Call for Working Papers

Technology & Diplomacy- Looking to the Future

One Day Workshop Hosted by the Oxford Digital Diplomacy Research Group

2017 marks a decade since the advent of digital diplomacy. What began as an experiment by a select number of foreign ministries and diplomatic pioneers, has become standard practice for diplomatic institutions all over the world. The past decade has seen diplomats adopt a variety of digital tools ranging from social media to Facebook and Twitter to Skype and WhatsApp. Additionally, foreign ministries now develop their own digital platforms be it in the form of smartphone applications or computer games.

The past decade has also seen increased academic interest in digital diplomacy. To date, scholars have evaluated the use of social media in public diplomacy, crisis management, countering violent extremism (CVE), diaspora engagement and the use of virtual embassies to overcome the limitations of traditional diplomacy.

However, as new technologies and platforms continue to emerge, so must the scope of digital diplomacy research expand. Presently, the digital diplomacy research lags behind the actual practice of diplomacy. While foreign ministries now write code and employ algorithms, these have yet to be investigated by diplomacy scholars. Moreover, scholars have yet to consider how the next generation of innovative technologies will impact diplomacy, be it in the fields of artificial intelligence or augmented reality. Finally, the digital diplomacy research corpus has yet to engage with the societal influences of innovative technologies in terms of the norms and values they promote, the ideologies that underpin their development and the philosophical or ethical dimensions of the digital age.

This one day workshop, convened by the Oxford Digital Diplomacy Research Group, aims to address these three substantial gasp. The workshop will consist of three panels.

Panel Number 1: Digital Diplomacy- Beyond the State of the Art

This panel aims to expand the digital diplomacy research corpus by investigating the manner in which diplomats employ a wide arrange of digital technologies including algorithms, big data, sentiment analysis, gaming, computational propaganda and Bots. By so doing, the panel will offer insight into unexplored areas of digital diplomacy and go beyond the state of the art which is often limited to social media.

Panel Number 2: Digital Diplomacy in 2025- Looking to the Future

This panel will look to the foreseeable future and investigate the influence that innovative technologies will have on the conduct of diplomacy. These technologies may include machine learning, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, augmented reality, 5G, the Internet of Things, satellite remote sensing, 3D printing and more. The panel will focus on a variety of diplomatic practices ranging from public diplomacy to cultural and exchange diplomacy.

Panel Number 3: The Digital Age- In Search for a Conceptual Prism of the Digital Society

This panel aims to explore the normative, behavioural and philosophical dimensions of the digital age. The panel seeks to define what it means to exist in the digital age through an analysis of its norms and values, the ideologies that guide its technologies and the behaviours they elicit. The panel stems from the assumption that diplomacy is a social institution and that diplomacy is practiced by social beings. Thus, to understand digital diplomacy is to understand the digital society.

Submission Guidelines: We invite submissions in the form of expanded abstracts (up to 1,500 words) that outline a potential contribution to one of the workshop's panels. Those accepted to present in the workshop, will be asked to submit a working paper ranging from 4,000-5,000 words in length. The working papers will all be published on the Oxford Group's webpage and may serve as the backbone for a special journal issue.

Submission should be sent to   digdiplorox@qeh.ox.ac.uk by Sept 30, 2017. The workshop will take place at the University of Oxford in November 2017 (date TBA). Participants are expected to cover their own travel expenses.