms. Create special offers for Twitter followers that are different from your offers to your Facebook fans.

4. Not leveraging social media real estate. When people visit your pages on social sites, they probably want to learn more about your brand and its offerings. On Facebook, you can provide as many links as you would like in the Info section. On Twitter, you can use the short bio to share a link that is integral to your service. Same with LinkedIn, Google+, and other platforms you may be a part of. Use that real estate wisely; it's there for a reason. While social media is a great platform to help you generate leads, you still want to create a connection between the educational content your prospects are downloading and the recognition that your business does more than give out free stuff. Make sure you're effectively leveraging the real estate of **your social media accounts** to create that brand and product awareness, too.

5. Not integrating email and social media. Email marketing and social media are great friends, not enemies. They work together well, help each other out to promote content, and share one another's information on a regular and consistent basis. You should promote your presence on social media sites through buttons on each email as well as share links to email opt-in forms for social followers to sign up to be a part of your email database. When you combine the power of your lead generation tools, you'll create a more strategic effort and a better chance of reaching and nurturing your potential customers through multiple fronts, allowing them to choose how they engage with you, consume information, and decide if they would like to move further down the sales cycle.

6. Not displaying highly visible social share and follow buttons. So you have your website and blog and all this great content, but can people easily share it? Be sure to place easy-to-see and -use share and follow buttons on all your content in order to increase its reach. The more your fans share your content with their networks, the more potential new leads will see it!

7. Not analyzing the effectiveness of your social media efforts. You may be on the latest and great social platforms, sharing awesome content, listening and engaging with your potential audience, and collecting that valuable lead information, but how do you determine if it's working as well as you want it to? You should be **regularly analyzing how much traffic and leads you're generating** from each social platform you're participating in as well as how valuable it is. This will allow your team to evaluate its efforts and make adjustments if needed. For instance, you may want to spend more time engaging the community that tends to convert into more qualified leads. Or perhaps you've discovered that Facebook fans prefer different types of offers than Twitter followers. Use this data to perfect your future lead gen efforts in social media to do more of what works and less of what doesn't.

How effectively are you using social media for lead generation?

This is a guest post written by Pam Sahota. Pam is a marketing communications/social media manager and freelance blogger





How Mainstream Media Outlets Use Twitter

Posted at <http://www.journalism.org/>

November 14, 2011

CONTENT ANALYSIS SHOWS AN EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP

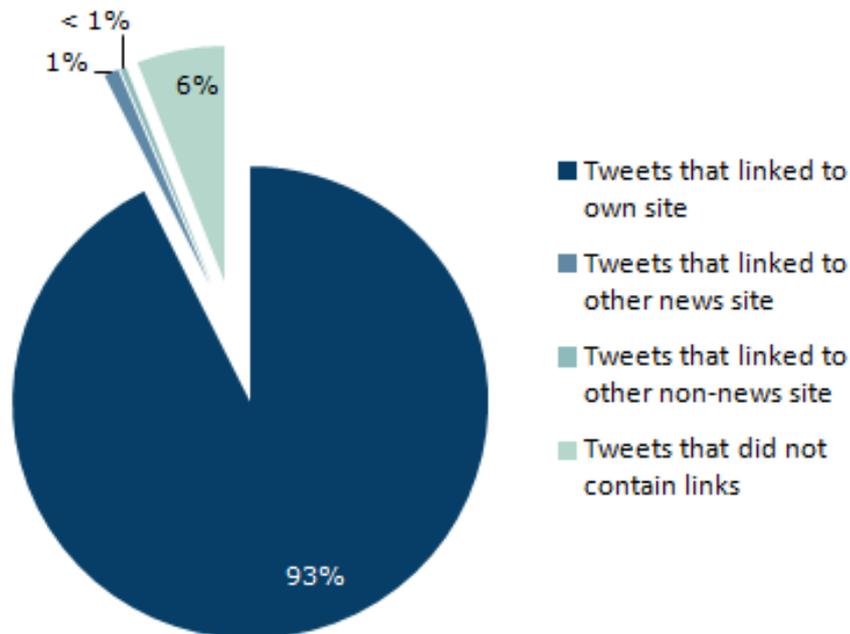
Jesse Holcomb of PEJ, Kim Gross of George Washington University and Amy Mitchell of PEJ

For nearly every news organization, Twitter has become a regular part of the daily news outreach. But there are questions about how those organizations actually use the technology: How often do they tweet? What kind of news do they distribute? To what extent is Twitter used as a new reporting tool or as a mechanism for gathering insights from followers?

To answer some of these questions, the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism and The George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs collaborated on a study of Twitter feeds from 13 major news organizations.^[1]

News Outlet Tweets Linked to Their Own Sites

Percent of tweets studied from news organizations' main Twitter feeds



Date Range: February 14-20, 2011

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S PROJECT FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM
AND THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The research, which examined more than 3,600 tweets over the course of a week, reveals that these news organizations use Twitter in limited ways—primarily as an added means to disseminate their own material. Both the sharing of outside content and engagement with followers are rare. The news content posted, moreover, matches closely the news events given priority on the news organizations' legacy platforms.



Specifically:

- The news outlets studied varied widely in the number of Twitter feeds or channels offered and in how frequently they posted. On average, the news organizations offered 41 different organizational feeds. The Washington Post, at the top of the list, offered 98, more than twice the average. The Daily Caller, on the other hand, offered a single Twitter feed. The level of activity also ranged widely. While as a group the outlets in the sample averaged 33 tweets a day on their main organizational Twitter feed, that number ranged from close to 100 a day to fewer than 10.
- The news organizations were much more similar in the focus of their Twitter activity. The vast majority of the postings promoted the organizations' own work and sent users back to their websites. On the main news feeds studied, fully 93% of the postings over the course of the week offered a link to a news story on the organization's own website.
- News organizations were far less likely to use Twitter as a reporting tool or to curate or recommend information that originated elsewhere. Just 2% of the tweets from the main news feed analyzed were information-gathering in nature-seeking views or first-hand accounts from readers. And only 1% of tweets studied were "retweets" that were reposted from a Twitter feed outside the organization.
- The news agenda these organizations promoted on Twitter closely matches that of their legacy platforms. A comparison of the top stories across these Twitter feeds and across the same mix of legacy outlets reveals four out of the top five news stories were the same on Twitter as in the legacy outlets. For the week studied, February 14-20, 2011, unrest in Middle East and the U.S. economy topped both lists.
- Individual reporters were not much more likely than the news institutions to use Twitter as a reporting tool or as a way to share information produced by those outside their own news organization. An examination of the Twitter feeds of 13 individual journalists-the most followed at each outlet studied-found that 3% of the tweets solicited information, a similar rate as the institutions overall. And 6% of their tweets were retweets of postings from outside entities (compared with 1% on the institutional Twitter feeds).
- Researchers also examined the Twitter feeds of one particular news beat-health reporters. These reporters made more use of the reportorial ability of Twitter, though they still produced far more tweets that disseminated their own material. On average, 6% of the health reporters' postings over the course of the week studied solicited information. That is twice that of the most-followed journalists (3%).

This is not to say that news organizations are not tapping into public sentiment on Twitter through other means. News staff may well be reading, even sometimes doing so on air, the comments posted by their followers. And reporters may have their own list of Twitter feeds that they check regularly. Still, these findings reveal limited use of the institution's public Twitter identity, one that generally takes less advantage of the interactive and reportorial nature of the Twitter.

This behavior resembles the early days of the web. Initially, news organizations, worried about losing audience, rarely linked to content outside their own web domain. Now, the idea is that being a service-of providing users with what they are looking for even if it comes from someone else-carries more weight. It bears watching whether Twitter use for mainstream news organizations evolves in this same way.



About the Study

Researchers examined the Twitter feeds of 13 major U.S. news sources at three levels, including the main feed representing the news outlet (like @washingtonpost) as well as the feeds of the individual journalists who had the largest number of Twitter followers. (The main Twitter feeds of the outlets studied were, in most cases, among the top followed of each outlet and among most productive. The cable outlets were the main exceptions.) In addition, researchers wanted to see how journalists with a specialty beat might use the social networking tool, and thus health reporters at each outlet were examined. (The health beat was one of the most consistent beat across these news sites—11 of the organizations have a specified health reporter with a Twitter feed.) In all, then, 37 different Twitter feeds were studied. Researchers examined every Twitter post, or tweet, in these feeds over the course of one week—chosen because it resembled a typical news week, as opposed to one absorbed with a major breaking news event. A total of 3,646 tweets were examined from the week of February 14-20, 2011 (2,969 main organizational tweets and 677 journalist tweets.) In addition, that content was compared with 972 stories found on the original platforms of those news outlets from the same week.

Among those who contributed to the study were, from The George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs, Dr. Kimberly Gross and Rachel Weisel. At PEJ, that included Amy Mitchell, Jesse Holcomb and Laura Santhanam.

More information about the study and a complete list of contributors can be found in the methodology section of this report.

FOOTNOTES

- [1] The outlets studied come from the five main sectors of mainstream media—print, network TV, cable, online and radio. They were selected based on audience size and for their comparability with the broader sample in PEJ's sample of outlets used in the News Coverage Index. For each outlet, researchers analyzed separately the main organizational Twitter feeds, the feed of the most followed individual reporter at each outlet and, where they existed, the health reporter's Twitter feed.
- [2] The main Twitter feeds of the outlets studied were, in most cases, among the top followed of each outlet and among most productive. The cable outlets were the main exceptions. See methodology for a more comprehensive comparison each outlet's main Twitter feed with its additional set of Twitter feeds.
- [3] It is conceivable that in another week, one in which a major breaking news event occurred, the Twitter universe among mainstream media outlets would look different. The goal of this study, however, is to assess the nature of Twitter use during a typical week, not an extraordinary one.





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