The impact of the Internet on diplomatic reporting: how diplomacy training needs to be adjusted to keep pace

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Declaration

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

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

For my dad, whose insistence on regular progress reports, kept me on track.

Abstract

Over the last 20 years, the Internet has changed the ways in which we work, how we socialise and network, and how we interact with knowledge and information. In the world of diplomacy, the change has been of even greater magnitude. The volume of information available and the speed at which it can be accessed has had a huge effect on diplomatic reporting.

This research set out to determine how the Internet has affected diplomatic reporting and to establish how training in diplomatic reporting needs to be adjusted to keep pace. Through surveys and face-to-face interviews with practicing and retired diplomats, it establishes that the Internet has indeed affected diplomatic reporting, making it more effective, more immediate, more cost-effective, and less formal. A survey of training offered by diplomatic academies shows while all institutions surveyed offer training in diplomatic reporting, none offer online training. This gap needs to be addressed. Given the increasing pressure on diplomats' time and embassy resources, online training will allow diplomats to stay current without leaving their desks.

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Introduction

Overview

Over the last 20 years, the Internet has changed the ways in which we work, how we socialise and network, and how we interact with knowledge and information. The Internet developed alongside the computer back in the 1950s, but it was not until the 1990s that personal computers became a feature on desktops everywhere.

The changes have been fast and furious, particularly since the advent of social media. We have moved from e-mail to instant messaging, from discussion boards to fully interactive online forums, from land-line phones to live video conversations via computer. In terms of the magnitude of its far-reaching effect, nothing comes close to the Internet and how it has changed the way we live our lives.

Statistics tell us a fascinating story. Since the first e-mail was sent in 1971, the picture has changed drastically (Pingdom, 2012).

- Today, there are **3.146 billion** e-mail accounts **w**orldwide.

- The average corporate user sends and receives **112 e-mails** each day.

- Over 70% of the world's e-mail traffic is spam.

At the end of 2011, Internet users numbered 2.1 billion worldwide, 45% of whom were under the age of 25. China has the highest number of users per country at 485 million, more than in the whole of Europe.

In the world of diplomacy, the change has been of even greater magnitude. Diplomats have moved beyond sending hardcopy reports in diplomatic bags. Ciphered messages and cables sent through a dedicated communications centre connected to the outside world are becoming a thing of the past. While hypersensitivity about security might cause some to have sleepless nights, direct desk-to-desk communication has lent itself to efficiency. Individual computers manned by diplomats around the world now have direct connections to the outside. Gone are the typing pools of old, that second or often third check for accuracy. The world of diplomatic reporting has indeed changed.

The sheer volume of information available and the speed at which it can be accessed has also had a huge effect on diplomatic reporting. Reports to capital have moved from being supply-led, i.e. the missions send whatever is available, to being demand-led, i.e. capital specifically requests information that tallies with the foreign affairs strategy. No longer is it enough to post everything of interest to the desk officer, say in London, whose job it is to prepare briefs for the minister on their countries. Much of that information is now available at a stroke of the keyboard. Instead, there's a move towards direct requests: i.e. this is what we are interested in.

From a resource perspective alone, embassies are cutting back, staff is stretched thinner, and with fewer resources, those still in position have to do more. In 1980, the United Nations had 150 member countries. In 1990 that figure stood at 159. Today, it stands at 193 (United Nations, no date). With more countries to cover than ever before, such coverage has to be prioritised. Countries needing votes need to lobby. They have to have a presence at the negotiations table.

The Internet has affected every walk of life. Professions are adapting daily to the many advantages (and disadvantages) it offers. The Internet has changed how we do business in every facet of human interaction. Diplomacy is no exception. The volume of information available to today's diplomat has led many to question whether a diplomatic report issuing from the pen (or keyboard) of a diplomat has any added value. 'Does not a subscription to *The Economist*, and to *Le Monde*, give one all the analysis that one would wish on international affairs?' (Rana, 2005, Ch. 3).

Research goals

The main goal of my research is two-fold:

1. To determine how the Internet has affected diplomatic reporting.

2. To establish how training in diplomacy needs to be adjusted to keep pace.

It stands to reason that as the medium of communication changes, so too, do the format and the style. Has diplomatic reporting kept abreast of these changes? Has it evolved alongside the Internet? Or is it lagging, falling behind?

It is my belief that the Internet has dramatically affected diplomatic reporting and it is my intention that this dissertation demonstrates the ways in which it has done so and makes recommendations to address the gaps in training in this regard.

Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 discusses the history of diplomatic reporting, taking a look at the main forms of diplomatic reporting and their origins. It covers the role of ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs), embassies, and diplomats in diplomatic reporting and seeks to answer the question of whether the importance/intricacy of diplomatic reporting has grown with the evolution of diplomacy through the years. It looks at the correlation between accountability and efficiency and what this means for diplomatic reporting. Finally it looks at the instruments which have affected diplomatic reporting: traditional instruments vs technological development.

Chapter 2 focuses on the elements of good diplomatic reporting: background and context, purpose and length, what is relevant and what is not. It considers whether these elements have changed and if so, what can be discarded and what should be retained given that the underlying purpose is to provide accurate and relevant information that will inform policy. It looks at contributing factors that are dependent on the experience/expertise of the author; for example, knowledge of the language,

familiarity with the topic, cultural awareness, ability to communicate effectively, technological adroitness, and skill in using online tools.

Chapter 3 looks at what technology can provide via the Internet. It compares the tools available to diplomats pre-1990 to those available today. By examining results compiled from a number of surveys by DiploFoundation that show the level and extent to which diplomats are currently using these tools, areas that are being underused are identified.

Chapter 4 discusses how the Internet has impacted the nature of reporting. It asks (and answers) such questions as:

- Can blogging and tweeting be considered forms of diplomatic reporting?
- Can social media form part of the sources for diplomatic reporting?
- Have ICT developments changed the basic characteristics of diplomatic reporting?
- Are the sources (more readily available through ICT/Internet) facilitating diplomatic reporting or diluting it?

Chapter 5 examines the differences and complementarities between a diplomat and a diplomatic correspondent. It looks at the value-added element and questions whether diplomats should report comments or only link to facts (already available online), bearing in mind that the function of diplomatic reporting is to inform policymakers so that when they make decisions, they are acting on the basis of accurate information. This contrasts sharply with the job of journalists – which is not to influence policy, but rather to report news.

Chapter 6 addresses concerns about confidentiality and security of diplomatic reporting in the Internet era. It looks at whether security is a 'new' issue in diplomatic reporting and generally surveys the historical and theoretical aspects of confidentiality and security in diplomatic reporting. It also focuses on the various potential or actual security issues posed by the new technology.

Chapter 7 surveys existing training on diplomatic reporting and identifies training gaps that need to be filled if young diplomats are to keep abreast of and take advantage of modern technological developments.

Finally, in the **Conclusions,** recommendations are made regarding training in diplomatic reporting, the limitations of this research are identified, and suggestions for further research are made.

Methodology

Published information regarding diplomatic reporting in the literature is scarce. What studies I have depended on are supplemented with semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with a number of practicing and former diplomats (for a full list of interviews, see Appendix 1). Additionally, a survey of 105 active diplomats with regard to how they have seen diplomatic reporting change during their careers sheds light on what is happening on the ground (Appendix 2). Research into current training offers from diplomatic academies helps further define the existing training gap (Appendix 6).

1. The history of diplomatic reporting

Diplomacy: the conduct of relations between sovereign states through the medium of officials based at home or abroad [...] the backbone of diplomacy has, for five centuries, been the despatch of diplomatic missions to foreign states, and it is still very much the norm (Berridge & James, 2003, pp. 69–70)*.*

It is beyond the purview of this dissertation to examine the history and origins of diplomacy in all its shape and form. Instead, our discourse is limited to that part of the evolution of diplomacy that affects diplomatic reporting.

As the chief protagonists of diplomacy, diplomats themselves are an institution, their job being to represent and protect the interests of their sending state, its nationals, and its government while abroad. They are a direct line back to capital; a channel between states, used by heads of government to communicate with each other so that the message is delivered with the intended tone and emphasis intact, to the appropriate person, who is best positioned to action it (Berridge & James, 2003). Theirs is a delicate job that requires 'a quick mind, a hard head, a strong stomach, a warm smile and a cold eye' (Meyer, 2009, cited in Miles, 2010).

How far back in time do we need to go to find the origins of diplomatic reporting? Nicholson (1954, p.3) quotes from Homer:

But when before the Assembly of the Trojans the Ambassadors began to weave the web of oratory and persuasion, Menelaus, although the younger of the two, spoke fluently, lucidly, and with few words.

Homer's point is the key to good reporting. Since its inception, diplomacy has been veiled in secrecy and touted by some as the ability to say nothing in a manner which leaves nothing unsaid … at least to the initiated. Those who are well versed in the nuances of diplomatic speak recognise the intentional ambiguity and have mastered the art of its interpretation. Those who have mastered the craft of diplomatic reporting are meticulous in their use of words, ensuring each one fulfills its intent.

Constantinou (2006) speaks of the ancient Greek practice of *theoria* which, on the one hand, was 'the name for a solemn or sacred embassy sent to consult the oracle […] charged with receiving cryptic missives and reflecting on their implications for the polis'. *Theoria* was also a group of citizens sent abroad to find out about 'laws and political ways of other peoples (non-Greeks)'. On their return, the information they had gathered was used to 'inform and suggest reforms in the polis'. This idea of sending emissaries abroad to learn what was going on in the rest of the world, to bring back new ideas and alternate views, which were then used to inform and reframe what is happening at home, is at the heart of diplomatic reporting. And such reporting has been around since man first started speaking and, later, writing.

Transmission of messages

Hedley Bull is quite firm in his assertion that 'the pristine form of diplomacy is the transmitting of messages between one independent political community and another' (Bull, 1977, p. 158). But how are these messages transmitted? Kurbalija (2013a) takes a step back and starts when the Sumerians first invented writing in the fourth millennium BC and the famous Armana letters, which he describes as 'the first diplomatic archives […] developed in order to preserve documentation and institutional memory'.

> In 1887, about 350 clay tablets were found at el Amarna, the site of Akhenaten's capital Akhetaten. Most of these are now in European museums […] They are written in cuneiform characters in the diplomatic language of the day, Akkadian […] They reflect the lively correspondence between the Egyptian administration and its representatives in Canaan and Amurru and the state of international affairs between Egypt and the major powers of the

Middle East, Babylonia, Mitanni and Assyria, and the lesser countries such as Arzawa in western Anatolia (resafim.org, no date).

These clay tablets were the Mesopotamian equivalent of what we know today as *Notes Verbale*. The protocol of the day dictated that, on arrival at his destination, the envoy would supplement his oral reading of the message with additional explanations – the key message consigned to text, the background retained for oral dissemination. This single-messenger system evolved into a pony-express-style relay system as rulers sought speed and efficiency. Dvorik (1974) traces this back as far as the seventeenth century BC, in the days when Hammurabi ruled Babylon. When the Mari archives were unearthed in the 1930s, correspondence between the King and his agents, both at home and abroad, and indeed correspondence with foreign agents, too, tell of diplomatic protocol and reporting on the 'fluctuating alliances and plots rampant in the Ancient Near East' (JVL, no date).

Writing is, as Kurbalija (2013a) states, 'the key diplomatic technology'. He has plotted the evolution of diplomacy and technology on a timeline (Box 1; Kurbalija, 2013b). From this, we can clearly see the evolution of transmission methods for diplomatic reporting: from tablet, to parchment, to printed material; from telegrams to telephones, to teleconferences.

Box 1. Milestones in the evolution of diplomacy

Amarna diplomacy (Ancient Egypt) – the first full diplomatic system with diplomatic archive (Amarna letters), elaborate communication system, diplomatic protocol and diplomatic envoys

Hittiti era – First written international treaty

Ancient Greece – Advanced use of cipher protection, emergence of public diplomacy

Byzantine diplomacy – Use of elaborate protocol and rituals

Papal diplomacy (Middle Ages) – Use of parchment for diplomatic communication

Renaissance diplomacy – First resident mission between Milan and Genoa (1455), well-developed cipher protection for diplomatic messages

Reformation era – End of the 'parchment era' and the start of the 'printed documents era' in diplomatic communication (invention of the Guttenberg press)

Pavel Schilling (Russian diplomat) conducts an early successful experiment in electric telegraphy (1835)

Lord Palmerston receives first diplomatic note by electric telegraph and reacts: 'My God, this is the end of diplomacy' (1860s)

International Telegraph Union (ITU) established (1868)

Three important telegrams in the history of diplomacy: **Ems Telegram** – 1870 (French-Prussian War and German Unification); **Kruger Telegram** – 1896 (Germany's role in South Africa and start of Anglo-German antagonism); **Zimmerman Telegram** (United States enters the First World War)

Regulation radio communication – first conventions adopted after the sinking of the Titanic

Red phone – hot-line between Moscow and Washington during the Cold War, more direct lines between capitals

Radio broadcasting – extensive use during the Second World War by Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin

Tele-conferencing by the ITU between New York and Geneva (1963)

CNN effect – the impact of TV on global public opinion during the Gulf War (1990/1991)

Mailing lists used in multilateral meetings at the Rio Earth Summit (1992)

Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) established (1998)

Diplomatic services websites start to appear (1990s)

World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) (2003-2005)

Social media used in diplomacy (2010+)

Yet before we come to technology (which will be discussed later in Chapter 3), let us first take a look at the origins of the modern ministry of foreign affairs (MFA), the headquarters, if you will, of diplomatic emissaries.

The birth of modern diplomacy

Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal and Duke of Richelieu (1585–1642), is championed as the father of the structure of modern diplomacy. Convinced that a diplomat should have 'one master and one policy', it was in France, in 1626, that he established the first foreign ministry (Encyclopaedia Britannica, no date). Functioning under the title Ministry of External Affairs (a title interestingly still favoured today by the government of India over the more generally accepted Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Richelieu's premise for establishing what we now recognise as the MFA, was to 'ensure his control of envoys as he pursued the *raison d'état'* (Encyclopaedia Britannica, no date). In singular pursuit of this national interest, Richelieu was a zeitgeist in the realm of statecraft:

> *Richelieu rejected the view that policy should be based on dynastic or sentimental concerns or a ruler's wishes, holding instead that the state transcended crown and land, prince and people [...] He asserted that the art of government lay in recognizing these interests and acting*

according to them, regardless of ethical or religious considerations. In this, Richelieu enunciated principles that leaders throughout the world now accept as axioms of statecraft (Encyclopaedia Britannica, no date).

Since that first resident mission between Milan and Genoa opened in 1455 (Box 1), countries have continued to establish missions abroad and diplomats have continued to report back to capital.

Miles (2010) marks the introduction of the telegraph in the mid-nineteenth century as the 'biggest single change' in modern diplomacy. The telegraph in essence robbed diplomats of their true plenipotentiary status – they were now 'within range of instructions' and no longer by authority or necessity stood 'in place of their sovereigns'. This advancement in technology turned the realm of diplomatic reporting on its head. Smith (2011, pp.128–129) maintains that 'as limits of time and space have decreased, so too has the diplomat's room to maneuvre. Sovereigns have always wanted to ensure that their representatives carry out their wishes. Diplomats act, therefore, on the basis of instructions. Smart diplomats do their best to write their own instructions before departing their capitals.'

Eban (1998, p. 92) reports US President Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) writing to James Madison, then Secretary of State as saying: 'We have not heard from our Ambassador in Spain for two years. If we do not hear from him this year, let us write him a letter.' With the advent of the telegraph, such a time lapse became very much a thing of the past. Now that diplomats were within reach, some even thought their very existence to be in jeopardy.

The diplomat's role

Lord Palmerston's famous death knell that the telegraph heralded the end of diplomacy (Box 1) never rang true, despite Queen Victoria (1819–1901) sharing his concern. She rejected a proposal to upgrade the British Legation in Rome and give it full embassy status on the grounds that with this technological advancement, the days of ambassadors were numbered (Soutar, 1996). More recently, in 1979, Edmund Gullion, then Dean of the Fletcher School for Law and Diplomacy, asked if there would still be diplomats in the year 2000. His thoughts? The traditional diplomat birthed in Vienna in

1815 might well be on the way out, but the species itself would survive, assuming, of course, that it was able to adapt to the ever changing circumstances of the new millennium (cited in Sucharipa, 2008).

Despite the dire predictions, diplomacy continues to weather the storm. Foreign embassies and MFAs at home are still the mainstay of diplomatic reporting. Diplomats are still required to report back to capital in order to inform both national and foreign policy. Collecting and reporting on information, tethered to advice (based on their on-the-ground experience) as to how their government should respond, is still very much a key part of the diplomatic wheel. Yet the feed is not just one-way; diplomats also have responsibility for implementing foreign policy in their receiving state, convincing stakeholders that what the home country has decided is best for all concerned. While capital will identify the goals that need to be pursued in terms of foreign policy, decisions about how best to go about this remain the purview of the diplomat. They are the ones who can best identify those needing persuasion; they are the ones who can best sort the adversary from the ally; they are the ones who best decide the strategy to be invoked.

In an interview with Ambassador Kevin Dowling, Irish Ambassador to Hungary (27 November 2012), Ambassador Dowling emphasised this two-way traffic. Although this sense of HQ is still very much present, as that is where the minister resides, Dublin undoubtedly listens as much, if not more so, to what information is coming in to it from its embassies. Gone are the days when HQ alone would have the capacity to build a case and send it out to the embassies for comment. Thanks to the Internet, this capacity is available to all and increasingly, embassies abroad are sending information/proposals back to Dublin for comment.

Part of the diplomatic skill set should include an in-depth understanding of the culture of the receiving country, its key players, its influencers, and its foreign policy. Meyer (2009) discusses the

qualities required in a diplomat and includes such items as an unquenchable curiosity about other countries combined with an enduring interest in foreign policy. Miles (2010) adds 'scrupulous regard for truth' to this list.

Good diplomats focus on developing key relationships with influencers in the receiving state, relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and understanding. They invest time and energy in gaining a deeper understanding of their host's motivation, beliefs, and ways of thinking. It goes without saying that the ability to negotiate, to persuade, is key to any diplomatic success story, as is, in tandem, the ability to inspire trust and engender credibility.

Eban (1998) talks of diplomats being 'vulnerable' charged with getting as much as possible for the home country while at the same time 'giving as little possible in return'. Exposed to public opinion at home, the diplomat is the one most likely to be blamed should things go wrong. By our nature, we like to see cause and effect. We like to bear witness to the consequences of a given action. We like to see the results of decisions taken by our elected officials (our governments) and yet we, as a public, tend to forget that the power we have at home is not the same as it is abroad. We see things, not from an international view (as does the diplomat) but rather through the lens of our own experiences.

Singh (2002, p.67) talks of 'the intellectual gift of seeing all around a problem, leaving no element out of account, and estimating all the elements in their relative proportions'. Yet as a public, we tend to view diplomats as 'a caricature of pinstriped men gliding their way around a never-ending global cocktail party' (Gyngell & Wesley, 2003, p. 106). Cautioned perhaps by the fallout from WikiLeaks, when the laundry of US diplomatic reporting was aired in public, diplomats might now be more cautious in putting pen to paper, as it were.

Prior to World War I, traditional diplomacy was imbued with formality, with a huge emphasis on interpersonal relationships. Communications took time and were shrouded in secrecy (Berridge, 1995). In 1918, in his now-famous speech on the Fourteen Points, US President Woodrow Wilson

called for 'open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view' (Williams, 1971, p. 79). And so dawned the era of 'new diplomacy'. The lid had been lifted as it were and diplomacy was being exposed to the media and public opinion; direct and unmediated conduct of negotiations by politicians and high-ranking officials, including heads of state and ministers, would no longer be the strict purview of diplomats (Eban, 1983).

Accountability vs efficiency

There is little doubt that technology has played a huge role in making diplomacy (and diplomats) more efficient. The vast amount of readily available information, the speed at which instructions can be sent, reports delivered, and decisions made are light years ahead of the days when messengers delivered clay tablets. Yet, as we shall see in later chapters, such expediency also endangers the relevancy of diplomatic reporting. It is important that diplomats not be distracted by the difference between weather and climate: something that is going to pass relatively quickly, and something that may not be particularly noticed but may have long-term implications that need to be sorted out. This is where the Internet can confuse the issue. While the breadth of information available to diplomats might have been greatly widened by the Internet, the depth is not necessarily deeper. This gives rise to a constant tension between what is current and what needs attention (Interview, Dowling, 27 November 2012).

It is vitally important that diplomats do not simply report information that is already in the public realm. This is the job of journalists and diplomatic correspondents as we will see in Chapter 5. By all means should they refer to it, and add to it, if they have new information, but most importantly they should attach reason to it. Armed with an insight fostered by local knowledge and experience, their analysis of the situation and its context is what is important. 'The foundations of good diplomacy are honest reporting and clear analysis' (Cowper-Coles, 2012, p. 10). Diplomatic reporting is not about justifying one's existence: it should serve as an early warning system, be predictive and intelligent in its bearing, and add substantively to the formation of foreign policy.

The current economic climate is seeing MFAs cut back on staff. The old civil service adage of 'urgency drives out the important' holds true. Scarce resources are spent on dealing with whatever fire is currently blazing right now, with little time to think about what caused it and how it might be prevented from re-igniting. More and more ambassadors are being given additional countries. One example is of the current Irish mission in Hungary where the ambassador is now accredited to Hungary, Kosovo, and Montenegro. Third secretaries at home may well find themselves posted abroad as deputy heads of missions. This increasing need for efficiency has given rise to regional clusters where missions abroad, in the same region, now linked by Internet and in daily contact can together report back to capital on what is happening in the region. Prague can talk to Budapest and Belgrade and Warsaw and jointly report on issues Dublin needs to hear of. It might well be said that accountability is then diluted, masked by a joint submission, yet in light of ever scarcer resources, efficiency would appear to be the order of the day (interview, Dowling, 27 November 2012).

Summary

We have seen how diplomatic reporting underwent its first major change with the advent of the telegraph. We have seen how, despite dire predictions to the contrary, diplomacy and the institution of diplomatic reporting have survived. And we have taken a first glance at the role the Internet has had to play.

In Chapter 2 we focus on the elements of good diplomatic reporting: background and context, purpose and length, what is relevant and what is not. We consider whether these elements have changed and if so, what can be discarded and what should be retained given that the underlying purpose is to provide accurate and relevant information that will inform policy. We look at contributing factors that are dependent on the experience/expertise of the author; for example, knowledge of the language, familiarity with the topic, cultural awareness, ability to communicate effectively, technological adroitness, and skill in using online tools.

2. The elements of good diplomatic reporting

…communicating in the right way, in the right voice, with the right people, in the right order of precedence was often more important than the objective truth or wisdom of what you communicated (Parris & Bryson, 2010).

The five C's of diplomatic reporting

On the face of it, the elements of good diplomatic reporting are not that different from good reporting in any field of endeavour. In an interview with former senior UK diplomat, Ms Liz Galvez (21 November 2012), Ms Galvez introduced the five C's which are the mainstay of good diplomatic reporting, namely it should be **concise, clear, correct, comprehensive,** and **courteous**. It is perhaps in the latter point, as evidenced by Parris's quote above, where the professional distinction lies.

Concise

The ability to say much in few words encapsulates the art of being **concise**. The absence of superfluous detail and unnecessary elaboration marks a pithy text. In the days when ciphers had to be coded and then decoded, the fewer words the better was the maxim of the day. Interestingly, we are seeing such economy with words come back in vogue with the popularity of the microblogging social media tool, Twitter. We will discuss this later in Chapter 7. As with any other type of report writing, the value of summaries or conclusions in diplomatic reports cannot be underestimated. Paradoxically, while technology frees up our time by helping us become more efficient, it also fills

that freed-up time with more tools and information. Just as the leisurely reading of broadsheet newspapers is facing extinction, so too is the time available for reading reports, however comprehensive they might be. Executive summaries and conclusions are the most-read sections of any report and care should be taken to ensure these contain all relevant details.

In an interview with Mr Mike Guy, Political and Consular Officer at The Bahamas High Commission in London (22 March 2013), Mr Guy recognised that the time and resources available in small missions to read lengthy reports is limited. 'We found out that there were two years of reports that had been unopened from our mission.' This was not particular worrying because any substantive matters would have been dealt with by the counsellors and elevated as needed. What is important is the record. 'As a mission, you have to show the work you are doing. Regardless of whether you read it or not, you have to have that record' (interview, Guy, 22 March 2013).

At the moment, the emphasis is on written reporting – but, as we shall see in Chapter 4, there is a move towards more secure video communication which will require diplomats to be as concise in their oral transmissions as they should be in their written reports.

Clear

While ambiguity may lie close to the heart of diplomacy and manifest itself through punctuation (or the absence thereof), clarity in reporting to capital is of the utmost importance. Perhaps less crucial today as diplomats are available 24/7 via mobile phone or Internet for clarification and follow-up, back when correspondence with capital was slower and the diplomat's availability was not as immediate, there was less room for error. There is an unattributed urban myth about a diplomat, to wit: When a diplomat says yes, he means perhaps; when he says perhaps, he means no; when he says no, he is no diplomat. The public's perception of diplomatic speak is perhaps not far off the mark.

Not directly related to clarity, *per se*, but still worth mentioning under the guise of relevance, is the necessity to be clear about which questions should be asked and which should remain

unasked. Neustadt and May (1986, p. 149) maintain that 'illuminating questions are what analysts need most. Decision-makers also need them'. Yet what if, in their analysis, diplomats ask questions that capital does not want answered? Or, perhaps the diplomat is faced with the choice of answering a given question objectively or couching their answers in terms that will be most appealing to their Foreign Minister. Even prior to put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, the diplomat needs clarity.

Correct

Paradoxically, getting the facts straight might perhaps have been easier in the pre-Internet days. In our interview, Ambassador Dowling (27 November 2012) alluded to an uncertainty about the accuracy of information that is present today more so than yesterday. This is in large part due to the speed with which information currently travels. In a matter of minutes, a message can travel around the world and once let loose in cyberspace, can become mired in a maze of conflicting information. Verifying sources and being sure that the information to hand is correct, is becoming more and more of a challenge. This is somewhat offset by the relative ease with which diplomats can consult with each other to double-check what they have heard should it not tally with the general consensus. Nevertheless, whether more or less difficult in the Internet era, being correct still remains a key part of good diplomatic reporting.

Much knowledge can be and is assumed as so much information is readily available. The diplomat's mandate has moved away from simple factual reporting and towards what Ambassador Dowling (interview, 27 November 2012) calls 'relationship reporting'. The fact of the matter might be that Minister X of the host country has resigned. That fact will be public knowledge as will the background and lead-up to the resignation. His appointment, his affiliations, his loyalties will all be public record. What is of interest to capital is how other countries are viewing this resignation. What potential fall-out might there be for foreign policy? What initiatives might flounder as a result? Who is the replacement likely to be? Is this resignation a sign of a bigger 'crack in the government'? This insider view has overtaken the need for facts as a matter of importance, yet the essence of being correct in interpreting the nuances remains.

Say, for instance, a diplomat attends five key meetings or has had a series of conversations with key players in the host country. While direct transcripts are neither sought nor required, the results should be reported in the context of relevance. What does it mean for our country in terms of policy-making? How is our position on various aspects of policy affected? Will we be able to negotiate to get to where we need to be? Will we be able to get what we want, and if so, at what price? The need for such opinion has always been there – what is clear today is that it has taken over from the need to report the accompanying facts.

We can also look at being correct from a technical perspective. In an interview with Mr Olaph Terribile, former Head of Protocol for Malta (20 March 2013), Mr Terribile spoke at length about the gradual decline in formality of diplomatic correspondence. As the Internet increasingly facilitates direct correspondence between diplomats, the quality check that was part and parcel of sending dictation to the typing pool has disappeared. Mistakes that would heretofore have been addressed by professional typists – errors such as incorrect titles, bad grammar, and poor construct – are now left to languish. The guiding hand of these experienced professionals is now absent. Writing in a recent blogpost, former diplomat Dr Jovan Kurbalija notes the passing of the typing pool as having a secondary effect on reporting: 'You had to think a lot before you submitted your handwriting for final typing. While the typist would tolerate a few mistakes in the first version (it was possible to correct them with a special ink), you'd better not come back with additional corrections. Bringing the text back for the fourth or fifth time for correction was unthinkable, even for the most courageous' (Kurbalija, 2013c).

Comprehensive

As mentioned in Chapter 1, diplomatic reporting should not be about justifying one's position or worth. Messages should be comprehensive. The subject in question should be covered as completely as possible. This requires a skill of innate importance to diplomats: the ability to see through a subject, to separate what is immediate from what could have long-term implications, to anticipate questions, and to cover all bases.

Comprehensive reporting should offer perspective and opinion, and act in some part as an early warning signal of what might come. Many valedictory despatches (a tradition in the UK FCO of ambassadors sending a last despatch before leaving their post) which signpost the way ahead proved wrong. In one, quite famous valedictory, Sir John Russel, HM Ambassador, predicted on leaving Brazil in 1969 that its population would reach 225 million by the year 2000. His prediction fell short, as evidenced by the national census which showed a population of 169 million. He was also 'a little hasty in his prediction of an imminent dissolving of all racial difference into a coffee-colored melting pot' (Parris & Bryson, 2010, pp. 51–52). Yet dealing comprehensively with the information to hand at any given time is not akin to soothsaying.

Courtesy

Courtesy is, perhaps, one of the key traits expected in a diplomat. Former French ambassador in Washington, Herve Alphand, said that 'a diplomat is a person who can tell the truth to anyone in the government to which he is accredited without offending him, and to anyone in his own government at the risk of offending him' (cited in Vella, 1998). Winston Churchill's famous quote also adds to the mystique: 'Diplomacy is the art of telling people to go to hell in such a way that they ask for directions.'[1] Otto Von Bismarck (1815–1898), first Chancellor of the German empire, advises: 'Be polite; write diplomatically; even in a declaration of war one observes the rules of politeness.'[2]

Author Robin Hobb describes diplomacy as 'the velvet glove that cloaks the fist of power'.[3] This contrast between soft velvet and a hard fist is a fundamental aspect of diplomacy. Yet one has to wonder how, given the many different languages used around the world, how such courtesy can be maintained. That a common diplomatic language has emerged over time is undoubted. The rituals and ceremony that have attached themselves to the practice of diplomacy facilitate a cross-cultural politeness that is absent in many other international professions. Driving this is the need to minimise

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[1] http://www.quotesbuddy.com/quotes/diplomacy-quotes/
[2] http://www.finestquotes.com/author_quotes-author-Otto%20von%20Bismarck-page-0.htm
[3] http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/25307.Robin_Hobb

what Jönsson and Aggestam (2007, p. 7) call 'unnecessary misunderstanding'. True diplomats have refined the art of communicating with tact and civility but neither should lead to the mistaken belief that diplomacy is simply talk. 'Like water, it is soft on the surface but very hard in its essence' (Camilleri, pers. comm.). As we discussed in Chapter 1, diplomats are meticulous in their use of words, focusing on eliminating redundancy even if they use some form of constructive ambiguity. As Cohen (1981, p.32) points out, 'a diplomatic communication should say neither too much nor too little because every word, nuance of omission will be meticulously studied for any shade of meaning.'

Take the closure of the Irish embassy in the Vatican in 2011 as a case in point. Touted as it was for 'economic reasons', many wondered whether this perfectly acceptable reason for closure (given the economic climate) was simply masking the growing disillusionment of Irish Catholics (ergo their government) with the Vatican's failure to resolve sex abuse scandals involving Irish priests and was, as such, a stern reprimand. Perhaps a courteous way of signalling a deep-seated resentment of how the issue was being handled with no face lost (Franco, 2011). A more recent case in Hungary, where in May 2013, the Australian government announced a series of cost-cutting measures that included the closure of just one embassy worldwide: Budapest. This move comes at a time when Hungary is preparing to open a new consulate-general in Melbourne and a consular mission in Sydney. While Canberra has stated in no uncertain terms that it no longer sees a reason to keep an embassy presence in Hungary, a spokesperson for the Hungarian government says they are convinced the move is temporary (*Budapest Times*, 2013). One has to wonder which party is speaking the truth or whether the truth is also a matter of perspective.

Indeed, giving the other side an opportunity to 'save face' is a key part to negotiations and what the general public might fail to realise is the importance of who travels to whom? If tensions are rife and relationships strained, as was the case with the USA and the USSR in the 1986 debate over nuclear arms reduction between Regan and Gorbachev, diplomatic courtesy dictated that they meet half-way, in Iceland, at the famous 1986 Reykjavik Summit (McGarvey, 2010).

Relevance

While we have alluded to the matter of relevance, it perhaps needs a little more reflection. We can see it in terms of timeliness and in terms of context. Ambassador Saviour Borg (interview, 22 March 2013) commented on the need for prompt reporting: 'It is important also that one reports as quickly as possible because things which you have come across today might not be relevant tomorrow.' Equally, while a diplomat must report back on specific issues requested by capital, they are also in a position to highlight issues they think are relevant, issues that capital may have overlooked or not been aware of.

In addition, technology now offers what Smith (2011, p.130) describes as more 'personal and informal channels of communication'. Should it feel the need to do so, either the embassy or the country desk at capital can notify the other of potential issues or problems that they may not want to commit to formal communication. Smith (2011) cites the example of an embassy being notified of an expression of interest by an assistant secretary about a particular issue. The embassy, once alerted, will know to submit a report on this subject promptly. This connectivity, though, is a 'double-edged sword'. Smith (2011, p. 131) argues that it 'increases the pressure on embassy reporting to adopt the capital's paradigm for understanding what is happening locally. This vitiates what ought to be one of the key values of embassy reporting – having capable people on the ground who can independently assess local developments'.

Content and structure

As noted in Chapter 1, sending emissaries abroad to learn what was going on in the rest of the world, to bring back new ideas and alternate views, which are then used to inform and reframe what is happening at home, is at the heart of diplomatic reporting. When speaking with Ambassador Dowling (interview, 27 November 2012) he talked of the breadth, depth, longevity, and accuracy of information available to a diplomat abroad. He spoke also of the tension in today's technologically fast-paced world that exists of needing to deal with something immediately and not getting the opportunity to look at it in more depth.

A key part of diplomatic reporting in the pre-Internet days was the gathering of information on the ground and reporting this back to capital: facts about the host country, its policies, its ministries, its politicians, it government, the situation as it was in the field. Given that the underlying purpose of diplomatic reporting is to inform policy, it was important that these facts be correct and well-researched. Country reports on the state of play were read eagerly and with some anticipation. The classic Graham Greene caricature of 'our man in Havana' comes to mind. As a specific point of contact in a foreign state, the diplomat was the 'go to' person to confirm or gather what information was needed. Instructions were relayed from capital to its missions with specific instructions on what information was needed. Now that much of this information is available in the public domain, a reverse situation is manifesting in that increasingly, capitals are taking note of what diplomats think important (interview, Dowling, 27 November 2012).

Prior to the Internet, when writing a *Note Verbale*, second opinions were sought before sending to ensure that this communication between states contained nothing that could be construed as offensive. They were reviewed for tone, accuracy, and content. This second opinion was usually offered by the immediate superior. Today, however, many *Notes Verbale* are sent by e-mail with the supervisor copied in to the message, too late to offer a second opinion. The message has already been delivered (interview, Terribile, 20 March 2013).

Contributing factors

When it comes to reporting, not everyone has the same skill set or background. The experience of the author – for example, knowledge of the language, familiarity with the topic, cultural awareness – coupled with their expertise – ability to communicate effectively, technological adroitness, and skill in using online tools – will all contribute to effective diplomatic reporting.

Another contributing factor, as noted by Mr Terribile (interview, 20 March 2013) is the expectations of the minister in office. Let us take, for example, the minutes of a meeting. One minister might require factual minutes detailing what was said, and by whom; another might require

a two-paragraph summary; while another still might be content with a series of bulleted points of interest. Likewise, the preparation of briefs is also subject to the vagaries of ministerial preference.

Often, a differing level of detail is required for different audiences and good reporting will be tailored to meet the needs of the reader. Strategic reporting from ambassadors should post both sides of the situation and then draw a conclusion, acknowledging the source and the predictive elements, if any. Assumptions being made should be clearly stated and the availability of further information well signposted.

Summary

We have identified the elements of good diplomatic reporting as encapsulated in the five C's: **concise, clear, correct, comprehensive,** and **courteous.** We have considered these elements in light of the underlying purpose to provide accurate and relevant information that will inform policy. And we have looked at the contributing factors that are dependent on the experience/expertise of the author, given that in addition to the technical proficiency required, good diplomatic reporting is anchored in the diplomat's judgment and analytical skills.

In Chapter 3 we look at what technology can provide via the Internet, and compare the tools available to diplomats pre-1990 to those available today. By examining results compiled from a number of surveys by DiploFoundation that show the level and extent to which diplomats are currently using these tools, we identify areas that are being underused.

3. What technology can provide via the Internet

When I took office, only high energy physicists had ever heard of what is called the Worldwide Web [....] Now even my cat has its own page (Clinton**, 1996).**

The Internet as we know it today had relatively modest beginnings. It started with the US-government project ARPANET – the brainchild of the Advanced Research Projects Agency situated in the US Department of Defense. Connecting four universities in 1969, ARPANET allowed researchers to use any of the four mainframes. New connections were soon added. And as the network expanded, so too did its capabilities. By 1994, the Internet facilitated the transfer of files, e-mail, and finally HTML – hypertext mark-up language (Smithsonian, no date).

Statistics tell us a fascinating story. Since the first e-mail was sent in 1971, the picture has changed drastically (Pingdom, 2012). Today, there are **3.146 billion** e-mail accounts **w**orldwide. The average corporate user sends and receives **112 e-mails** each day. Over 70% of the world's e-mail traffic is spam, which explains that while the Internet may offer many time-saving tools, this comes at a price.

At the end of 2011, Internet users numbered 2.1 billion worldwide, 45% of whom are under the age of 25. China has the highest number of users per country at 485 million, more than in the whole of Europe (Figure 1).

- Wordwide: **2.1 billion**
- Asia: **922.2 million**
- Europe: **476.2 million**
- North America: **271.1 million**
- Latin America/Caribbean: **215.9 million**
- Africa: **118.6 million**
- Middle East: **68.6 million**

- Oceania/Australia: **21.3 million**

Internet users by region, March 2011

- Africa (6%)
- Asia (44%)
- Europe (23%)
- Middle East (3%)
- North America (13%)
- Latin America / Carib. (10%)
- Oceania / Australia (1%)

Data source: Internet World Stats, January 2012   www.pingdom.com
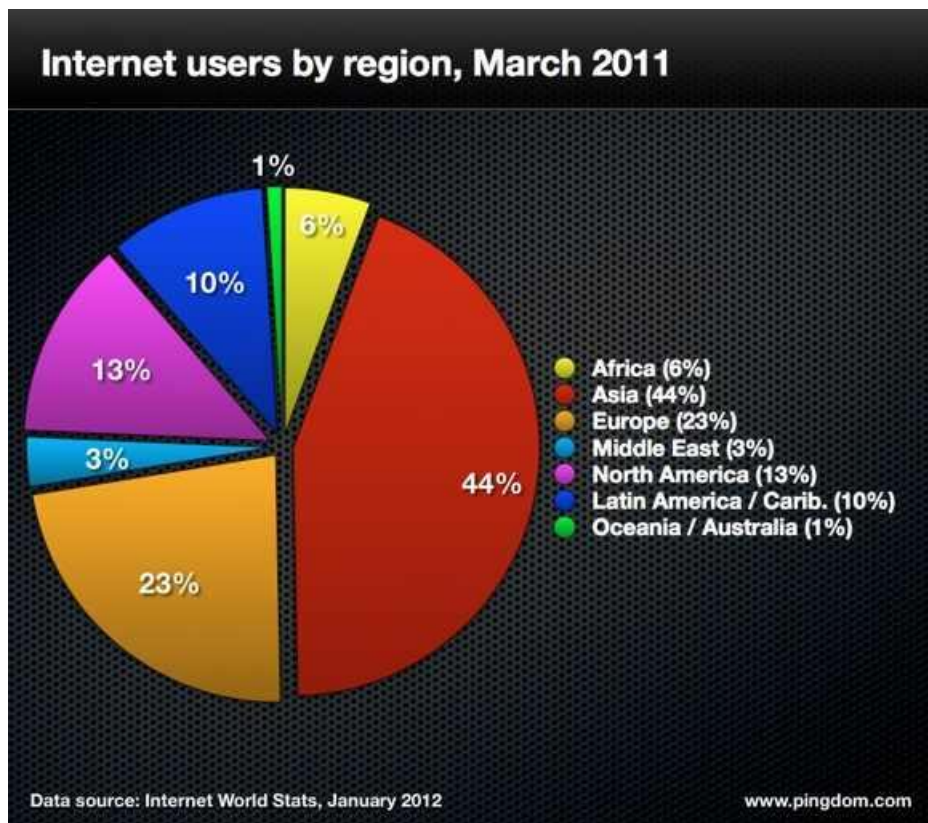
Figure 1. Internet users by region (Pingdom, 2012).

Internet penetration – i.e. the percentage of the population using the Internet – is highest in North America at 78.3%, followed by Oceania/Australia at 60.1% (Figure 2).

The Internet has affected every walk of life. Professions are adapting daily to the many advantages (and disadvantages) it offers. The Internet has changed how we do business. Diplomacy is no exception. The emergence of personal computers began to change the working environment of corporations large and small. What might have taken hours was now accomplished at the click of a mouse. Simple features like cut and paste made the lives of students and professionals easier. No profession was immune. Even traditional professions like diplomacy have seen monumental changes in how they operate on an organisational level.
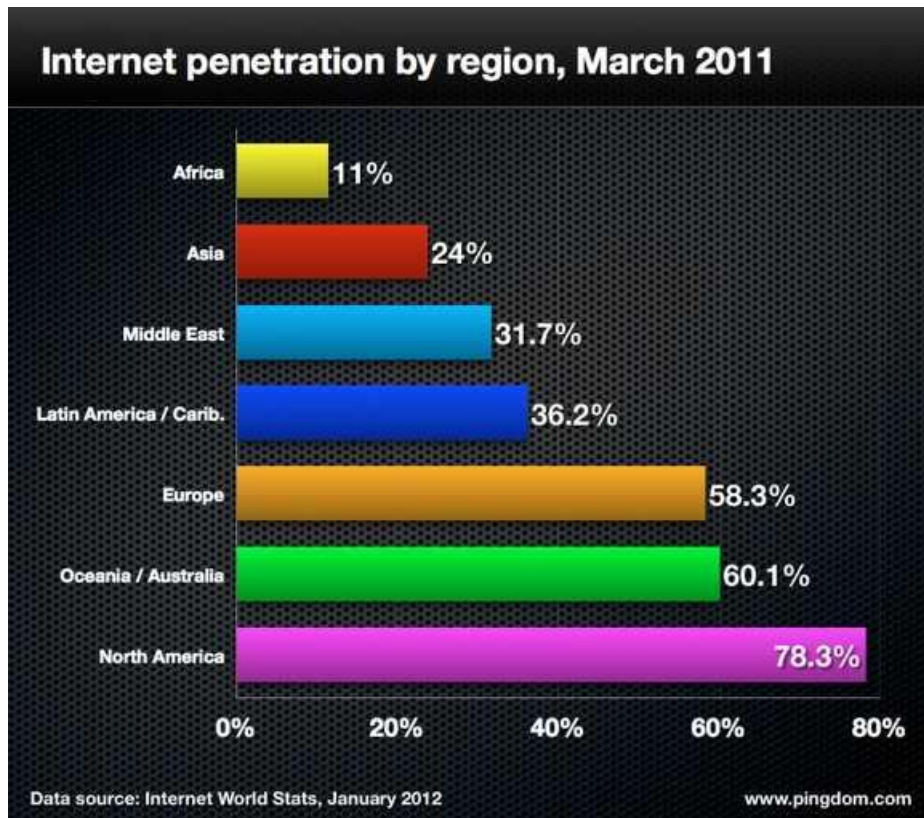
Figure 2. Internet penetration by region, March 2011 (Pingdom, 2012).

Information and communication technology (ICT) has changed the face of world politics. The Internet has opened the doors through which have come numerous non-state actors: non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academia, civil society, diaspora, special interests groups, corporations, activists, and even less appealing actors such as terrorists, racists groups, and extremists. It is not simply the case that ICT has made their existence plausible, rather that these non-state actors are increasingly vocal and visible.

With so many more voices making themselves heard through the use of social media, these opinions are influencing policy on a national and global stage, and thus impact diplomacy. Such involvement in itself is not new; what is new is the effect it has. Diplomats have had to broaden their sphere of reference outside the traditional one of foreign government to include these non-state actors, in order to get a complete picture of any given situation. Add to this the fact that the general

public is now, thanks in large part to the Internet, much better informed and less likely to take things at face value. As Traub (2007) put it: 'All diplomacy is public diplomacy.'

As the variety of actors with which diplomats must engage increasingly moves out of the more traditional sphere, it is important that they stay current and learn to converse with these non-diplomats in a way that fosters communication exchanges and knowledge sharing. 'To be effective, today's diplomat must convey a deeper understanding of his or her country beyond the national headlines. A contextually rich view of issues, infused with comments produced by conversations with government ministers, academics, and taxi drivers, is the desired deliverable to the institution' (Bronk, 2006). For many in the service, there is a steep learning curve to be faced, something we will look at in more detail in Chapter 7.

From the myriad free tools and applications available to diplomats (and indeed anyone using the Internet), there are some that are of primary use in diplomatic reporting. Let us take a look at these and situate them in the context of diplomatic reporting.

Key tools for diplomats
Information aggregators

The sheer volume of information available to today's diplomat has led many to question whether diplomatic reports issuing from the pens (or keyboards) of diplomats have any added value. 'Does not a subscription to *The Economist*, and to *Le Monde*, give one all the analysis that one would wish on international affairs?' (Rana, 2005, Ch. 3). That so much information is available is a given. Yet how can diplomats better use the Internet to access this information efficiently? The very nature of their jobs requires them to stay current, to follow the latest developments practically as soon as they happen. In essence, they need to aggregate the information that is out there and have it feed into one location for easy access. While there are many such aggregators available (including Google Desktop), the most popular and effective is probably Netvibes. It does away with the need to laboriously bookmark pages and then revisit each one manually. Instead, it allows the user to track updates to websites via RSS technology.

Borg Psaila (2011) speaks of two ways to use aggregators:

1. *A fast, essentials-only way is by using an* **RSS/Atom reader** *(RSS and Atom being standard formats which many publishers/authors/journalists use for their content, and which an RSS/Atom reader can 'capture'). This aggregates content from news headlines, blogs, audio, and video. The feeds include summarised versions or full text, author and date, and the readers can be web-based or desktop-based (such as FeedDemon[4] and NewzCrawler[5]).*

2. *A second, more comprehensive, bird's eye view way, is by using a Web 2.0 Start Page, or personal webpage. This has all the features of an RSS/Atom reader, but has the advantage of being able to do more: integrate e-mail (for example, Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail or other POP/IMAP-based webmail services), add calendars and weather forecasts, integrate photo and video services (e.g. Flickr or YouTube), integrate Facebook and Twitter accounts, and many more modules. Popular start pages include Netvibes,[6] […] iGoogle[7] and Pageflakes.[8]*

According to Borg Psaila (2011) whichever you choose is very much dependent on your needs and whether you want an overview or specific information; whether you need news and blogs only or everything social media generates. Here again, we see the need for good judgment in striking the right balance between too much information and not enough.

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[4] http://www.feeddemon.com/
[5] http://www.newzcrawler.com/
[6] http://www.netvibes.com/en
[7] http://www.google.com/ig
[8] www.pageflakes.com

Figure 3. A screenshot of a Netvibes aggregator page 'Digital Diplomat at work'.

Italian diplomat, Stefano Baldi, has chosen Netvibes. Director of the Diplomatic Institute of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Baldi has developed a Netvibes page called 'Digital Diplomat at work'[9] which features feeds from relevant papers, agencies, and organisations with information he needs to do his work (Figure 3). As already highlighted in Chapter 1, 'relevant' is the operative word: if good judgment is not used in deciding the best feeds, those with the most relevant information for the task at hand, then the aggregator will become yet another mass of information that has to be sifted through.

Wikis

Invented by Ward Cunningham, a wiki enables individuals or groups to collaborate in writing documents using a web interface. Ideal for joint reporting, where many people are feeding into the

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[9] http://www.netvibes.com/diplosor#Training

same report or knowledge repository, wikis are very much live entities, the most famous in general terms being Wikipedia, which boasts over 26 million articles in 286 languages (Wikipedia, 2012).

The most renowned instance of its use in the diplomatic world is the US Department of State's Diplopedia. 'Anyone who can access Diplopedia is invited and encouraged to contribute his or her experience, knowledge and expertise in the form of articles, discussion or editing of material submitted by others. It is fast becoming a reference and starting point for all topics of interest to the Department and U.S. Government (USG) foreign affairs community' (US Department of State, 2012).

Diplopedia serves as a reference point for new diplomats who need to quickly get up to speed on their position/assignment. It is also used to disseminate information following a major event. A particular case in point was in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, where an associated page was uploaded within 12 hours, and included all the information necessary for officers to help with evacuations and facilitate donations to the Red Cross (Olopade, 2010).

Admittedly, a successful diplomatic career is not 'traditionally derived from a collaborative and creative professional mileau', but rather from the successful individual analysis of information from many sources; the US State Department recognised the need for 'finding, identifying, and collecting data' from disparate sources and aggregating them to create a repository of information accessible to all diplomats in its foreign service (Bronk & Smith, 2010).

Another added advantage of wikis is that they facilitate regional approaches to issues. Given that many states are facing financial constraints in terms of diplomatic representation, regional clustering (i.e. achieving a better effect through collaboration between embassies) could be the way forward (interview, Dowling, 27 November 2013).

Bookmarking

With many diplomats working from multiple computers – work desktops, home PCs, laptops, iPads, smart phones – bookmarking is getting even more complicated than it used to be. Finding that key piece of information and logging it for a later date only to find that when it comes to writing that

report, the bookmark needed is on another device can be frustrating. With Delicious, an online service, diplomats can synchronise their bookmarks and save, tag, and share URLs to relevant websites. Smart and efficient use of tagging allows them to bookmark the same piece of information in different categories: for example, information on the Dublin agreement might be tagged under Schengen, Switzerland, EU, asylum seekers, and Eurodac.[10] Such efficiency in retrieving already identified information is time-saving and lends itself to greater productivity.

E-mail alerts

For diplomats, keeping track of how the media is reporting on their country, their minister, or a specific event, is key to staying current with what is going on. Services like Google Alerts facilitate searches on key terms chosen by the user. Any time the chosen term appears on the Internet, an e-mail alert is sent along with the relevant web-page address. The more specific the term chosen, the more accurate the information will be. This again reduces time and avoids hours of trolling through websites for information which is instead delivered to your inbox on publication.

Digital photocopies

Exchanging files that look like the original and cannot be modified without indicating the modification is becoming increasingly important. The ability to print documents in portable document format (PDF) is helpful and can be done from many applications.

Online collaboration

Google Drive (formerly known as Google Docs) facilitates multiple users working on shared documents. It is particular useful in multilateral diplomacy more so than in diplomatic reporting (unless, perhaps, regions are cooperating on joint reports). Several people can work on the same document, commenting in real time, suggesting changes and asking for clarification on specific text.

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[10] European Dactyloscopy, is the European fingerprint database for identifying asylum seekers and irregular border-crossers

It also enables version control so that previous versions of the documents can be checked and revisited.

What diplomats are currently using

How would you rate your familiarity with each of the following tools?
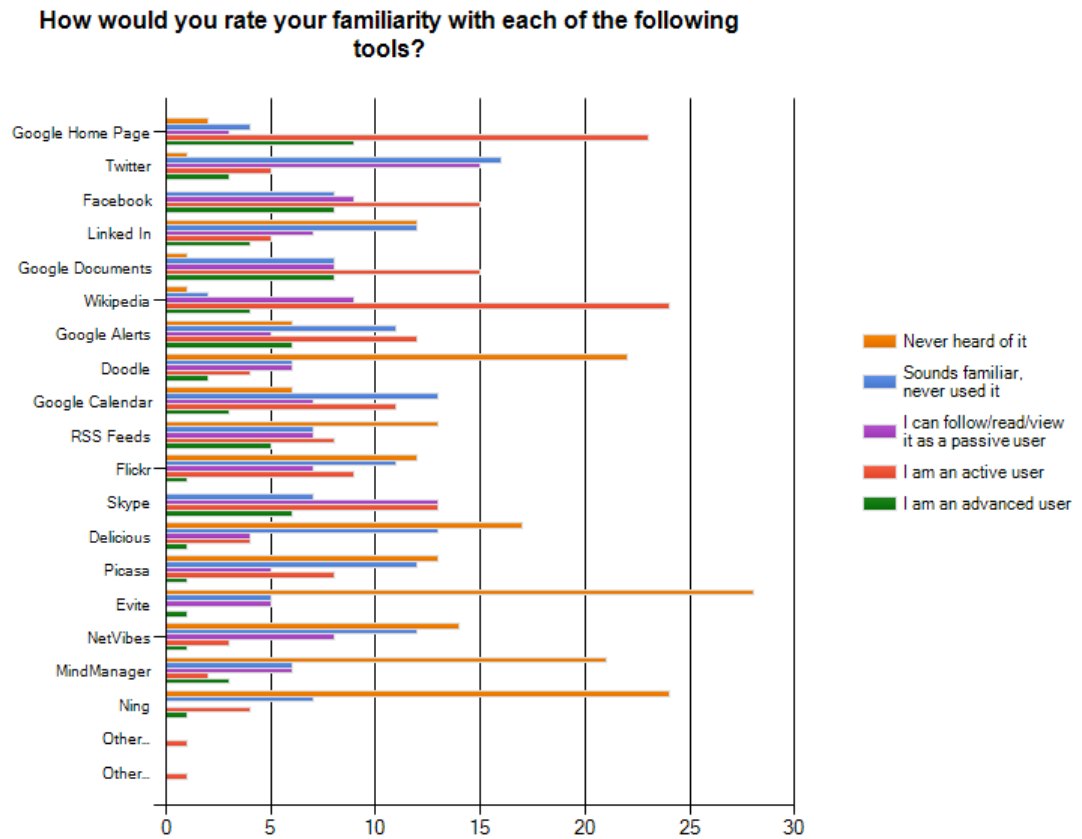
Figure 4. Survey of familiarity with e-tools (2010).

In 2010, Diplo surveyed 40 diplomats regarding their use/familiarity with e-tools (DiploFoundation, pers. comm.). The results show that while many had heard of Twitter, few were actively using it. The most used tool, according to the survey, was Wikipedia. This in itself is raises some concern. Sandra Ordonez, communications manager for Wikipedia, admits that while 'Wikipedia is the ideal place to start your research and get a global picture of a topic. […] it is not an authoritative source' (cited in Sideman, 2007). As we will discuss later in Chapter 7, training in diplomatic reporting, in particular for junior diplomats, should stress this point.

Figure 5. Survey of diplomats re use of Internet tools (2012).

In 2012, a similar survey by DiploFoundation of 26 diplomats fewer than five considered themselves advanced users of any of the tools we have discussed with the exception of Google Documents (DiploFoundation, pers. comm.). While these results cannot be considered representative given the number of respondents, they do give some indication of the popularity of e-tools and clearly demonstrate that better use could be made of what is currently available on the Internet. We will discuss how best to maximise this usage in Chapter 7.

Summary

We have discussed those e-tools that have the most relevance for diplomatic reporting, and looked at what technology can provide via the Internet. By examining results compiled from surveys by DiploFoundation, we saw examples of the level and extent to which a small cohort of diplomats are currently using these tools and noted areas that are being underused.

In Chapter 4, we will discuss how the Internet has impacted the nature of reporting and answer such questions as: Can blogging and tweeting be considered forms of diplomatic reporting? Can social media form part of the sources for diplomatic reporting? Have ICT developments changed the basic characteristics of diplomatic reporting? Are the sources (more readily available through ICT/Internet) facilitating diplomatic reporting or diluting it?

4. The impact of the Internet: what the numbers say

So of course there's no such thing anymore as effective diplomacy that doesn't put a sophisticated use of technology at the center of all we're doing to help advance our foreign policy objectives, bridge gaps between people across the globe, and engage with people around the world and right here at home (Kerry, 2013).

What exactly does diplomatic reporting include? Is it simply inter-mission correspondence or does it also include correspondence with capital, i.e. cables, quarterly reports, annual reports, financial reports, memoranda, country briefings? Can we also add inter-government correspondence, i.e. *Notes Verbale, démarches,* letters of credence, and foreign policy matters reported in the media? And to this mix, can we insert public diplomacy initiatives, for example, communication with the diaspora?

This question was asked in a general survey answered in part by 105 practising diplomats from five regions: Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. As just 67 completed the entire survey (including demographics), some of the results have been filtered to show these answers only. It is interesting to note that of the 67 respondents who provided their demographics, 22 have 0–5 years of service, 11 have 6–10 years, 23 have 11–20 years, and 11 have 21 or more years (Figure 6). Those most likely to have seen the effects of the Internet on diplomatic reporting (i.e. those with 11 or more years of service), having observed the transition first-hand, represent slightly more than 50% of those surveyed.

Going back to our original set of questions, it would seem that all five 'categories' of diplomatic reporting are viable (Figure 7), with the main component being correspondence with capital (92.7%), followed by inter-mission correspondence (67.8%), inter-government correspondence and foreign policy matters reported in the media (58.1%), and public diplomacy initiatives (54.3%).


Years in diplomatic service
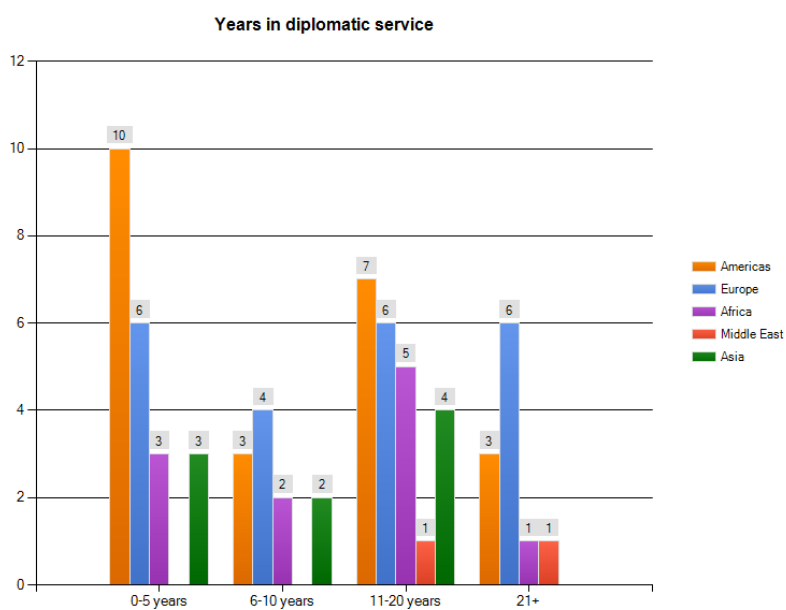
Figure 6. Breakdown of survey participants by region and years in diplomatic service.

In addition to the categories listed, others volunteered by the respondents included:

- Constant reports to headquarters about the situation on the field.
- Annual conference/meeting of ambassadors held in the capital.
- Discussions with diplomatic interlocuteurs.
- Economic matters reported in the media.
- Foreign policy discussions with contacts not in the media.
- Early and regular identification of promotional and investment opportunities for short and medium term action.

**What does diplomatic reporting include, in your opinion? (tick all that apply)**
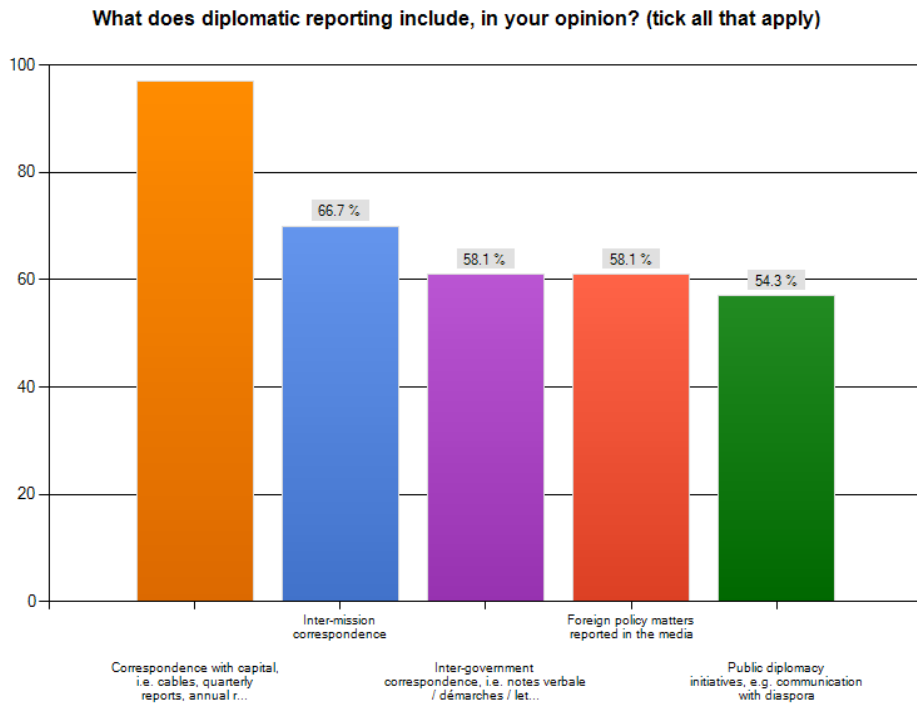
Figure 7. What respondents mean by diplomatic correspondence.

If you have 10 years of service…do you think diplomatic reporting has changed since you entered the service?
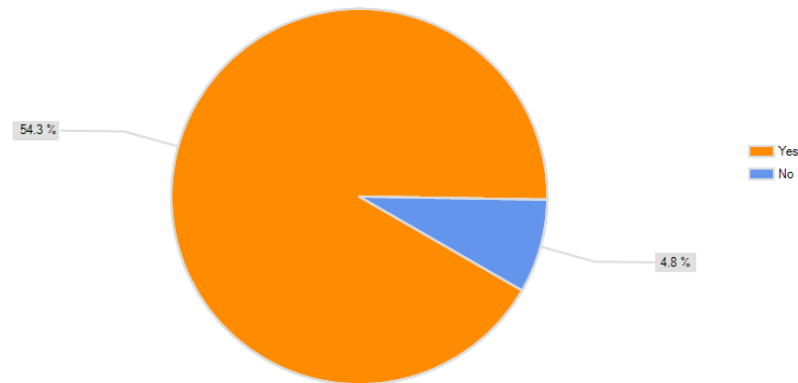

Figure 8. Percentage of respondents who believe that diplomatic reporting has changed.

More than 90% of those with more than ten years of diplomatic service said that diplomatic reporting has changed since they began their service (Figure 8).

Effectiveness, immediacy, cost-effectiveness, formality, and pressure[11]

But how has it changed? Using the parameters effective, immediate, cost-effective, formal, and pressured, the survey asked respondents whether they found the Internet to have made diplomatic reporting more or less effective, or whether they have registered no change at all (Table 1).

Table 1. How has the Internet affected diplomatic reporting?

	More	Less	No change
Effective	91%	5%	4%
Immediate	92%	1%	6%
Cost effective	86%	9%	5%
Formal	6%	84%	9%
Pressurised	63%	20%	17%

The vast majority said that it has made their work more effective, more immediate, more cost-effective, less formal, and more pressurised.

When we think 'Internet', many first think 'e-mail'. This immediate form of communication has revolutionised how we interact. It also provides diplomats with a way to censor their reports. Smith (2011) talks of a tendency to clear preliminary drafts of despatches with capital, particularly if they have the potential to be controversial. Secure e-mail facilitates this sense-check. The response might be such that the official dispatch may never see the light of day, or that the end result will be a sanitised version. Prior to the Internet, such censorship would have been done at the embassy but time would not have allowed the luxury of an opinion from capital.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

Other protocols enabled by the Internet have also affected diplomatic reporting. Take Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) as an example. Also known as Internet telephony, VoIP allows users to make free calls using the Internet. Survey results show that VoIP has made diplomatic reporting more

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[11] Some values in the tables in this chapter may not total 100% due to rounding errors

effective, more immediate, more cost effective, and less formal (Table 2). Going back to the example attributed to Smith (2011) in Chapter 2, a quick Skype chat would be a good way for someone on the EU country desk at capital to notify the embassy in Dublin that the assistant secretary was enquiring about growing reports of racial unrest. This unofficial, even somewhat casual conversation would be off-record, expedient, cost-effective, and deliver immediate results.

Table 2.How has VoIP affected diplomatic reporting?

	More	Less	No change
Effective	71%	12%	18%
Immediate	67%	15%	18%
Cost effective	69%	18%	13%
Formal	6%	62%	32%
Pressurised	38%	25%	38%

In an interview with Ambassador Saviour Borg (22 March 2013), the ambassador spoke of when Malta was in the Security Council in 1983/1984. 'At that time there were no laptops, no e-mails, nothing. What we had was a telephone, and a fax, and ciphers.' He told of how there were two or three receptionists on duty at the UN at all times. He 'had to go to them, to book a call, to call our authorities and pass on the information we were obtaining on a resolution, for example. We consolidated that with a fax, but later, for example when we were working at night, we had to make sure […] that certain messages were passed through the telephone.' Today, thanks to the Internet and modern ICT, the situation is completely different.

Social media

Social media has taken the world by storm. We will see later in Chapter 5 how citizen journalists are increasing pressure on diplomats to deliver timely and accurate reporting of what is happening on the ground. The survey results show that the biggest impact social media has in terms of diplomatic reporting is making it more immediate and less formal.

While a 2010 survey by DiploFoundation showed that 76% of respondents thought Diplomats should blog (DiploFoundation, 2010), some argued that 'blogging is not compatible with

the diplomatic function'. Stephen Hale (2008), of the UK FCO, did not agree. 'A large part of what we do offline in the Foreign Office is engage and influence audiences in support of UK foreign policy goals. Diplomacy is not just about states talking to states. And often the issues we work on (like climate change or counter terrorism) can't be solved by one state talking to another. The internet provides us with the means to engage and influence audiences all around the world. And blogs are one tool that diplomats can use to talk informally with their target audience about specific foreign policy issues.'

Table 3. How has social media affected diplomatic reporting?

	More	Less	No change
Effective	67%	16%	16%
Immediate	79%	8%	12%
Cost effective	67%	19%	14%
Formal	3%	78%	19%
Pressurised	41%	31%	28%

With the post-9/11 move in the US government from a 'need to know' to a 'need to share' (Smith, 2011), the US Department of State became an example of one diplomacy machine that has embraced social media and is seeking to maximise existing tools to promote the sharing of information. It is not rocket science. 'What better way to move an agency into need-to-share protocols than to integrate technology from the world's leading authorities on need to share, namely social networking sites Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia' (Khalid, 2011). In a non-exhaustive list of blogs compiled by Danielle Derbes for the June 2011 *Foreign Service Journal*, the Department of State lists 161 blogs (Table 4) and the UK's FCO lists 47 active bloggers on its site (FCO, no date).

In Chapter 6 we will deal more with Twitter, but it is interesting to note here that a distinction apparently needs to be made between the diplomat and the person. In which capacity are they tweeting or blogging? One case in point is that of former Indian diplomat Shashi Tharoor, who, in 2010, tweeted a rather innocuous message to his half-million or so followers: *Dilemma of our age. Tough visa restrictions in hope of btr security or openness & liberality to encourage tourism*

& goodwill? I prefer latter. He made the front page news nationally for making a 'big mistake in

Indian politics: appearing to disagree publicly with his superiors on a delicate issue' (Polgreen, 2010).

Table 4. List of State Department blogs.

Blog description/category	No. of blogs
State Department Foreign Service Officers: personal journal blogs of Foreign Service Officers with the Department of State covering all FS generalist career tracks: political, public affairs, economic, consular and management, and include everyone from new A-100 new hires to ambassadors.	33
USAID Foreign Service Officers: personal journal blogs of Foreign Service Officers with the US Agency for International Development.	3
State Department Foreign Service Specialists: personal journal blogs of Foreign Service Specialists.	10
Foreign Service Spouses and Partners: personal journal blogs containining interesting stories and observations from the everyday lives of spouses and partners of Foreign Services Officers that demonstrate how cultural differences affect the FS family while abroad.	42
Both Spouses: personal journal blogs by husband and the wife team who are Foreign Service employees, providing two different perspectives on life at their post, as as well as insight on the challenges and opportunities that the FS has presented in their relationships.	20
Foreign Service Families: collective personal journal blogs set up by families to provide an account of their lives for friends and relations.	28
News and Opinion with a Foreign Service Bent: blogs that synthesize and analyze all the news pertaining to Foreign Service life and US foreign policy, carefully searching through news websites, press releases, and other FS blogs to find relevant stories.	7
Resources for Unaccompanied Tours: personal journal blogs giving accounts of unaccompanied tours by FS employees who have 'been there, done that', offering candid insights and helpful advice on living and working in challenging conditions.	2
Retiree Blogs: personal journal blogs offering an entire career's worth of insights on US foreign policy and the internal politics of the countries in which these retired Foreign Services Officers served.	9
Critical Blogs: blogs disucssing topics related to the Foreign Service from a more critical perspective.	4
Miscellaneous Blogs	2
Foreign Service Hiring and Career	1
	161

With public diplomacy coming more and more to the forefront as an international tool of

engagement, social media has a huge part to play in diplomatic reporting. Whether diplomats use

Twitter to get instant updates about what is happening on the street or to float an idea in

cyberspace to informally sound out public opinion, this microblogging tool is rapidly become part of

the diplomat's reporting toolbox.

Likewise with blogs. As we have said repeatedly, the diplomat's prime objective is to promote and to pursue their country's interests. Blogs written by themselves or by others can be a valuable source of information that often goes unreported in mainstream media. In a comment on Diplo's online survey on whether diplomats should blog (DiploFoundation, 2010), Vladimir Radunovic cites a visit in 2009 to Serbia by then Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, a regular blogger. Bildt announced a last-minute visit to Belgrade on his blog, where he planned to meet with the Serbian President and the Foreign Minister. This visit coincided with the Butmir regional talks on the Balkans, while Sweden held the EU presidency. Yet the visit was never officially announced. This low-profile approach to the meeting was enhanced by the medium used to communicate its happening. As Radunovic puts it in his comment: it was 'available to all as not being a secret; yet reaching only some, without drums and fuss' (DiploFoundation, 2010). This nuanced messaging is a key component of diplomatic reporting and it would seem that social media offers the perfect set of tools to carry it out.

Videoconferencing

With new technological developments every day and secure webcam systems becoming increasingly less expensive, the days of the written report from embassies abroad could well be limited. In addition to increased efficiency, more effective real-time reporting, and the ability to involve multiple parties in the one report, this will 'put a premium on oral briefing skills and perhaps further [limit] the impact of traditional written diplomatic political analysis' (Smith, 2011). As we will discuss later in Chapter 7, this will require a new skillset.

Table 5. How has videoconferencing affected diplomatic reporting?

	More	Less	No change
Effective	77%	9%	13%
Immediate	78%	11%	11%
Cost effective	65%	19%	16%
Formal	21%	58%	22%
Pressurised	36%	32%	32%

Videoconferencing is already making itself felt in the realm of diplomatic reporting with the majority of survey respondents finding it a more effective, a more immediate, and a more cost-effective way of reporting back to capital.

Mobile devices

Carrying a mobile device effectively means that the diplomat is available 24/7, be it by mobile phone, e-mail, Skype, instant messaging, or any other form of electronic communication. And as long as the connection is working and the bandwidth is there, this connectivity is a metaphorical umbilical cord between the diplomat and their capital.

Table 6. How have mobile devices affected diplomatic reporting?

	More	Less	No change
Effective	92%	3%	5%
Immediate	93%	1%	5%
Cost effective	59%	28%	12%
Formal	7%	84%	10%
Pressurised	58%	31%	11%

Dissemination

The *Note Verbale* has long been considered the most sacrosanct piece of diplomatic reporting. And while the vast majority of respondents say their missions still issue *Notes Verbale* (Figure 9), the methods they use to disseminate them differ, with e-mail being the most popular choice (Figure 10).

Does your mission/country produce notes verbale?
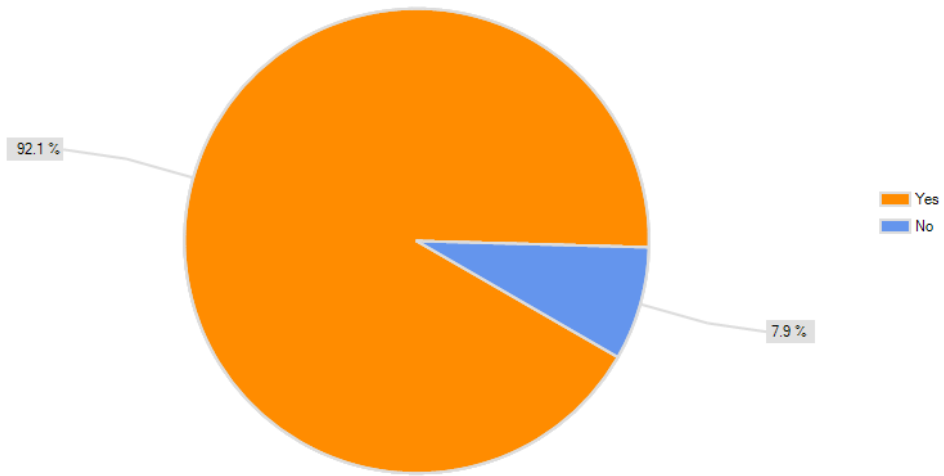
Figure 9. Percentage of respondents whose missions still use Notes Verbale.

**If yes, how do you disseminate notes verbale (tick all that apply)**
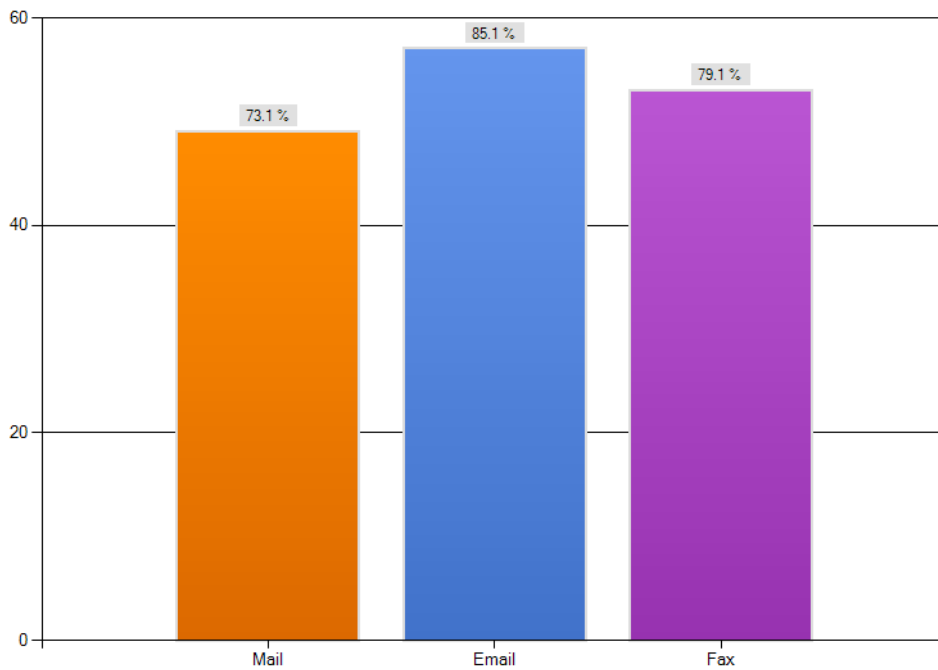
Figure 10. How Notes Verbale are disseminated.

More said that if the occasion warrants it, *Notes Verbale* are also delivered by hand, by courier, or by diplomatic pouch.

When asked if the diplomatic pouch is still used to transport documents, again the majority answered in the affirmative (Figure 11). Yet it would appear that this is no longer the sole method of delivery: 11% of respondents also send all documents via electronic mail while same percentage sends documents just via the diplomatic pouch. What might be seen as an increased reliance on electronic forms of communication begs the question as to how firm its foundation is. We are increasingly seen global-scale cyberattacks that can bring down national servers and literally disconnect a nation from the world, so one has to wonder what, if any, contingency plans are in place. Is diplomacy prepared to go offline?

Does your country utilise a diplomatic bag to transport documents?
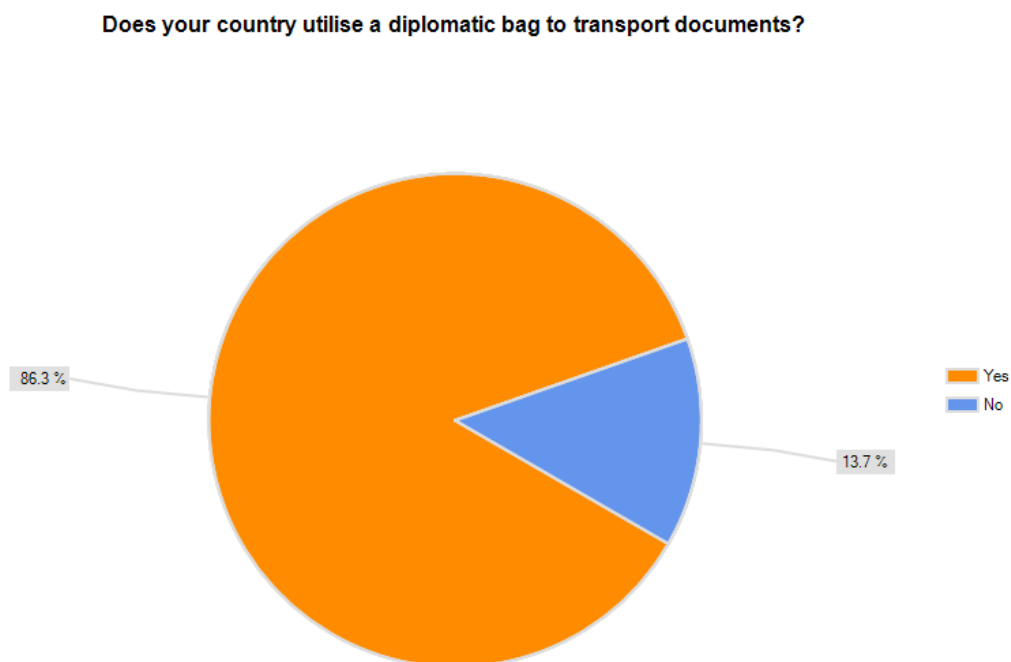
Figure 11. Use of diplomatic pouches to transport documents.

If yes, are these documents sent in advance electronically?
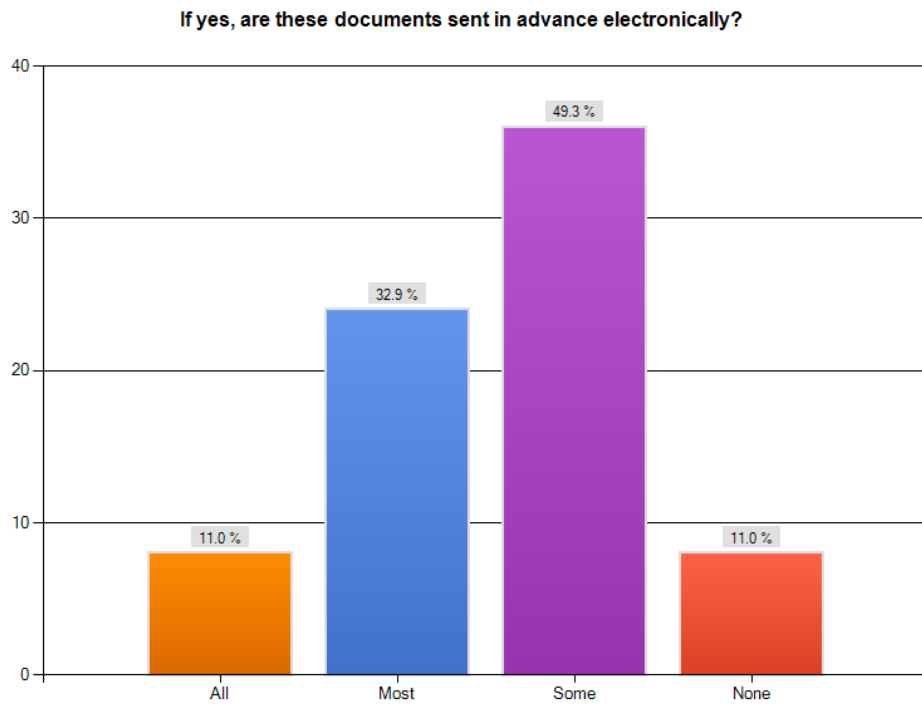
*Figure 12. Use of electronic dissemination.*

Summary

While blogging and tweeting may not yet be considered 'official' forms of diplomatic reporting, their widespread use in diplomatic circles is facilitating the effectiveness and immediacy the work of a diplomat. Social media has a strong role to play. Taking blogs as one example, Hale (2008) points out regular engagement with this tool help the FCO to 'open up issues for wider discussion when we don't necessarily have all the answers, add depth, context and a personal angle to the issues we're working on, [and] engage in conversations that we know are taking place elsewhere on the web. E-diplomacy (or digital diplomacy) might appear to be a new facet of diplomacy, but as US Secretary of State John Kerry said recently, 'the term digital diplomacy is almost redundant – it's just diplomacy, period' (Kerry, 2013).

Diplomacy in 140 characters
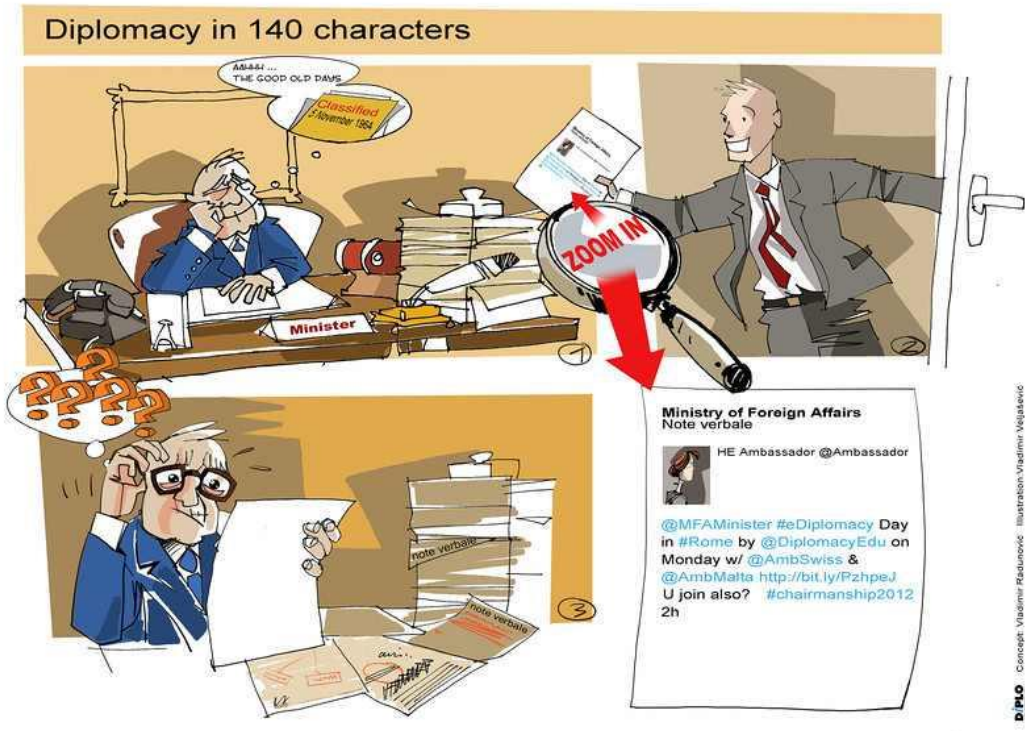
In Chapter 5 we examine the differences and complementarities between a diplomat and a diplomatic correspondent. We look at the value-added element and questions whether diplomats should report comments or only link to facts (already available online), bearing in mind that the function of diplomatic reporting is to inform policymakers so that when they make decisions, they are acting on the basis of accurate information. This contrasts sharply with the job of journalists – which is not to influence policy, but rather to report news.

5. The relationship between diplomats and diplomatic correspondents

A network of friendships and mutual dependencies draws diplomats and correspondents into an elite community of foreign affairs specialists (Phillips Davidson, 1975).

There is a distinct, if subtle, difference between a journalist and a diplomatic correspondent: the former comments generally on international affairs as part and parcel of their daily routine; the latter is a specialist, fluent in the specialised language spoken by diplomats, skilled in interpreting the various nuances of diplomatic speak, and well connected in diplomatic circles. While the diplomat's prime objective is to promote and to pursue their country's interests, the diplomatic correspondent is not similarly constrained. They are free to unleash their individual ideology in their interpretation and reporting of events. Indeed, their conclusions might well be coloured by personal experience, beliefs, and political bias.

Back in autumn 1975, W. Phillips Davidson, then Professor of Journalism and Sociology at Columbia University, published an article in the *Journal of Communication* titled 'Diplomatic Reporting: Rules of the Game'. This has become the benchmark for the state of diplomatic correspondence pre-Internet. In it, Phillips Davidson defines the diplomatic correspondent as 'a journalist who regularly writes about foreign affairs, who often covers international conferences,

who is allowed time by his or her editors to do in-depth stories, and whose work is respected by members of the foreign affairs community' (Phillips Davidson, 1975).

Reciprocity: diplomats and diplomatic correspondents

The average member of the public could be forgiven for thinking that an adversarial relationship exists between diplomats and the media, particularly in light of the WikiLeaks phenomenon. The traditional world of diplomacy is regarded by many as one of secrecy and confidentiality, while the *raison d'être* for the media would seem to be to expose these secrets and break these confidences in the guise of public interest and transparency. While it may seem to many that it is the diplomatic correspondents who need to cultivate sources in the foreign office in order to feed their reporting, diplomats need these correspondents just as much.

For instance, should a diplomat want to make information available to the general public or even another government without directly approaching either, they can feed the story to a diplomatic correspondent for publication. Likewise, existing stories/perspectives of a county can be 'corrected' by the guided intercession of a correspondent who is privy to the inside story. If a diplomat is reluctant to use official channels to communicate with another government, strategically worded and correctly placed information will serve his purpose just as well (Phillips Davidson, 1975).

One classic example of this is the case of former US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, and the 'calculated leak' to three British correspondents about the Marshall Plan. In his autobiography, Acheson (1987) recalls that he asked three British journalists to telephone Ernest Bevin (post-War Labour Foreign Secretary) about the significance of the Marshall Plan knowing full well that the impetus and pressure would have to come from Europe. This was a telephone conversation that he himself could not initiate. Interestingly, one of these journalists, in a later interview, denied that this had indeed been the case (Marshall Foundation, 1977). Each of the three journalists (BBC correspondent Leonard Miall, along with this colleagues Malcolm Muggeridge, of *The Daily Telegraph* and René MacColl, of *The Daily Express*), was relatively new to Washington at the time and felt at a

distinct disadvantage as they had few sources in the government. They deliberately cultivated

Acheson and indeed were responsible in large part for the press coverage that Acheson's famous

Mississippi speech received in London, but they had no previous knowledge of its contents.

Acheson's plan worked. The press coverage the speech received (it was reprinted in full in the

London Times), prompted James 'Scotty' Reston, correspondent with *New York Times,* to visit

Acheson to ask whether the speech was based on policy or just his own private thoughts and

musings. Acheson reportedly reminded him that foreign policy was made at the White House and

suggested that he ask President Truman, which he did. President Truman confirmed that it was

indeed policy. Acheson's mission was accomplished. According to Miall, Acheson explained his

reasoning: 'He didn't want it disclaimed in the way that Henry Wallace's unorthodox ideas on foreign

policy had just been rejected by him being kicked out of the Cabinet. So all this discussion went on in

terms of anecdote, and especially the rather curious circumstances under which Acheson had come

to make the speech at Cleveland, Mississippi' (Marshall Foundation, 1977).

On the other hand, journalists of any speciality (including diplomatic correspondents)

vigorously cultivate sources – insider experts who can be trusted to feed them key pieces of

information. The very nature of diplomacy is such that although it may be transacted in the speaker's

native language, the complexity of the language, the subtly of the nuances, and the key messages

that may be contained in the unsaid, often need professional interpretation. Diplomatic

correspondents rely on their trusted sources within a ministry of foreign affairs, to point them in the

right direction.

Indian journalist Bhaskar Menon describes meeting the then Indian Ambassador to the UN,

Chinmaya Gharekhan in November 1990. He was at a Security Council 'stakeout', as the Iraqi invasion

and occupation of Kuwait heralded the UN's first post-Cold War crisis. He asked the Indian

Ambassador why he had voted *for* the US resolution pushing for war, on foot of making a very strong

statement *against* the resolution. 'His reply was pure diplomatic silk. "The statement and the vote

are two different things" he said, noting a nuance that I would not have perceived on my own'

(Menon, 2012).

The medium and how it can colour the message

YouTube videos and TV footage, whether captured by professionals or what are now known as 'citizen journalists', portray what the documentarist sees, i.e. the action that is unfolding in front of them. In effect, without proper context, this type of reporting can be misleading. What is going on off camera might tell a different story. How the action began, what led to it, what its consequences are likely to be: these 'extras' are key to quality reporting. It is not simply enough for diplomatic correspondents or, for that matter, diplomats themselves, to gather the information, to record it, to send it home whether to Media HQ or to capital. Its importance, its context, and its relevance need to be highlighted.

Just as video footage can be edited to portray a certain perspective, so too can diplomatic reports. What determines the message aired, be it nationally or internationally, to a viewing audience, or to the minister and the MFA, is the judgement used by the diplomat or the correspondent. The audience the message is intended for will often determine the angle at which the message is delivered. This is where editorial style comes into play and where the symbiotic relationship between diplomats and diplomatic correspondents is most effective.

When asked to verify a story, or to speak to the home country's policy on a particular issue in focus, the diplomat has first and foremost to ensure their primary task is fulfilled, i.e. to promote and pursue their country's interests. This affects both the straightforward narration of facts, tailored as they are to meet the requirements of capital, and more especially the analytic part of their reports. Everything is viewed through the prism of the home country's interests. The speed with which such comment is expected to be delivered puts increasing pressure on diplomats. 'With information moving faster and wider, government officials are often tempted to respond precipitously to accommodate the artificial pressure of media deadlines – before reliable information has been

gathered, its implications assessed, and the appropriate policy devised and agreed upon' (Rai, no date).

While diplomats and diplomatic correspondents work in parallel, each charged with transmitting information to their respective headquarters, it is the diplomat who very often is caught on the back foot, with many politicians increasingly turning to news agencies for real-time information. US President Bush is quoted as saying: 'I learn more from CNN than I do from the CIA' (Friedland, 1992). Time zones and 24/7 broadcasting both contribute to the immediacy of the news available. While no one can expect a diplomat to be alert and awake and following world events around the clock, theirs is a job that requires them to be as up-to-date as possible. As we discussed in Chapter 3, this is where information aggregators come into play. While their reports may lag in terms of timeliness, diplomats can redress the balance with insightful analysis of the information reported in the public realm, factoring in the relevance of what is being discussed to home country policy and host country politics. James F. Dobbins, former Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, maintains that 'diplomatic reporting … is useless if not readable, and harmful if not accurate' (Dobbins, 2011).

Summary

In this chapter, we examined the differences and complementarities between a diplomat and a diplomatic correspondent, looked at the value-added element and questioned whether diplomats should report comments or only link to facts (already available online), bearing in mind that the function of diplomatic reporting is to inform policymakers, so that when they make decisions, they are acting on the basis of accurate information. This contrasts sharply with the job of journalists – which is not to influence policy, but rather to report news. Diplomatic correspondents take the role of the journalist one step further, both reporting news and providing a balanced analysis of the events unfolding.

In Chapter 6 we will address concerns about confidentiality and security of diplomatic reporting in the Internet era looking at whether security is a 'new' issue with diplomatic reporting

and generally surveying the historical and theoretical aspects of confidentiality and security with

regard to diplomatic reporting. We also focus on the various potential or actual security issues posed

by new technology.

6. Confidentiality and security of diplomatic reporting in the Internet era

The key requirements [of a diplomat] are experience and access so as to get the 'feel' of an opaque and secretive society, and to make the judgements on which the furtherance of our national interests depends (Green, 2000, cited in Parris & Bryson, 2010).

The first technological breakthrough in diplomatic reporting was the 'invention' of writing, as we discussed earlier in Chapter 1. Its evolution continued with the invention of the printing press and was furthered again by the advent of the telegraph. The Internet is the fourth element in this timeline. All have contributed to 'a freer and more open flow of information' (Camilleri, 2011). Inherent to such freedom is the concept of risk. The more information is made available, the less secret it is likely to be. The more accessible the medium used to communicate the message, the more open that message is to interception.

The Internet has ushered in an era of immediate and ready access to all sorts of information. Its potential as a repository is beyond anything known before in the history of communication. Once information is posted to the Internet, in any form, be it a Facebook update, an e-mail, or a Twitter feed, it is indelibly etched on the memory of mankind, there for eternity.

The ownership of the information is an important issue. Academics write for their peers and their students; journalists write for their newspapers and their public; diplomats write for their capitals. Yet there is a fundamental difference in that a diplomat 'does not act

as a free agent when producing a report' (Camilleri, 2011). Diplomacy is the interaction of states (principals) facilitated by diplomats (agents). Communication within the confines of a principal/agent relationship is in essence confidential. Or it was.

The WikiLeaks' *Cablegate* phenomenon of 2010 saw the publication of 251,287 leaked US embassy cables, 'the largest set of confidential documents ever to be released into the public domain'. Dating from 1966 to February 2010, the cables were reputed to contain 'confidential communications between 274 embassies in countries throughout the world and the State Department in Washington DC' (WikiLeaks, no date). An outline of the contents of these cables is given in Box 2).

Box 2. Key figures from Cablegate

- 15, 652 secret
- 101,748 confidential
- 133,887 unclassified
- Iraq most discussed country – 15,365 (Cables coming from Iraq – 6,677)
- Ankara, Turkey had most cables coming from it – 7,918
- From Secretary of State office - 8,017

According to the US State Departments labeling system, the most frequent subjects discussed are:

- External political relations – 145,451
- Internal government affairs – 122,896
- Human rights – 55,211
- Economic Conditions – 49,044
- Terrorists and terrorism – 28,801
- UN security council – 6,532

Yet the security (or lack thereof) in this case had little, if anything to do with the Internet as we know it. According to Borger and Leigh (2010), all the published cables were marked Sipdis (Secret Internet Protocol Distribution), i.e. they had been sent via the US Department of Defense's classified version of the Internet, Siprnet: Secret Internet Protocol Router Network.

This worldwide 'military internet system [is] kept separate from the ordinary civilian internet and run by the defence department in Washington' (Borger & Leigh, 2010). Yet more than three million US government personnel have access to it, including Bradley Manning, the US soldier alleged to have downloaded the cables onto a CD while stationed in Baghdad. He is quoted as saying:

> *I would come in with music on a CD-RW labelled with something like 'Lady Gaga' … erase the music … then write a compressed split file. No one suspected a thing ... [I] listened and lip-synched to Lady Gaga's Telephone while exfiltrating possibly the largest data spillage in American history. [I] had unprecedented access to classified networks 14 hours a day 7 days a week for 8+ months* (Leigh, 2010).

While the Internet certainly facilitated the rapid upload and distribution of the cables, the security issues were those of the US Department of Defense. In what might be termed as an ironic twist of fate, this increased global access to information came as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attack when the US government sought to plug the gaps in information sharing between various departments and to allow diplomats to better do their jobs.

The issue of trust

A key part of a diplomat's job while stationed abroad is to obtain access to the society in which they operate. Building a network of contacts who will speak frankly about what is happening in the host country is a vital part of a diplomat's portfolio, with such information strengthening the quality of their analysis and hence their reports. As long as such inside sources felt that confidentiality was inviolable, the information would keep coming; yet now, this inviolability is questionable and may have dampened the enthusiasm of some to cooperate. By virtue of the confidentiality involved, this is difficult to assess or quantify.

What WikiLeaks did, however, was to raise awareness in general about the relative ease with which information can be downloaded and distributed. At some level, every Internet user is aware that they may be victims of viruses, hackers, or identity theft; the degree to

which they take precautions differs widely. Many embassies have firewall systems in place that prevent staff from using YouTube or Facebook or Twitter – which is both a help and a hindrance. Accessing real-time information posted by citizen journalists on YouTube and other social network site can be of great benefit to diplomats in staying current with a given situation. Yet preventing access can reduce the risk of hacking, etc. There is a balance to be struck.

The Internet is a relatively new phenomenon whose governance is the subject of much debate. The move from the traditional frontline where battles rage, guns fire, and people die towards the more sanitary but no less deadly field of cyberwar, has fundamentally changed how states view security. Gone are the days when stories of teenage geeks who managed to hack into state security systems grabbed the headlines. Today, governments are facing more sophisticated attackers, including foreign governments, searching their electronic data and information systems. Everything online is exposed, be it financial data, intelligence information, or even personal details. And with these vulnerabilities, comprising a new type of war, and the escalation of stealth techniques employed by cybercriminals, a new age of security has dawned: cybersecurity.

In October 2011, President Obama issued an Executive Order that broadened the role of the Information Sharing Environment (ISE). When it was first initiated in 2003, its role focused primarily 'coordinating the development of standards and processes to share terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and law enforcement data' (Miller, 2011). With the 2011 Executive Order, its remit has been expanded to include classified information sharing, which includes diplomatic correspondence and reporting.

Precautionary steps

For the most part, governments will do their level best to ensure the security of diplomatic correspondence and reporting. Various types of encryption are available and security

clearances and access levels help limit the potential damage that might be done should information be leaked. For their part, though, the diplomat, like any other Internet user, needs to have some basic knowledge of the threats they face and need to be as alert to impersonation and fraud as in the pre-Internet era. Sitting back and relying on assurances of safety are not enough – just as spell-check will catch misspelled words but ignore correctly spelled words used in the wrong context – human intelligence can still, on occasion, have the upper hand. The danger is that users are lulled into a false sense of security and stop paying attention to the signs that something might not be quite right.

Just about anyone with a little knowledge of how the Internet works can hide behind a fake e-mail address or identity. Verifying the source of your information via e-mail is just as important as verifying the source of a conversation or a reference citation. Taking e-mail addresses at face value can be a costly experience.

Simple precautions such as, for example, taking more care when opening an e-mail from an address you do not recognise can prevent a virus attacking your computer. Given the time pressures diplomats face and the need to be constantly up to date on what is happening locally, nationaly, and indeed interenational, the use of hooklines (e.g. report for comment) in a subject line might cause many to venture into dangerours territory. The possibility that something other than what you are seeing is lurking in an e-mail message can become apparent if the file size is significantly greater than the few lines of text in the body of the message.

Content, context, and confidentiality

Yet another aspect of security that is often overlooked is the speed at which messages are disseminated. A careless tweet can reach millions of people in a matter of seconds and cannot be retracted. And Twitter is just one example of the many new digital diplomacy tools available to diplomats. Taking the Arab Spring and the September 2012 attacks in Cairo as just

two cases in point, it is clear that social media, in all its guises, is becoming 'a form of diplomatic engagement [...] the most visible result of the very same foreign policy agendas that governments put in place in their capitals to be actuated by means of traditional diplomacy. Social media is just a new tool to help achieve strategic goals' (Sandre, 2013).

Sandre (2013) goes on to say that 'because the effect of digital diplomacy travels through the information channels at a much faster rate, however, it shortens the traditional chain of command and injects more visibility – and thus responsibilities – to the end user, whether an ambassador, a foreign officer, or a social media advisor. It is the speed at which social media travels that makes twiplomacy look riskier than any other form of diplomacy.' Going back to our earlier example of spell-check and the still existing need for human interaction with the Internet, Sonenshine (2012) points out: 'Social media is a neutral entity. It is the human use of it that matters.'

Given the publicity that high-profile Twitter conversations attract (Box 3), diplomats are more aware than ever of the effects, both good and bad, that a Tweet or a Facebook comment, or a blog post, or photograph or a video, can have – and just how quickly these effects are felt.

Box 3. Passive-aggressive tone obvious in a Twitter chat (Sandre, 2013)

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

US Embassy Cairo ✔
@USEmbassyCairo
11 Sept 12

1) Thank you for your thoughts and prayers.

US Embassy Cairo ✓ @USEmbassyCairo — 11 Sept 12

2) Of course we condemn breaches of our compound, we're the ones actually living through this.

,

US Embassy Cairo ✓ @USEmbassyCairo — 11 Sept 12

3) Sorry, but neither breaches of our compound or angry messages will dissuade us from defending freedom of speech AND criticizing bigotry

In 2009, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi famously held up a NATO summit by talking on his mobile phone as German Chancellor Angela Merkel stood by on the red carpet waiting to greet him. The video footage that flooded the world was open to interpretation, sent as it was without context. Berlusconi was, in fact, talking to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, his Turkish counterpart in Istanbul, 'in an attempt to persuade Turkey to drop its opposition to Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen as Nato's new chief' (BBC News, 2009).

While the Internet offers much in terms of benefits when it comes to improving the substance and timeliness of diplomatic reporting, the level, effect, and importance of the human interface should not be underestimated. This is where training in the proper use of social media, and the Internet in all its facets, comes into play. We will look at this in more detail in Chapter 7.

Yet technology and its effect on the levels of confidentiality and security in diplomatic reporting are not limited to the Internet. The advancement in closed captioning and the ready availability of the resulting transcripts could arguably be said to have lightened the weight of interventions. With diplomats increasingly aware that what they are saying will be recorded and disseminated, the value of such interventions deserves some future analysis.

Summary

We have addressed concerns about confidentiality and security of diplomatic reporting in the Internet era and looked at whether security is a 'new' issue with diplomatic reporting. We also briefly focused on the various potential or actual security issues posed by the new technology.

In Chapter 7, we will survey existing training on diplomatic reporting and identify training gaps that need to be filled if young diplomats are to keep abreast of and take advantage of modern technological developments.

7. Diplomatic reporting: training and training gaps

Despite the absence of any specific professional training, diplomacy has a high professional status, due perhaps to a degree of secrecy and mystery that its practitioners self-consciously promote (Burton, 1968)*.*

Industry is rife with many niche languages understandable only by those who work in a particular field. A paper written for electronic engineers might be unintelligible to medical doctors whose treatises in turn would be indecipherable to history teachers. Each profession has its own professional speak, a vocabulary loaded with nuanced terms and singular codes that apply specifically to its area of expertise.

Yet perhaps more than any other profession, diplomacy relies on communication. Tran (1987) maintains that 'communication is to diplomacy as blood is to the human body'. As we mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, diplomatic communications should strike the right balance between saying too little and saying too much as each word, present or absent, will be scrutinised for meaning. By using constructive ambiguity, diplomats keep their options open. And often *not* saying something can say just as much as speaking volumes, even if the unsaid is understood solely by diplomats (Cohen, 1981).

With Twitter messages limited to 140 characters, and shorter attention spans preferring concise Facebook updates, 'the social media revolution has been changing the way we see the world and has been changing the way we talk to the world […] it has made

everybody more aware of the effects – both positive and negative – a single word, tweet, Facebook comment, video, or image can have in a relatively short timeframe' (Sandre, 2013). Yet in this global, interconnected world of ours, diplomats should take care not to limit their knowledge gathering to western social media outlets like Facebook; they also need to engage with those social networking platforms predominately used in the host country.

So where does that leave diplomatic reporting? As we have seen in the preceding chapters, the diplomats' ability to express themselves in both written and oral form is a prerequisite in their profession. But can these skills be taught? Or are diplomats born and bred rather than trained and moulded?

With the flattening of diplomatic hierarchies and organisational efficiencies leaning more towards delegation, day-to-day reporting is increasingly signed off without clearance. It is no longer unheard of for junior diplomats to e-mail higher-ranked officials, bypassing several layers in the hierarchy. Indeed, as the survey results in Chapter 4 show, the Internet has made diplomatic reporting far less formal. The more important the subject, the higher up it goes, and yet overloading the person at the top with the job of rewriting (and thus running the risk of demoralising those lower down) important despatches and reports is a challenge that needs to be faced (interview, Galvez, 21 November 2012). In smaller missions, where the hierarchy is less obvious, a more informal approach might be taken. In an interview with diplomat Mike Guy (22 March 2013), Mr Guy described the situation in London as follows. The mission has three counsellor officers: economic and chancery, political and maritime, and legal. All three counsellors report directly to the head of mission on their substantive portfolios. They each contribute to the annual report, which is then sent to the High Commissioner for approval, and submitted by the Head of Chancery. In his experience through his interaction with Young Diplomats of London (YDL) most small missions operate similarly. He stresses that should the Head of Chancery not be available, there is no issue at all with going directly to the High Commissioner.

Things have changed substantially since Burton commented on the lack of training in diplomacy back in 1968, as noted in the introductory quotation at the beginning of this chapter. Induction training for new diplomats varies hugely from country to country. Some MFAs have their own diplomatic academies, others send inductees away for training, or rely on the fact that new entrants come with a post-graduate degree in diplomacy or international relations and will learn the ropes on the job. Those posted to Geneva to the UNCHR may well receive training in Humanitarian Diplomacy. Other may receive pre-posting economic or legal training if their posts require it. Language training is probably the most constant component of the diplomatic training bag and yet, given that communication is such a key part of diplomacy, where does training in diplomatic reporting fit in? What priority is it given? Is it even seen as a necessity?

Where do diplomats learn how to cultivate relationships with their counterparts in other missions, in the media, in the host country? Where do they learn the nuances of diplomatic engagement? Where do they pick up the skills necessary to sift through the mountains of information available, and separate the wheat from the chaff, to recognise a key omission or statement that could have huge bearing on a particular situation?

As we have already discussed, the days of writing a report, reviewing it, polishing it, and then sending it off in the diplomatic pouch to arrive a week later are long gone. Communication is now much more immediate and the luxury of rewriting is just that – a luxury. Perhaps key to any good reporting is to know what your objectives are. As we saw in Chapter 1, technology has reduced the diplomat's room to manoeuvre. They act on instructions and, as Smith (2011, p.129) said, 'smart diplomats do their best to write their own instructions before departing their capitals.' Setting key objectives for their post will help a diplomat tailor their reporting accordingly.

Verbatim reporting is not required. Transcripts are now available of who said what in international meetings. Minutes are circulated after the event. What is needed is an

interpretation of the atmosphere created and the tones used when important points are made. Who sided with whom? What, if any, underlying friction was noticed? What non-verbal reactions were visible? The key question remains whether or not diplomats can be trained in diplomatic reporting.

Does the need for diplomatic training exist?

Survey respondents were split almost evenly between those ministries providing training in diplomatic reporting and those that do not (Figure 13).

Does your ministry make training on diplomatic reporting available?

52.1 %

47.9 %

Yes
No
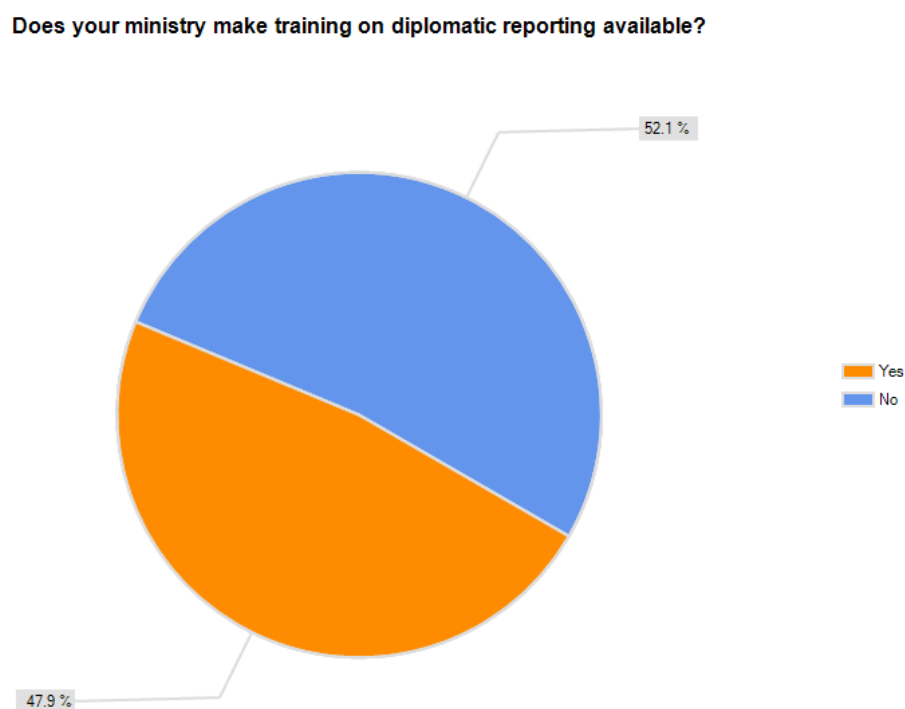
Figure 13. Survey of 105 practising diplomats.

When asked about the forms of training offered, it seems that the majority offer training on the job (Figure 14) with four saying that this training was offered online. The overwhelming majority agreed that there is a need for training in diplomatic reporting (Figure 15).

But can diplomatic reporting can be taught? Mr Terribile (interview, 20 March 2013) expressed concerns about the need to train young diplomats in the etiquette of

communication: 'I believe it is important that we train our young officials the proper use of email, the proper use of Twitter, and the difficulties they might encounter. For example young diplomats go on Facebook and express their opinion about another state without realising that that comment might be recorded and eventually it might be used against them […] Communication tools are good but we need proper training.'

If yes, what type of training?
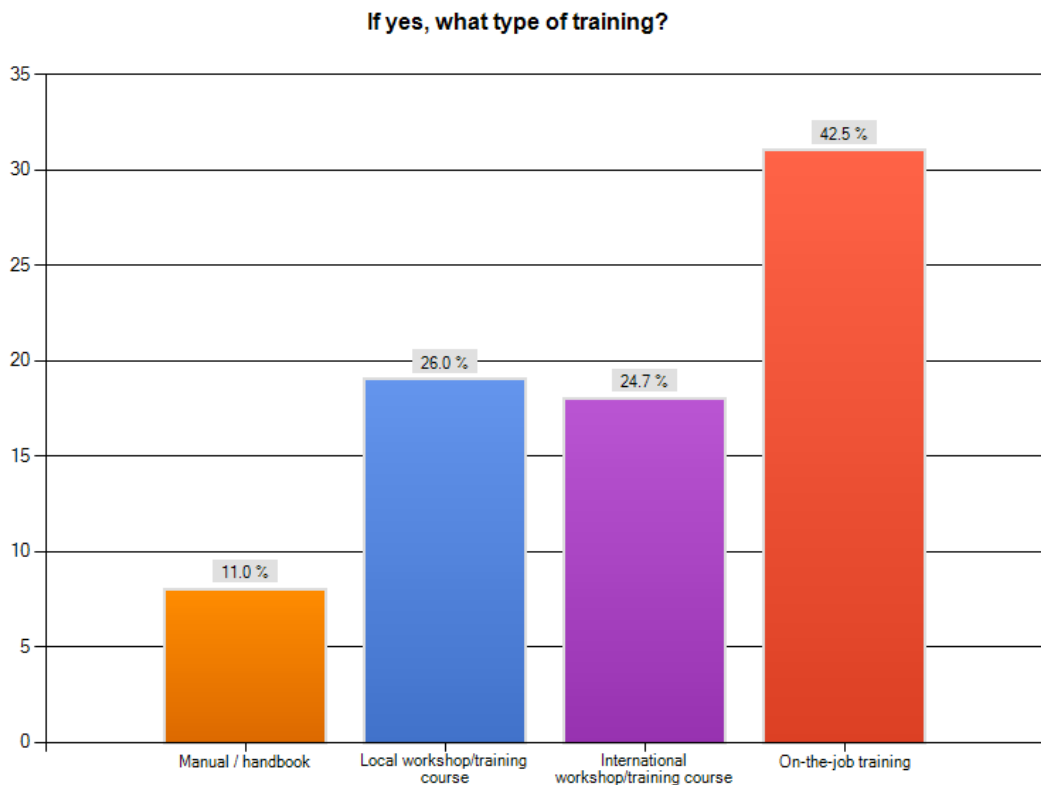
Figure 14. Types of training offered.

Ambassador Dowling (interview, 20 November 2012) spoke of the need to position diplomatic reporting somewhere between 'the glance and the gaze'. He mentioned the capacity to pick up on something relatively quickly, something that the Internet and its associated tools can facilitate. Younger diplomats will have grown up with these tools and perhaps be better positioned to take full advantage of them. But it is not enough to glance at headlines and pass those back to capital. There we need what he calls the 'slow burn, long range, in-depth, fact-

filled approach, for which others often are better suited'. What is needed is some way of 'walking that tightrope between the too shallow and the too deep'.

Do you see a need for training in diplomatic reporting?
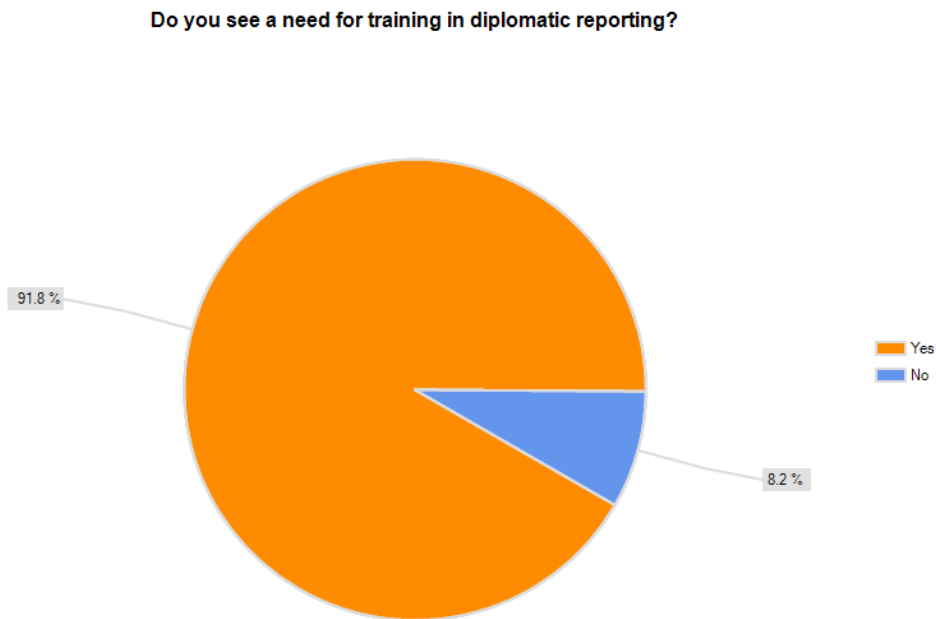
Figure 15. Does the need for diplomatic training exist?

Ambassador Saviour Borg (interview, 22 March 2013) was of the opinion that while diplomatic reporting can be taught, it is important that it is practised. Using senior diplomats to guide new entrants in how to report, is a key part of young diplomat's training. While young diplomats may be well-versed in the theory of multilateral diplomacy (most already will have a postgraduate degree in diplomacy or international relations), in which countries belong to what organisation, and who is aligned with whom, a deeper knowledge of the different groups and the historical and current reasons behind such alliances is essential knowledge usually passed down from more experienced hands.

What sort of training is needed?

In the survey, 51 respondents answered the open question 'What kind of diplomatic training is needed' in some form or fashion. The majority were in favour of formal face-to-face workshops, be they local or international (Table 7).

A closer look at the answers (for full details of responses see Appendix 5) revealed that training in analysis is what is needed most, followed by actual report writing (Table 8). Keywords such as concise, structure, brevity, clarity, factual were all used in terms of analysis and reporting. Interestingly (and perhaps a little sadly!) both references to *Notes Verbale* were incorrectly pluralised as *Note Verbales*. Perhaps this is indicative of a need for more basic training than advanced analytical skills.

Table 7. What style of training is needed?

Style of training needed	Mentions
International courses/workshops	5
Local training courses/workshops	5
On-the-job training	5
Formal training courses	3
Internet training	2
Manuals/handbook	2
Seminar	1
Three-week training	1

Table 8. What type of training is needed?

Topics	Mentions
Analysis	13
Report writing	11
Research	5
Social media/ICT	4
E-mail	2
Notes verbale	2
Information management	2
New trends	1
Protocol	1

As e-mail is now the communication method most employed in general (and diplomacy is no exception), it is somewhat interesting to note that it received only two mentions even though it has the potential to cause serious damage. Who should be included in the TO list, or the CC list or when, if ever, it is appropriate to use the BCC list. Knowing to check to see where you featured in the addressing of the e-mail and being sure not to REPLY ALL to a message you have been blind copied on. Another cardinal sin is to forward an e-mail with a thread of e-mails underneath, to those who should not be privy to the previous conversation. The pressure of time constraints might result in the elimination of pleasantries and a curter tone that might be employed over the phone. As we say in Chapter 4, the Internet has deformalised diplomatic reporting – but informality should not be an excuse for carelessness.
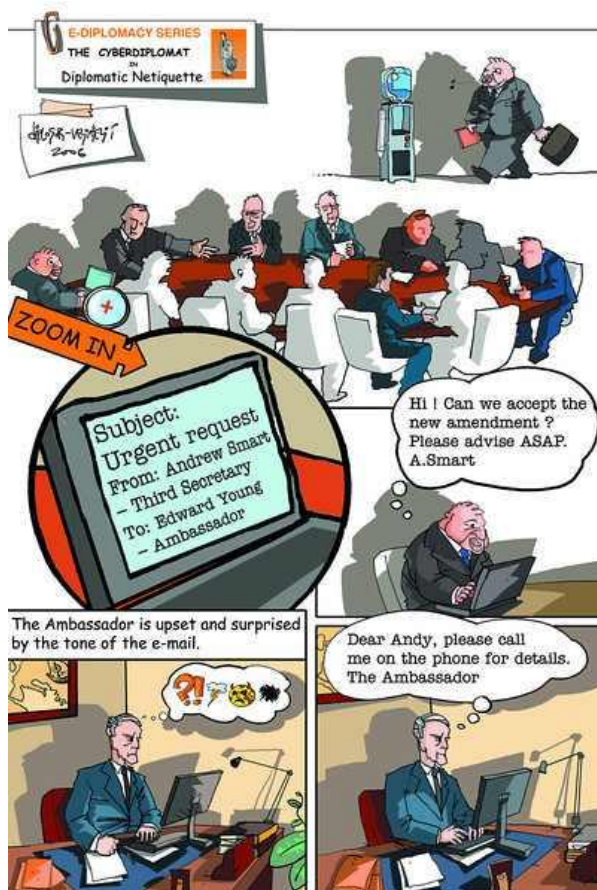
A survey of the 67 members of the International Forum on Diplomatic Training (IFDT) showed that 100% of the 10 respondents provide training in diplomatic reporting either as a standalone *in situ* workshop, or part of another *in situ* workshop (Appendix 6). The option for online training does not appear to be used. We will look at this further in the Conclusions.

Summary

In this chapter, we surveyed existing training on diplomatic reporting and identified training gaps that need to be filled if young diplomats are to keep abreast of and take advantage of modern technological developments.

In the Conclusions, we summarise our findings and make recommendations regarding training in diplomatic reporting, identifying the limitations of this research, and making suggestions for further research on this topic.

Conclusions and recommendations

There can be no doubt that the Internet has affected diplomatic reporting. It has made it more effective, more immediate, more cost-effective, and less formal. Tech-savvy junior diplomats who are digital natives know no other way to do business. This is in sharp contrast with more senior diplomats who still remember the days of typing pools and ciphered telegrams. Mike Guy (interview, 22 March 2013) talks of junior officers in the Commonwealth being asked by their heads of mission to do a round-robin to get a feel for people's positions on particular issues. 'We can do that on an informal basis and feed that information through our head of mission and so that they are fully briefed going into a meeting knowing the position of each delegation.' He spoke of junior officers present at full member-state meetings being on Facebook chat discussing amongst themselves what is happening at the table, what interventions are being made. If a working party is being formed, these informal offline (yet online!) discussions focus on who should be proposed (interview, Guy, 22 March 2013).

The diplomat's lot is an onerous one. With the vast amount of information currently available, coupled with the so-called CNN effect of immediate reporting by citizen journalists of events taking place around the world, the need to be on top of things is ever present. This constant connectivity with capital, while on the one hand further reducing the diplomat's plenipotentiary status, has also empowered them as never before to provide key analysis that will shape policy at home and abroad. We can add to this ready access to the aggregated knowledge and experience of their colleagues and their counterparts via wikis, blogs, and information aggregators. That an expert on Asian affairs can be called to the table in seconds to give their opinion on a crucial matter, or

indeed that the diplomatic circle of knowledge is expanding to include academics and other subject-matter professionals, can only better serve the cause of diplomatic analysis and reporting.

With regard to actual reporting, perhaps the wheel is turning full circle. We saw in Chapter 1 where the protocol of the day in Mesopotamia dictated that, on arrival at his destination, the envoy would supplement his oral reading of the message with additional explanations – the key message consigned to text, the background retained for oral dissemination. Smith (2011, p. 5) notes that 'the young political analyst who aspires to high position and influence will have to master written analysis earlier in his career and hone oral briefing skills as he begins to climb through the ranks.' As discussed in Chapter 4, the onset of secure and less expensive secure videoconferencing could see the future of diplomatic reporting shift sharply towards oral briefings and away from dense written reports. But that is still some ways off and, even if it were to happen tomorrow, there are key skills that are applicable to both mediums. The need for archives, for written material that documents the workings of diplomacy, will always be there. Menon (2012) talks of meeting the legendary journalist I.F. Stone when he spoke at Columbia Journalism School. 'I asked him how he did it [consistently scooped the mainstream media during the Vietnam War], and his memorable reply was "I read the documents. A democratic government cannot function without writing things down. Everything you want to know is in public documents".'

Recommendations for training in diplomatic reporting

As mentioned in Chapter 7, all ten (100%) of the IFDT members who responded to the survey (Appendix 6) say that they offer diplomatic training, equally split between standalone face-to-face courses or as part of another face-to-face course (Figure 16). Those responding said that they provide training in diplomatic reporting in the following guise:

- As part of a basic diplomatic course
- In the framework of a one-week course on communication
- In two seminars and one tutorial session as part of a wider, year-long course module in diplomatic practice

- As part of the orientation course for newly recruited diplomatic officers

If yes, please indicate the type of training you offer
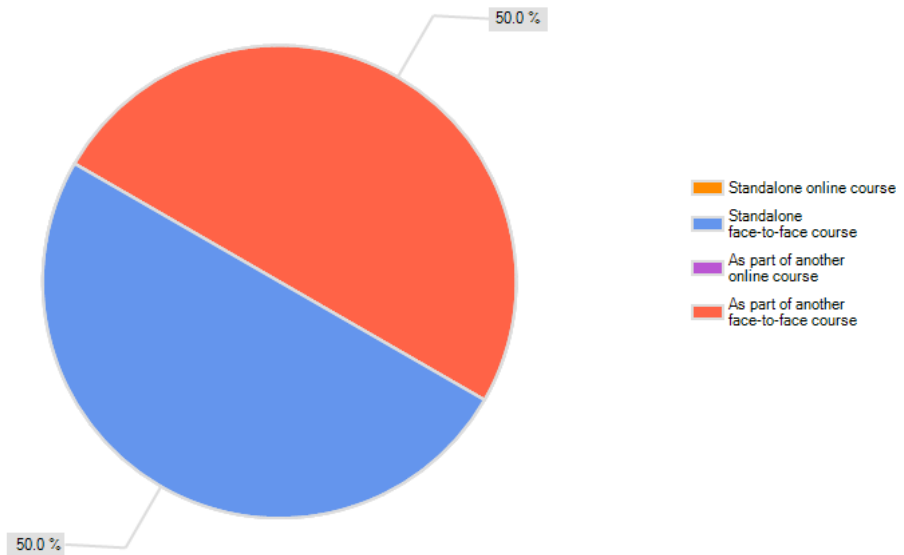
Figure 16. Breakdown of training currently on offer in diplomatic reporting.

None of the respondents to the IFDT survey indicated that they offer online training in diplomatic reporting. Few of the respondents to the general survey (Appendix 2) indicated that they would, in fact, prefer online training in diplomatic reporting. Yet given the pressure on diplomats' time and the difficulties in being away from their desk for any length of time, it would seem to me to be an expedient and efficient way of delivering ongoing training. As an experienced communications trainer, I have difficulty believing that the art of report writing or analysis can be taught in a one-off workshop. Certainly, the theory can be discussed, but to embed the skills, a constant review process over a period of weeks is preferable.

My recommendation, based on personal experience is that an online course in diplomatic training could fill a key need in the field. Key aspects of such an online course, to be run over 12 weeks, would cover those issues we spoke about in Chapter 7:

1. Introducing the history of diplomatic reporting, its evolution, and its current form. Establishing what is needed/currently required in those missions represented in the class. This would also include templates for, for example, *Notes Verbale* alongside a glossary of key diplomacy vocabulary.

2. Defining your audience: who the report is for, what it seeks to do (inform, persuade, motivate), and at whose request it is being written.

3. Structuring your report: introduction, body, conclusion; how to write an executive summary and a succinct conclusion (very often only the two sections of a report that will be read).

4. Using diplomatic language: constructive ambiguity and the 'unsaid', protocol, courtesy, forms of address.

5. Evaluating sources and references: how to validate a source or judge the credibility of a reference; the importance of checking facts and giving context.

6. Researching your topic: aggregating and filtering information, using social media and ICT tools to further facilitate this process.

7. Analysing the situation: What is needed? What is already out there? What policy do you hope to influence? What can you add to what is already available?

8. Evaluating existing reports for clarity, conciseness, usefulness, relevant, and argument.

9. Finalising your report: final questions and discussion on how best to present the information you have acquired. This would also include a section on email etiquette.

10. Evaluating the work of other participants.

11. Presenting a briefing based on the written report with peer evaluation and feedback.

12. Wrapping up: lessons learned, changes implemented, value/benefits received.

Online sessions would last 90 minutes and make full use of hypertext, a tool that facilitates student participation by allowing them create a 'contextualised conversation', i.e. a discussion which is anchored in the course text. This encourages them to actively read the text by discussing it interactively with other students and the lecturer. Developed by DiploFoundation, 'the basic purpose of a hypertext entry is to add something to the given course text; a comment, based on your own experience, knowledge or research. In addition, you might add a link to a relevant web resource' (DiploFoundation, pers. comms).

The limitations of this research and recommendations for further research

While the surveys conducted are a reasonable indicator of how the Internet has affected diplomatic reporting and how training needs to keep abreast of new technologies and developments, it would be interesting carry out a much larger survey (500 respondents) and correlate the varying opinions/responses to length of service, offices held, and number of overseas postings. It would also be interesting to see how the different regions responded. One limitation in the main survey used for this report was that while 105 respondents began the survey, only 67 gave their demographic details. This was a failing in the question logic.

The one main guide to diplomatic analysis (*The craft of political analysis for diplomats)* is very US-centric. Given the exponential increase in Internet access in developing countries and the increasing dependence of small states on social media, it would be interesting to explore how the Internet has affect diplomatic reporting in regions outside of Europe and the Americas.

Summary

New modalities of diplomacy and communication are changing the challenges faced by diplomats and the objectives of diplomacy obligations. Ubiquitous access to information makes the diplomat's unique analysis and insight in the field more important than ever, as the ability to see patterns and

trends, and to analyse and make sense of the now overabundance of information becomes essential.

Not only must diplomats excel in absorbing and understanding this information, they must be able to

identify what is relevant, and then organise and communicate their knowledge effectively.

Appropriate training and the honing of diplomatic reporting skills is more essential to the diplomat

than ever before. Those providing training in diplomatic reporting would do well to take appropriate

steps to ensure that, they, too, remain current with technological updates and that their training

offer keeps abreast of advancements in ICT.

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Appendix 1. Interviewees

21 November 2012   Interview with **Ms Liz Galvez**, a senior diplomat with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office until 2006. During her 33-year career, she served in a wide range of diplomatic jobs in London and several overseas postings, including Finland, Central America, UN Geneva, OSCE Vienna, and UN New York. Following a posting in Romania in the late 1990s, she was seconded for two years as a senior policy adviser to the Romanian Foreign Minister. She continues to provide advice to the Romanian Foreign Ministry on human resources development and diplomatic training. After retiring, she was appointed Executive Director of the Aspen Institute Romania.

27 November 2012   Interview with **Ambassador Kevin Dowling**, Irish Ambassador to Hungary, with secondary accreditation to Kosovo and Montenegro. With 34 years' experience in the diplomatic service, Amb. Dowling served previously at the Irish Embassy in Washington, Bonn, Geneva (Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN), and New York (Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN). He also held the position of Africa Director, Political Division, while in capital.

20 March 2013   Interview with **Mr Olaph Terribile,** private secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Malta. Mr Terribile served as Director of Protocol and Consular Services at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Malta. In his 28-year diplomatic career, he has served at various missions overseas including the Maltese Embassy in Riyadh and in London. Since 2004, Mr Terribile has been a regular lecturer at DiploFoundation, where he lectures on protocol procedures including practical exercises on etiquette.

22 March 2013	Interview with **Ambassador Saviour Borg,** who is currently serving as Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Malta. He was Ambassador of Malta to the People's Republic of China concurrently accredited as Ambassador to Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. He has also served as Malta's Permanent Representative to the UN office and other International Organisations in Geneva, the UN office in Vienna, UNIDO, the IAEA, and the CTBTO, as well as to the OPCW. Ambassador Borg is a member of the Board of Administrators of DiploFoundation.
22 March 2013	Interview with **Mr Mike Guy** Second Secretary/Vice Consul at The Bahamas High Commission in London. After four years in The Bahamas High Commissions in London and Ottawa as Technical and Administrative Staff, Mike joined the Foreign Ministry in 2008 and worked in the Multilateral Organizations/Relations (Political) Section. Currently the High Commission's Political Officer, his portfolio includes oversight of relations between The Bahamas and the UK, France, and Greece, The Bahamas' involvement in International Organizations based in the UK and Europe; including the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Organizations, the International Maritime Organization and the Bureau of International Exhibitions. Mike is currently President of Young Diplomats in London (YDL), a forum for diplomats based in London to network and share experiences.

Appendix 2. Survey questions

In an effort to identify how the Internet has affected diplomatic reporting and what training is needed to fill the gaps, if any, we have compiled the following survey. Question 3 may seem a little daunting, yet it is key to informing the discussion. The survey shouldn't take more than 7.5 minutes of your time. Thank you.

1. What does diplomatic reporting include, in your opinion? (tick all that apply)

☐ Inter-mission correspondence

☐ Correspondence with capital, i.e. cables, quarterly reports, annual reports, financial reports, memoranda, country briefings

☐ Inter-government correspondence, i.e. notes verbale / démarches / letters of credence

☐ Foreign policy matters reported in the media

☐ Public diplomacy initiatives, e.g. communication with diaspora

Other (please specify):

2. If you have 10+ years of service…do you think diplomatic reporting has changed since you entered the service?

○ Yes

○ No

○ N/A

3. Please indicate how the following technologies have impacted diplomatic reporting in your mission/country. For example: Has the Internet made diplomatic reporting less effective and more pressurised? More, less, not at all.

Please select an answer for each column in each row. This page has the main survey content. I appreciate your time and thought to mark these responses.

	Effective	Immediate	Cost Effective	Formal	Pressurised
Internet					
VoIP					
Social Media					
Video Conferencing					
Mobile Devices					

4. Given the large amount of information available online, have you seen a change in the level of analysis REQUIRED given limited time and increased demand on resources?

○ Yes

○ No

5. Given the large amount of information available online, have you seen a change in the level of analysis PROVIDED given limited time and increased demand on resources?

○ Yes

○ No

6. Does your mission/country produce Notes Verbale?

○ Yes

○ No

7. If yes, how do you disseminate notes verbale (tick all that apply)

☐ Mail

☐ Email

☐ Fax

Other (please specify):

8. Is your file registry...

☐ Physical (hard copy)

☐ Electronic

☐ Elements of both

9. Are mission and ministry file registries kept up to date?

○ Yes

○ No

○ I don't know

10. Does your country utilise a diplomatic bag to transport documents?

○ Yes

○ No

11. If yes, are these documents sent in advance electronically?

☐ All

☐ Most

☐ Some

☐ None

12. Does your ministry make training on diplomatic reporting available?

○ Yes

○ No

13. If yes, what type of training?

☐ Manual / handbook

☐ Local workshop/training course

☐ International workshop/training course

☐ On-the-job training

☐ N/A

Other (please specify):

14. Do you see a need for training in diplomatic reporting?

○ Yes

○ No

15. If yes, what type of training?

Please specify:

DEMOGRAPHICS

16. Gender

○ Male

○ Female

17. Years in diplomatic service

○ 0-5 years

○ 6-10 years

○ 11-20 years

○ 21+

18. Region posted

○ Americas

○ Europe

○ Africa

○ Middle East

○ Asia

○ Pacific

19. What are your work responsibilities?

☐ Multilateral

☐ Bilateral

☐ Political

☐ Economic

☐ Consular

☐ Legal

☐ Chancery

☐ Technical

Thanks for taking the time to help us research this topic.

Appendix 3. Survey questions social media

	Never heard of it	Sounds familiar, never used it	I can follow/read view as a passive user	Active user	Advanced user
Twitter					
Facebook					
LinkedIn					
Google Documents					
NetVibes, Google homepage or similar					
Skype or similar					
Delicious or similar for tagging					
Picasa, Flickr or similar photo management					
MindManager or similar mind mapping					
Using a wiki for collaboration					
Google Alerts or similar					
Evite or similar for invitations					
Doodle or similar for meeting planning					
Using a blog					
Google Calendar or similar					
RSS Feed Reader					
RSS Feed generator					
Ning or similar social network creator					

Appendix 4. Survey results: Question 3

How the Internet has affected diplomatic reporting

Please indicate how the following technologies have impacted diplomatic reporting in your mission/country. For example: Has the Internet made diplomatic reporting less effective and more pressurised? Please select an answer for each column in each row. This page has the main survey content. I appreciate your time and thought to mark these responses.

Effective

Answer Options	More	Less	Not at All	Response Count
Internet	70	4	3	77
VoIP	48	8	12	68
Social Media	49	12	12	73
Video Conferencing	58	7	10	75
Mobile Devices	70	2	4	76

Immediate

Answer Options	More	Less	Not at All	Response Count
Internet	71	1	5	77
VoIP	45	10	12	67
Social Media	58	6	9	73
Video Conferencing	58	8	8	74
Mobile Devices	71	1	4	76

Cost Effective

Answer Options	More	Less	Not at All	Response Count
Internet	66	7	4	77
VoIP	46	12	9	67
Social Media	49	14	10	73
Video Conferencing	49	14	12	75
Mobile Devices	44	21	9	74

Formal

Answer Options	More	Less	Not at All	Response Count
Internet	5	65	7	77
VoIP	4	41	21	66
Social Media	2	58	14	74
Video Conferencing	15	42	16	73
Mobile Devices	5	61	7	73

Pressurised

Answer Options	More	Less	Not at All	Response Count
Internet	48	15	13	76
VoIP	24	16	24	64
Social Media	29	22	20	71
Video Conferencing	26	23	23	72
Mobile Devices	42	22	8	72

Appendix 5. Survey results: Question 13

How the Internet has affected diplomatic reporting

If yes, what type of training?

answered question   51

Response Text

- Both formal training course and on the job training.
- International workshops
- To clarify protocols re use of emailing, social media etc. To set standards and ensure uniformity.
- Definitions, format for reporting, protocols, etc.
- Not sure
- Innovative methods on reporting bilaterally since note verbales are still the main source of communication between Embassies
- Writing Reports and Briefs Skills
- Both local and international
- Inter-government e-diplomatic reporting
- New trends in diplomacy so as to remain relevant within the domain.
- Three weeks training
- Diplomatic Language specifically on Note Verbales is crucial
- Analysing issues and how to present it without affecting interest of country's foreign policy
- Critical analysis
- To use the data correctly, to research properly and to use the tools effectively
- Local or international training course on how to use new technologies of communication to improve diplomatic reporting.
- 1) On-the-job training; 2)international workshop/training course
- Structural approach to analysis and reporting.
- Analysis; knowing what can be considered reliable sources
- Writing, analysing
- Training courses as well as on-the-job training
- Presentation, style, specific wording and courtesy formulas
- How to 'read' prevailing political mood/outlook in a country based on what is observed in situ e.g. painful austerity measures by government x is expected boost support for the opposition party. This can be seen from (applicable indicator as observed by diplomat).
- How to use social media, e-diplomacy
- Management of information.
- Style
- Seminar
- How to formalize report , the structure etc
- Models of diplomatic reporting. Knowing what is expected of a goo diplomatic report. How to achieve effectiveness.
- Prioritizing and differentiating from news accounts
- How to analyse the type of information we ares exposed to, regarding sources, context, interest, priorities.
- Internet training
- Manuals/handbook; local workshop/training course; international workshop/training
- International courses would be useful to share best practice.
- Formal

- Analyzing information, need for brevity, conciseness and clarity
- Formal and informal (on-the-job), depending on the situation and the initial expertise of the diplomat/professional
- Identifying reliable sources
- Unified structure of reporting
- To update a language adapted to the new communications and in particular to transmit the assessments in a more condensed fashion.

- On the job training at least, also manual
- Teach them spelling and grammar to start with and then move on to how to draft coherently.
- Supplement on-the-job with examples on an intranet
- All kinds of it
- Analysis
- Different style and format, of reporting. How to use the huge information of the media in reporting., etc
- use of proper security system
- Utilization of different technologies available to ease diplomatic reporting, and what constitutes an effective report
- All effective types
- The use of new Media and technologies.
- Officers often need help to determine priorities in reporting. Training to heighten analytic skills and training in reporting that is easy for busy ministers and sr officials to digest.
- Report writing, concise and factual

Appendix 6. IFDT survey questions

This short survey is designed to audit the availability of training in diplomatic reporting. It should not take longer than 2 minutes to complete. Results can be made available to you, if you are interested.

1. Does your academy/organisation offer training in diplomatic reporting?

- Yes
- No

2. If yes, please indicate the type of training you offer

- Standalone online course
- Standalone face-to-face course
- As part of another online course
- As part of another face-to-face course

3. If you offer training in diplomatic reporting as part of another course, please provide details.

4. Do you see a need for training in diplomatic reporting?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your time. This information will be used to help determine whether the need for training in diplomatic reporting is being met.