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Digital diplomacy: international experience and ukraine's perspectives

Introduction

In the age of globalization and the dominance of digital technologies, public diplomacy is no longer the prerogative of politicians as the number of agents of influence is constantly increasing. As Dev Lewis (2014) remarks, "already non-state actors – individuals, companies, NGOs, terrorists – are using digital tools and growing more powerful and active in shaping international affairs. Governments and diplomats no longer have a monopoly over international relations." Openness and publicity dictate new rules of the political game and, accordingly, make new demands on public diplomacy of the state. In light of the global Covid–19 pandemic, digital technologies are becoming especially relevant, strengthening the importance of digital diplomacy as the newest direction of public diplomacy.

Literature review

From a theoretical point of view, currently, there is no unified interpretation of the digital diplomacy phenomenon. For example, Brian Hocking (2015) describes the nature of digital diplomacy as an organic part of public diplomacy. Nicholas Cull (2013) considers digital diplomacy as an independent new field and connects it with fundamental changes in international relations and foreign policy in response to the advent of digital tools and space. A balanced position is proposed by Ilan Manor (2016), who believes that digital diplomacy is a special phenomenon that arose due to the digitalization of communication and diplomacy, and that it is a follower of public diplomacy, but is also separated from it.

American scholar Marcus Holmes defines and conceptualizes digital diplomacy as "a form of international practice that is not only a strategy of public diplomacy but also a mechanism for states to manage international change" (Bjola, Holmes 2015: 30). He has co-edited a unique collection of case studies on digital diplomacy, which is the first of its kind, bringing together established scholars and experienced policy-makers to bridge the analytical gap about how digital diplomacy works. Organized

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around a common theme of investigating digital diplomacy as a form of change management in the international system, it combines diverse theoretical, empirical, and policy-oriented chapters centered on international change.

American digital media specialist D. Lewis (2014) defines digital diplomacy as the use of digital tools of communication (social media) by diplomats to communicate with each other and with the general public. In particular, he emphasizes that the Internet has three main types of impact on international relations: 1) it increases the number of actors involved in global processes and participating in the development of strategically important political decisions, thereby reducing the exclusive control of states in this process; 2) it accelerates and frees up the dissemination of accurate or inaccurate information about any problem or event that may affect its consequences and results; 3) it allows faster and more efficient provision of traditional diplomatic services both to its own citizens and government, and to countries abroad (Musaeva 2019).

Works by domestic and foreign scientists such as Olexander Vysotskyi (2020), Leonid Litra and Yuliya Kononenko (2013), Ol'ha Seheda (2020), Yarina Turchyn (2014), Fergus Hanson (2012), Larisa Permyakova (2012), Yelena Zinovieva (2013), Natalia Tsvetkova (2011) are important theoretical bases for studying the issue of digital diplomacy.

For instance, L. Permyakova (2012: para. 2), emphasizing "digital diplomacy", notes that "openness is a forced necessity for the state, which works in the information space on an equal basis with other sources of information. If you do not fill this space with objective information, others will fill it. Digital diplomacy is designed to promptly provide adequate information, refute incorrect information, and confirm information from official sources."

Ukrainian researchers Georgii Pocheptsov (2018), Nataliya Pipchenko and Taras Moskalenko (2017), Lesya Dorosh and Yulia Kopey (2018) analyze specific aspects of digital diplomacy, focusing on the influence of the latest media and digital platforms on modern society and foreign policy communication.

Along with the term «digital diplomacy», such terms as «cyber diplomacy», «net diplomacy», «virtual diplomacy», and «e-diplomacy» are used by experts. In particular, the term "e-diplomacy" has been used in the scientific community since 2012. For example, the Australian scientist F. Hanson (2012: 2) defines e-diplomacy as "the use of the internet and new Information Communications Technologies to help carry out diplomatic objectives".Hanson identifies eight priority areas of e-diplomacy: 1) Knowledge management: "To harness departmental and whole of government knowledge, so that it is retained, shared and its use optimized in pursuit of national interests abroad." 2) Public diplomacy: "To maintain contact with audiences as they migrate online and to harness new communications tools to listen to and target important audiences with key messages and to influence major online influencers." 3) Information management: "To help aggregate the overwhelming flow of information and to use this to better inform policy-making and to help anticipate and respond to emerging social and political movements." 4) Consular communications and response: "To create direct, personal communications channels with citizens traveling overseas, with manageable communications in crisis situations."

5) Disaster response: "To harness the power of connective technologies in disaster response situations." 6) Internet freedom: "Creation of technologies to keep the internet free and open. This has the related objectives of promoting freedom of speech and democracy as well as undermining authoritarian regimes." 7) External resources: "Creating digital mechanisms to draw on and harness external expertise to advance national goals." 8) Policy planning: "To allow for effective oversight, coordination and planning of international policy across government, in response to the internationalization of the bureaucracy" (Hanson 2012: 4–5).

Russian researcher Yevgeniy Pantielieiev (2012) uses the term "innovative diplomacy", which, in his opinion, is a tool of external influence for the state, aimed at developing public opinion through the use of modern ICT.

All of these definitions are united by the fact that they consider digital diplomacy as a special instrument of the so-called "smart power", which is a combination of hard and soft power utilized effectively to achieve desired foreign policy goals. One of the founders of this term is the well-known Joseph Nye, the author of the concept of "soft power" as the art of persuasion, "the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion and payment" (Nye 2008: 94). Joseph Nye (2010) distinguishes three dimensions of public diplomacy: "The first and most immediate dimension is daily communications, which involves explaining the context of domestic and foreign-policy decisions. The second dimension is strategic communication, which develops a set of simple themes, much as a political or advertising campaign does. The third dimension of public diplomacy is the development of lasting relationships with key individuals over many years or even decades, through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels." Nye (2008: 94) concluded that "public diplomacy is an important tool in the arsenal of smart power, but smart public diplomacy requires an understanding of the roles of credibility, self-criticism, and civil society in generating soft power." In his opinion, to strengthen U.S. influence, image, and effectiveness in the world, any of the U.S. Presidents "has to make America represent the export of hope, rather than fear. We have to appeal to others in a way that gets them to want to follow us" (Gavel 2008).

As the American researcher and diplomat Charles Crocker (Crocker, Hampson, Aall 2007: 13) notes, the components of "smart power" are the use of diplomacy, the development of certain competencies, an emphasis on persuasion, and the projection of power, as well as the use of economically effective measures that are politically and socially legitimate. In other words, in this case, it is advisable to correctly use both intangible resources – various cultural achievements, methods of persuasion, and political ideals – as well as measures of economic and military-political pressure.

In fact, according to D. Lewis (2014), the digital diplomacy discussion is still in its infancy but is starting to become institutionalized. In Europe, the Stockholm Initiative for Digital Diplomacy was begun in January 2014, and brought together diplomats and the technology industry to look for digital solutions to problems faced by diplomats. Another forum is Yenidiplomacy, a global digital diplomacy research and training institute founded by Gökhan Yücel, a public policy consultant

and technologist. Gateway House as an early adapter to digital tools is also joining the institutional discussion.

Since the phenomenon of digital diplomacy does not have a unified theoretical approach, countries take their own independent approach and strategy in this area. Thus, the study of these different approaches is of interest to the global scientific community, because through analysis of them it is possible to draw conclusions about the understanding of the phenomena and trends in different countries.

Research Outcomes

The purpose of this paper is to study the international experience of the inclusion of digital diplomacy into the arsenal of public diplomacy and the opportunities and problems that have arisen from this, in order to apply that experience to the digitalization of Ukrainian public diplomacy.

The need to understand digital diplomacy is determined by a number of factors; in particular, increasing information flows, the inclusion of diplomatic communication in the global context of networking, the use of new communication channels and tools as well as its intensity, and the emergence of new types of influence on the audience in diplomatic practice.

According to O. Seheda (2020: 145), "the organic integration of digital diplomacy tools into the plane of public diplomacy is due to the following unique advantages: relatively low budget, access to a large audience, the possibility of rapid two-way communication and feedback." The key outcome is the growing role of digital diplomacy as a tool of public diplomacy. The competitive advantage of digital diplomacy within global digitalization is that it can translate a significant number of public diplomacy projects into a virtual dimension. At the same time, the efficiency of the projects can even increase, as the audience and the scale of coverage in an online mode is greater than in real life, while the organizational cost is significantly less.

So, digital diplomacy in the broadest sense is the use of the Internet, information, and communication technologies to solve diplomatic problems. As a result of analyzing the essence of digital diplomacy, areas where it can become an effective resource are identified: first, in the field of information management, and second, as a tool of the analysis of a huge amount of information for use in policy forecasting and strategic planning (Okladna, Stetsenko 2020: 14).

The main tool for implementing digital diplomacy is a social network. O. Seheda (2020: 142) distinguishes such main factors of the popularity of social networks as: "1) an attractive channel of ultra-fast communication that appeals to the emotional sphere and empathy; 2) the ability to interact with anyone and get feedback, evaluate the reaction to the broadcast message; 3) there is no need to use excessive financial resources; 4) record audience (out of 7.75 billion people in the world 4.54 billion use the Internet, 3.8 billion of them are active users of social networks)." The potential of social networks is that account holders simultaneously become suppliers, consumers, and distributors of information. Facebook diplomacy and Twitter diplomacy create a favorable political environment for the promotion of national

interests, for researching public opinion, and solving social problems by addressing target groups.

As Ali Fischer (2013) noted, "the advantage of social media provides the opportunity to reach citizens of other countries in near real-time. Social media platforms also provide spaces for interaction, increased engagement, and thus furthering the goals of public diplomacy… The potential ease with which social media can be accessed and the low cost in comparison to other methods make it an attractive tool for many embassies, as well as other government offices, that are facing budget cuts and demands to increase engagement. Numerous platforms allow for the use of more dynamic content, such as videos, photos, and links, than traditional methods of giving lectures or passing out pamphlets. In addition, social media are key channels in reaching youth populations, a major goal of current public diplomacy efforts." This point of view is shared by Evan Potter (2002: 23), who considers digital diplomacy as an important tool for promoting the foreign policy of the state, since it provides targeted interaction with the foreign public.

The diplomatic services of the world's leading countries use the Internet to communicate with citizens of their host countries, conduct surveys, and provide necessary information. Political elites skillfully use information and communication technologies to achieve their goals both within their own states and in the international arena. Even the Ministries of Foreign Affairs are studying the basics of media literacy and how to utilize social networks. There are several general areas where digital diplomacy used as a resource by a Foreign Ministry seems to be particularly effective:

– implementation of public diplomacy in establishing contacts with an online audience and the formation of new communication tools that provide the opportunity to address directly to the target audience with specific messages;
– facilitating the establishment of a dialogue in the format of "citizen-citizen, person-person" that can be initiated both by the participants of civil society and by the state, which can act as a moderator of the dialogue;
– information management, including the accumulation and analysis of a huge amount of information that can be successfully used in policy forecasts and strategic planning;
– implementation of consular activities;
– use of ICT for emergency communication with the state embassy abroad.

The spread of the Internet has made it possible to influence foreign audiences through such methods as posting radio and television programs on the Internet; distributing literature about stakeholder states in a digital format; monitoring discussions in the blog spaces of foreign countries; designing personal pages of government members in social networks; and, sending information via mobile phones (Tsvetkova 2011).

The U.S., United Kingdom, and France were the first countries to use digital diplomacy to address foreign policy issues, promote political culture values from the national to the international level (the formation of a "democratic club"), and fulfill the functional responsibilities of foreign ministries and diplomatic missions.

Digital diplomacy programs in the U.S. started in 2002 to 2003 when the George W. Bush administration began to transfer traditional international radio and television channels to the Internet. In 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice formed the Digital Interaction Group to monitor information and misinformation about the U.S. on social networks. At the same time, the Secretary of State announced the launch of the first official blog of the State Department, opened a government portal, and began publishing several electronic magazines. Hillary Clinton, who became Secretary of State in the Barack Obama administration in 2009, initiated *21st Century Statecraft* maximizing the potential of technology and serving U.S. diplomatic goals. The purpose of its implementation was "complementing traditional foreign policy tools with newly innovated and adapted instruments of statecraft that fully leverage the technologies of our interconnected world" ("21st Century Statecraft" [b.d.]). Under Hillary Clinton, digital diplomacy was taken to a new political level, emphasizing the important goals of U.S. foreign policy, such as discrediting al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other anti-American movements, as well as fighting political regimes in Iran, China, and a number of other countries by mobilizing a protest youth movement and a new generation of dissidents.

In September 2010, the *IT Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2011-2013 – Digital Diplomacy* was adopted. The Plan declares that "the mission of IT at State is to empower diplomacy, consular services, and development by providing access to information and technology solutions anytime and anywhere." It presents the Foreign Affairs Network (FAN) initiative slated to consolidate the Department's global IT infrastructure and related services and make it available to other agencies operating overseas. "Digital Diplomacy 2013 focuses on applying modern IT tools, approaches, systems, and information products to the mission and tasks of diplomacy and development. The intent is to create an environment where the use of these tools is ingrained in the State's culture and day-to-day activities" ("IT Strategic Plan…" 2010). The State Department also applies next-generation innovative tools for information and data management, moving from traditional data warehousing to cloud analytics. Today, U.S. digital diplomacy programs are implemented through a variety of agencies, including the State Department, the CIA, the Department of Defense, and the United States Agency for International Development.

According to D. Lewis (2014), "the U.S. state department is one of the few governments that are leaders in employing digital strategies and employ technology in their approach." The State Department's Office of eDiplomacy has created a wide range of interactive web portals, linking State Department employees internally, and also connecting them with diverse groups around the world. One innovative example is eDiplomacy's creation of TechCamp, a series of two-day conferences during which civil society organizations working abroad and technology experts identify and apply low-cost, easy-to-implement technologies to shared problems that have helped make these organizations more resilient and effective. At a State Department TechCamp in Lithuania, activists from nations with repressive governments learned how to keep their groups safe online when they use social media to organize protests. A TechCamp in Chile led to the widespread application of open-source software that

is being used by nongovernmental organizations around the world for collaborative disaster management, election monitoring, and information sharing.

In addition, eDiplomacy's team has expanded two existing online initiatives: the first is Diplopedia, the wiki-based online encyclopedia for foreign affairs information that has 15,000 articles written by 5,000 State Department employees and averages 40,000 page views per week; the second is the Communities@State, a group of 80 internal multi-author blogs designed to promote dialogue, information and region-specific "content with conversation" for State Department employees. eDiplomacy's office also created the Virtual Student Foreign Service that has allowed some 350 college students to engage with State Department diplomatic posts overseas ("Advancing U.S. foreign policy…" 2012). An important strategic document in this area is "Modernizing Diplomacy: US Foreign Policy in the Age of Connection Technologies", created by Clinton in April 2012. According to this document, the State Department is promoting policies that support U.S. values and objectives in cyberspace, including Internet Freedom, Internet Governance, Cybersecurity, Access and Development, and Open Government. So, "Modernizing Diplomacy" summed up the activities of the Secretary of State's team on digital diplomacy and emphasized the quintessence of the latter.

The first legal framework for digital diplomacy in the United Kingdom was the e-Diplomacy Development Strategy published in 2000. In 2001, it was updated as "E-Diplomacy: An e-Task Strategy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Commonwealth of Great Britain". The document articulated the main principles of diplomatic work: analysis of the audience, which needs information, and expected information; assessment of how best to provide information to each target group; and analysis of primary sources of information. To implement those principles, such programs as the Electronic Public Services Program, the Knowledge Program, the Resource Management Program, Information & Communication Infrastructure Program, and Organizational Change Program have been introduced. In January 2004, an updated "Information and Communication Technology Strategy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Commonwealth of Great Britain" was launched. It was referred to the development of the Ministry until 2010 and emphasized new ICT strategies: 1) to complete the formation of a global information structure that would provide better classification, storage conditions, and recovery of information; 2) to make such a structure mobile to allow working even with classified information; 3) to modernize the working conditions of employees of the Ministry; 4) to improve the communication between existing ICT systems (Vysotskyi 2020: 20).

Since 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Commonwealth of Nations have been developing an annual Digital Strategy programs series, which sets out common priorities and actions for the implementation of digital diplomacy and e–government. The Ministry's three key areas of digital strategy include: 1) digital diplomacy – analysis of the possibility of using digital technologies to improve the key areas of diplomatic work, including monitoring of international events, increasing the impact, and design of open policy; 2) service delivery – analysis of the possibility of digital services; 3) making the change – finding out the skills and other changes that are needed to deepen the use of digital technologies in public administration.

The main achievements of the implementation of this digital strategy are acknowledged as being: ensuring effective leadership of the digital agenda; providing staff with the access they need to digital media and tools; taking full advantage of the possibilities for digital diplomacy; continuing to produce excellent and integrated communications; and delivering digital by default for administrative services, ensuring effective digital management information (*Digital Strategy* 2014). Among the areas to prioritize, the improvement of virtual consular services, training of people who use the latest digital technologies in their work, as well as improving the analysis and forecasting of the Internet space, were identified in 2015.

Nowadays, digital diplomacy has been officially declared a priority direction for the development of the international activities of France. A striking example of French digital diplomacy is the "France Diplomacy" official website of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), which is a comprehensive information portal covering virtually all aspects of the foreign policy of the French Republic. The portal is a source of information for social networks, in particular, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube, etc. More than one million Twitter users are subscribed to the Ministry's webpage (for comparison, more than five million users are subscribed to the U.S. State Department webpage, more than 82,000 users to the webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine). As the "France Diplomacy" portal states, "Digital diplomacy is one of the priorities for the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The concept of 'digital diplomacy' refers both to the Ministry's domains of action, the 'international challenges of digital technology', and widening the scope of traditional diplomacy through innovations and new practices brought about by information and communication technologies (ICTs). However, digital tools are considered as much more than a simple means of communicating information, they are helping transform diplomatic work" ("Digital Diplomacy" 2019). The French President Emmanuel Macron also has official pages on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other social networks, which regularly post updated information.

The experience of the leading world's democracies shows the potential of digital diplomacy as a strategic resource for promoting national interests and implementing diplomatic tasks and state political doctrine. The essence of the cultural and political dimension of digital diplomacy is that the use of the latest information and communication tools in the foreign policy area contributes to strengthening an attractive image of the political culture of the state, ensuring the main goals of a country's economy in the world economic space, as well as promoting its national identity abroad. Digital diplomacy is a tool for spreading democratic values worldwide that creates a basis for global unity.

Today, Twitter seems to be the most popular channel of political communication. Many world leaders increasingly follow each other, creating virtual diplomatic networks on Twitter through which they can converse with each other informally and through private direct messages (Lewis: 2014). In particular, journalist Eva Harder (2012) believes that among all social networks in the world, Twitter is the most important, because it can change the "face" of a country's foreign policy. She claims that Twitter is developing a new method of managing external relations

between countries, based on how public institutions inform their citizens. According to Philip Seib (2012), a specialist in communication and journalism, the use of Twitter is a diplomatic tool that fits perfectly into the new meaning of the expansion of political rights and opportunities that accompanies the boom of social networks".

Twitter was created as a social network in 2006 by Jack Dorsey and since that time has rapidly gained popularity among the general public. This network of microblogging became more widespread in diplomatic practice around 2011. It was then that the term "Twitter diplomacy" appeared. Matthias Lüfkens, studying diplomacy social networks, proposed to introduce this term to characterize the use of Twitter by state leaders, international government organizations chiefs, and diplomats to converge positions on international issues („Twitter Diplomacy Tree Branding" 2014).

In June 2012, the French Press Agency launched the e-Diplomacy Hub website, which accumulates the Twitter activity of heads of state and representatives of foreign policy departments in real-time. A significant amount of data has been gathered by the Burson-Marsteller American public relations research group, which focused on the development of Twitter and the engagement of politicians from different countries with this online communication channel (Dorosh, Kopey 2018: 33–34).

According to a study by the information-analytical portal Twiplomacy (2018), 98% of the 193 UN member states have an official presence on the platform. Only six countries' governments, namely Laos, Mauritania, Nicaragua, North Korea, Swaziland, and Turkmenistan do not have an official presence on the platform. The 2018 BCW (Burson, Cohn & Wolfe) survey identified 951 accounts on Twitter, of which 372 personal and 579 institutional ones were the accounts of heads of states and governments, as well as of foreign ministers of 187 countries. Ministries of foreign affairs continue to expand their digital diplomatic networks, encouraging their ambassadors and those on diplomatic missions around the world to become active in social networks. By implementing their policies on Twitter, foreign ministries, consulates, staff on diplomatic missions, and especially state leaders have the opportunity to expand their communication and learn more about the views and attitudes of civil societies. Thus, in fact, the boundaries in communication with the public, both in their home country and abroad, are erased.

Among the well-known statesmen who used social networks in 2018, in the top three were: Donald Trump, President of the U.S., with 53 million subscribers, Pope Francis of Rome with 47 million subscribers, and the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, with 43 million followers ("Twiplomacy: The 50 most followed world leaders in 2018").

Thus, "Twitter diplomacy" is evidence that social networks today offer ample opportunities for political activities. It is an effective foreign policy tool and can rightly be seen as an adjunct to traditional diplomacy due to the large number of additional tools that it offers and how extensively it engages its audience. However, there is also a negative factor to Twitter and other social networks' influence on the political environment. As Alfredo Torrealba (2015) remarks, because people can post information without any content control, there is a risk of increasing mass protests and terrorist attacks that threaten the stability of the state and the security

of its population. Twitter has more than once become a platform for rapid incite-ment of revolutions and the direct subject of public opinion manipulation. Examples of such events are the Egyptian revolution in 2011–2013, anti-corruption actions in Turkey in 2014, protests and calls for murder in Venezuela in 2014, and more (Otsvera 2019).

In addition, it is often the case that an impulsive tweet posted by a politician to express an opinion on a certain crisis situation or conflict, or on the personality of another politician can aggravate relations between the two countries in real life. For example, though Donald Trump has greatly influenced the popularity of Twitter, his impulsive tweets caused an exacerbation of the U.S. – China conflict (Okladna, Stetsenko 2020: 15).

Lewis (2014) suggests that defining digital diplomacy purely within the scope of social media is not sustainable. The definition is already expanding as the capabil-ities of "digital" tools increases with advances in big data, and as wearable technol-ogy devices like smart watches and glasses enter the mainstream. Tools like crisis mapping – which plots live information gathered from social media and emails, in crisis situations – are being used by humanitarian organizations to better under-stand and respond to natural and manmade calamities. In the near future, diplomats will have an even larger array of digital tools at their disposal, allowing them to use data science to conduct sentient analyses to predict the public mood and cre-ate models to predict future reactions (Yücel 2014) or create custom-made apps for digital diplomacy – the possibilities are vast. As new digital tools increasingly allow people to connect, engage and mobilize we will truly have diplomacy 3.0 – an instant, hierarchy – and protocol-free, peer-to-peer (P2P) diplomacy (Yücel 2013).

Conclusions

We share the conclusion of O. Seheda (2020: 142) that public diplomacy as an element of "soft power" occupies an important place in the foreign policy strategy of many countries. "The effect of "non-coercive persuasion" enables the achieve-ment of a wide range of goals: to strengthen the country's image, to defend nation-al interests, and to promote diverse potential in the fields of science, technology, art, education, etc. In this context, digital diplomacy is a powerful tool for achiev-ing a number of outlined goals, and social networks as one of its main proponents have proven to be an unprecedentedly effective mechanism in this rapidly changing world." We believe that "digital diplomacy" is unlikely to ever displace diplomacy in its usual format, but it will facilitate public access to the results of traditional diplo-macy, as well as manage change in the international system.

In response to a demand for the development of digital diplomacy, Ukraine needs theoretical research on the phenomenon and its conceptualization at a na-tional level. The result should be the design of a comprehensive program of state representation in the online space. Finally, after the theoretical and legal concep-tualization of digital diplomacy, a clear division of competencies between existing authorities or the separation of a special responsible institution will increase the

efficiency and integrity of communication and representation of Ukraine for foreign audiences in the digital space.

Opportunities for the development of "digital diplomacy" in Ukraine seem to be limited by the lack of a national information and communication strategy, the shortage of trained professionals, and a number of risks inherent in working on the Internet. Years of attempts to change the status quo of Ukrainian digital diplomacy "from above" have not been very successful because of a lack of a combination of certain factors; firstly, a team of qualified staff who generate a common course for the development of digital diplomacy; secondly, the involvement of a wide range of diplomats in the initiatives of the mentioned team, which acts as a think tank; and thirdly, a spark, or a coincidence in which the two previous factors become relevant. In the case of Ukraine's digital diplomacy, a powerful impetus for its development has been the need to respond to information attacks by the Russian Federation, which has launched a hybrid war against Ukraine and a large-scale campaign to legitimize it in the world's public opinion. It is the factor of external military aggression that has given impetus to the expansion of Ukrainian diplomacy onto the digital plane. Subsequently, the potential of digital diplomacy began to be used as an effective tool for building Ukraine's image in the international arena, strengthening Ukraine's information presence in the media field of foreign audiences, and more. So, according to Seheda (2020: 144), "Ukraine's digital diplomacy has made a quantum leap towards mastering powerful social networking tools" since 2014. From 2013 to 2018, the number of tweets from the official Twitter website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine increased by 50 times (from 1,047 to 50,987), with the peak of growth in 2014. Respectively, the number of website followers increased from 760 in 2013 to 82,621 in 2018.

The spread of Covid-19 has significantly actualized the potential of digital diplomacy; virtual platforms have become almost the only meeting place for diplomats, politicians, and statesmen. For example, in April 2020, Ukraine took over the chairmanship of the online OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation; the first virtual visits of the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to Germany took place via video conference. As Ye.Haber, the Deputy Director of the Hennadii Udovenko Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine (2020, April 23) remarks, "the pandemic has shown that, if desired, much of international relations can be easily translated into a 'digital' format." In this context, the media activity of the embassy significantly affects the perception of the state by citizens, and political and business circles of the host country. Social networks used by foreign diplomatic missions of Ukraine play an important role in the implementation of the country's image, initiatives, and projects, and in establishing international dialogue.

However, according to the Dorosh & Kopey study

> by 2014, due to the geopolitical location and centuries-old influence of the Russian Empire, the most popular social network in Ukraine was Vkontakte. Such events as Revolution of Dignity and the president's decree on the official ban of Russian social networks in Ukraine led to redirection of Internet users towards Facebook and Twitter. The activity of political leaders on the Internet clearly illustrates greater demand for

Facebook as a social network among representatives of the Ukrainian political elite, while diplomatic discourse on Twitter's network is being actively developed in the rest of the world. Problems that delay the development of domestic Twitter diplomacy, as opposed to the world, are low activity of the political leaders themselves – frequency of messages' distribution on Twitter network is very low; practice of copywriting – a post written for one social network (Facebook) with a delay for a few hours also appears on another social network (Twitter). The situation with the presence of state bodies on social networks is also critical. Most ministries and public councils have their own official pages on Facebook, and only a few of them are officially present on Twitter (Dorosh, Kopey 2018: 37).

Obviously, Ukrainian political leaders and diplomats should recognize all the opportunities and benefits of Twitter-diplomacy and use them more actively to be effective in utilizing smart power.

Nevertheless, digital diplomacy in Ukraine is actively developing, involving more and more stakeholders in the process of information exchange. That is facilitated by the very nature of social media, which, like any living organism, is constantly evolving.

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Digital diplomacy: international experience and Ukraine's perspectives

Abstract

In light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, digital technologies are increasingly relevant, strengthening digital diplomacy's importance as the newest direction for public diplomacy. This paper studies the opportunities and challenges of digital diplomacy's inclusion in Ukrainian public diplomacy considering increasing information flow, diplomatic communication in the global context of networking, new communication channels and tools, and emerging new influences. The author asserts that opportunities for developing "digital diplomacy" in Ukraine are limited by the lack of a national information and communication strategy, shortage of trained professionals, and several risks inherent in working on the Internet. Nevertheless, digital diplomacy in Ukraine is actively developing, involving more stakeholders and facilitated by social media, which is constantly evolving like any living organism.

Keywords: public diplomacy, digital diplomacy, "smart power," social networks, Twiplomacy