#Diplomacy: Internet and social media

Diplomacy and technology: A historical journey

Dr Jovan Kurbalija, November 2021
The evolution or revolution of diplomacy?
The invention of the internet

- **1960s** - DARPA**Net** created, a network of computers that enabled government leaders to communicate to one another, in case the telephone system was destroyed.

- **1970s**, Vinton Cerf, American computer scientist, invented the **TCP/IP** (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol)

- **1991**, Tim Berners-Lee, British computer programmer, introduced the **World Wide Web**
The internet and public diplomacy

- The ordinary internet users have become reporters and participants in the online debate.
- Diplomats are no longer the sole advocates of strategic interests and national reputation of their country.
- Diplomats need to actively engage by using the same online communication channels as their counterparts.
Digital diplomacy - the use of the Internet and new information communication technologies to help achieve diplomatic objectives. The development of new technologies brought:

- New geo-political and geo-economic *environment* for diplomatic activities
- The emergence of new *topics* on diplomatic agendas
- The use of internet *tools* to practice diplomacy
New environment for diplomatic activities

- Diplomats have to deal with an altered landscape of economic and political power.
- Digital technology will shape the evolution of the political and economic environment for diplomatic activities.
New topics on diplomatic agendas:

- New topics on diplomatic agendas: cybersecurity, data protection, internet governance, AI governance...
- The ‘old’ diplomatic topics are influenced by digitalisation - e-commerce, digital health
- ‘Digital’ issues on the agenda of the United Nations and its specialised international organisations
Internet as a tool for diplomacy

- Diplomats use the internet as a new tool for communication, gathering of information, and public diplomacy.

- The introduction of each new e-tool challenged the way things were done traditionally and opened up new opportunities for diplomats and diplomacy.

- Social media (Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, etc) are intensively used for public diplomacy.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the emergence of online meetings in multilateral diplomacy.
The use of social media in diplomacy

- Diplomats use social media as an additional communication channel, and additional source of information for diplomatic reporting.
- Over 97% of all 193 UN member states have an official presence on Twitter.
- The most popular platform globally for world leaders is Twitter, followed by Facebook, and then Instagram.
- The United Nations uses social media platforms and other digital tools to enhance the outreach of its messages.
- The use of emojis has become widespread in governmental tweets to draw the reader’s attention.

👍🙂😉
The use of social media in diplomacy

Snippets of @Twiplomacy’s 2019 poll - they had asked world leaders, governments and foreign ministries on Twitter how they used the platform and what were the benefits of Twitter as a tool for digital diplomacy.
Online conferencing and e-participation

- The first remote participation session in multilateral diplomacy was held by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 1963.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, diplomacy has shifted online to conferencing platforms such as Zoom.

- Key challenges: solving security issues, adapting to changes in communication and negotiation dynamics, offering translation services, and ensuring a stable Internet connection.

- Hybrid (blended) forms of diplomacy combine in-situ and virtual attendance at meetings.
Meanwhile in...Space

- **1967 Outer Space Treaty** - Space should be used only for peaceful purposes, space and celestial bodies cannot become the sovereign territory of any nation.
- The growing dependence on satellites is increasing the need to negotiate about rights and obligations
- There are now more than 3,000 satellites; it is predicted that in a decade that number will rise to over 100,000.
- Space is becoming more commercial, as private companies entered the space exploration domain (SpaceX, Blue Origin, Virgin Galactic)
Cheers! **Coffee**

“Good coffee should be black as the devil, hot as hell, pure as an angel, sweet as love.”

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, French diplomat

**Louis XV** hand picked his coffee beans in Versailles, roasted, grounded and served the brew to his guests.

‘I would rather suffer with coffee than be senseless’

**Napoleon**

**J.F.Kennedy** organised famous ‘Coffee with the Kennedys’ as a part of the 1952 US Senate campaign

It is said that **Theodore Roosevelt** drank **40 cups** of coffee every day - a habit forged in childhood when he was given strong cups of coffee and puffs of cigars to help ease his asthma.

**Thomas Jefferson** called coffee ‘favourite drink of the civilized world.’