

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPLEMENTATION IN THE ROMANIAN MILITARY

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General Studies

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MARCEL HORIA ARAMA, LTC, ROMANIAN LAND FORCES  
B.S., Cluj-Napoca Technic University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2004

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: LTC Marcel Horia Arama

Thesis Title: Social Media Implementation in the Romanian Military

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Thesis Committee Chair  
Roger J. Linder, MA

\_\_\_\_\_, Member  
Daniel A. Gilewitch, Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_, Member  
Steven A. Boylan, MA

Accepted this 14th day of June 2013 by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, Graduate Degree Programs  
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

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## ABSTRACT

**SOCIAL MEDIA IMPLEMENTATION IN THE ROMANIAN MILITARY**, by Lieutenant Colonel Marcel Horia Arama, 156 pages.

In a globalizing world, dominated by the incredible fast-paced development of information and communication technology, the widespread availability and access to the Internet, and a growing public demand for diversified information, military Public Affairs system is required to adapt to the new communication paradigm created by the emergence of the social media. Today, the ability of the Romanian Armed Forces Public Relations system to cope with the challenges and opportunities posed by the social media is not sufficiently exploited. The thesis examines the functional social media systems of NATO and U.S. DOD Public affairs, and explores the opinion of public relations experts with regards to social media to answer the research question. In conclusion, the study proposes a new social media model for the Romanian military, to better adapt to the ever changing communication domain. The major recommendations for change in the Romanian Armed Forces Public Relations system include changes in policy, training and measurement.

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## ACRONYMS

DIRP	Directorate of Public Relations
DOD	Department of Defense
DOTMLPF	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, and Facilities
DTM	Directive-Type Memorandum
IO	Information Operations
LOE	Limited Objective Experiment
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
MOD	Ministry of Defense
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PA	Public Affairs
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem

In a globalizing world, dominated by the incredible fast-paced development of information and communication technology, the widespread availability and access to the Internet, and a growing public demand for diversified information, military Public Affairs system is required to adapt to the new communicational paradigm created by the emergence of the social media. Today, the ability of the Romanian Armed Forces Public Relations system to cope with the challenges and opportunities posed by the social media is not sufficiently exploited.

#### Primary Research Question

The purpose of this study is to answer the question:

How does the Romanian military Public Relations adapt in the new context generated by the emergence of social media?

#### Secondary Research Questions

Answers to the following questions assist in framing the problem:

1. What lessons learned derive from implementing social media in U.S. Army and NATO?
2. How does the Romanian Armed Forces use social media at present?
3. Which are the similarities and differences between U.S. Army/NATO social media and social media in Romanian Armed Forces?

4. What are the recommendations of communication and social media experts for public affairs?
5. What adjustments are necessary for optimizing Romanian military social media?

### Key Terms

Citizen Journalist: A person who independently gathers and reports news, views or opinions using means other than through a media organization, frequently through social media networks.<sup>1</sup>

Cyber Image Analysis: The measurement of Internet content via chat rooms or discussion groups in cyberspace regarding a client or product or topic; the measurement of a client's image everywhere on the Internet."<sup>2</sup>

DOTMLPF change recommendation: Joint doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) change recommendation—A recommendation for changes to existing joint resources when such changes are not associated with a new defense acquisition program.

Information disciplines: include according to NATO doctrine Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (civilian), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations and Psychological Operations (NATO)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>NATO International Military Staff, MC 457/2, *NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Graphics and Printing, February 2011), 29.

<sup>2</sup>Don W. Stacks, ed., *Dictionary of Public Relations Measurement and Research*, [http://www.instituteforpr.org/iprwp/wp-content/uploads/PRMR\\_Dictionary.pdf](http://www.instituteforpr.org/iprwp/wp-content/uploads/PRMR_Dictionary.pdf) (accessed 15 December 2012), 10

Information environment: The aggregate of individuals, organizations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information.<sup>4</sup>

Internet Posting: The process of loading a presentation or product onto a publicly accessible server, and creating the links required to make the item publicly live.”<sup>5</sup>

NATO Military Public Affairs (PA): The function responsible to promote NATO’s military aims and objectives to audiences in order to enhance awareness and understanding of military aspects of the Alliance. This includes planning and conducting media relations, internal communications and community relations.<sup>6</sup>

New Media (Social Media): A generic term for many different forms of electronic communication that are made possible through the use of computer-based technologies.<sup>7</sup>

Operation environment: A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander. (DOD)

Public Affairs: Those public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense. (DOD)

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<sup>3</sup>NATO International Military Staff, *NATO Strategic Communications Policy* (NATO Graphics and Printing, 14 September 2009), 2.

<sup>4</sup>Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 8 November 2010 (As Amended Through 15 July 2011)), 171.

<sup>5</sup>NATO International Military Staff, MC 457/2, 35.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., X.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 32.

Public Relations: “Public relations are a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.”<sup>8</sup>

Social Media Networks: Networks designed for the dissemination of information and messages through social interaction using Internet web-based technologies, often leading to conversational debate.<sup>9</sup>

### Limitations

The amount of time available to conduct this research is limited to the US Army Command General Staff College course length—ten months. The study is comprised of only unclassified data. The boundaries of this research are restricted to social media. However, connections with the other elements in the information environment are addressed if deemed appropriate for the purpose of the research.

### Significance of this Research

This research is significant to the Romanian Armed Forces because it must have an efficient and responsive public relations system, able to cope with the larger spectrum of opportunities and challenges introduced by the proliferation of social media. This research aims to identify how Romanian Military Public Relations can use social media to inform Romanian domestic and international audiences in accordance with its statutory requirements. The analysis determines the areas for improvement in today’s Romanian Armed Forces Public Relations system by comparing and contrasting it with other

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<sup>8</sup>Public Relations Society of America, “What is Public Relations,” <http://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/publicrelationsdefined> (accessed 15 December 2012).

<sup>9</sup>NATO International Military Staff, MC 457/2, 29.



functional models from the NATO and U.S. military environment. Based on the analysis, the author proposes pertinent recommendations to the Romanian Armed Forces Public Relations in terms of policies, structures, training, and standard operating procedures.

This study begins with a literature review that conducts a critical examination of social media in NATO and the U.S. Army and examines major works in the field of social networking theory and modern social media technology. Chapter 3 explains the methodology used in this research to develop a theory and build a model that describes the social media applicable to military organizations such as the Romanian Armed Forces.

The final chapter summarizes the findings of the study in a social media model for the Romanian Armed Forces, and makes recommendations for a more effective Romanian Public Affairs effort in regard to the emergence of social media.

#### The Establishment of the Romanian Armed Forces Public Relations

Due to the symbiotic relationship between the media and the Public Relations, it is worthwhile to explain how the changes undertaken by free press in the Romanian post-communist era have spawned the public relations in both the public and the corporate sector. In the years following the December Revolution of 1989, Romania transitioned from a totalitarian communist regime with centralized planning and a controlled government system to a democratic society, enthusiastically embracing the Western values of a multi-party system, free market and freedom of expression. A prerequisite for achieving a functional democratic society was the “emergence of free press in the post-communist countries, including Romania. The emergence of free press has led to the

birth of a new professional body of media professionals in Romania.”<sup>10</sup> Similar to other countries of the former communist bloc, Romania experienced profound transformations at all levels of society, undertaking major and necessary political, economic, cultural, and social changes. From 1990 onwards, political parties were increasingly pro-Western, leading to Romania actively pursuing the strengthening of relations with the West in general and with the U.S. and the European Union in particular.

The globalization of the information environment has prompted the modernization of the communications infrastructure in Romania as well, allowing a broad access to information at all levels of society. The social and political changes in Romania, in concert with the globalization of information, have sparked an unprecedented boom of media outlets, private radio and TV stations, newspapers, and the internet after more than 40 years of media censorship. The profession of public relations in Romania was formed in the same environment as Romanian journalism.<sup>11</sup> The impetus of media development was conducive to the birth of public relations in Romania as a viable and necessary counterpart for the media, both in the civil society and in the military as well. Hence, a growing demand for journalist and public relation professionals appeared in the Romanian labor market.

“Romanian practice of public relations evolved and developed quickly aligning with the international practice, [because] there were no public relations in Eastern Europe

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<sup>10</sup>Mihai M. Coman, “Media Bourgeoisie and Media Proletariat in Post-communist Romania,” *Journalism Studies* (2004): 45-58.

<sup>11</sup>Adela Rogojinaru, “Challenges of Revived Democracies: The Rise of Public Relations in Romania,” in *The Global Public Relations Handbook*, ed., K. Sriramesh and D. Verčič (New York: Routledge, 2009), 547-574.

before 1989, because the concept was not acceptable for socialism.”<sup>12</sup> In Romania, the development of public relations included “three distinct phases: (1) the pioneer phase of public relations (1990-1995), (2) the exploratory phase (1995-2000), and (3) the consolidation phase (2000-current).”<sup>13</sup>

In Romania, after a “pioneering initial stage”, when the first public affairs professionals were journalists that migrated to public relations, communication and public relations as disciplines were introduced in schools and universities to meet the growing demand for experts in these fields. The curriculum was adapted to provide students with the basics of the communication process and public relations in particular. In the meantime, all government institutions, including the military and business organizations, realized the impact that public relations has on the general success of their activities.<sup>14</sup>

Although the institutionalization of Romanian public relations began early in the 1990s, misunderstanding public relations as relations with the public still persisted in some ministries even in 2011.<sup>15</sup> In 1997 the profession of public relations specialist was recognized in Romania and thus included in the Professions Classification Code.

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<sup>12</sup>Alina Dolea, “Institutionalizing Government Public Relations in Romania after 1989,” *Public Relations Review* 38, no. 3 (3 September 2012): 354-366.

<sup>13</sup>Anna Klyueva, ABD; Katerina Tsetsura, Ph.D., Project Coordinators in Romania; Dana Oancea; and Thomas Achelis, “Media Non-transparency Research: The Case of Romania,” *Public Relations Journal* 4, no. 4 (Fall 2010): 7.

<sup>14</sup>George David, *Relații publice-garanția succesului* (București, Romania: Oscar Print, 2010), 15-16.

<sup>15</sup>Dolea, 4.

In 1994, Romania was the first country among the former Warsaw Treaty members who made the early steps towards NATO by joining the NATO Partnership for Peace Program (PfP) and in 2004 became a NATO lifetime member. Continuing the integration process into the Euro-Atlantic bodies, Romania acceded in the European Union in 2007.

In the military environment, public relations were a novelty and were established from the beginning. In the communist regime, the concept of public relations office/officer did not even exist as the entire media was controlled by the communist state-party; hence there was not an authentic interaction with the media. The requirement to have public relations experts capable to interface with the media at all levels of command, to tell the story of the Romanian Armed Forces in transition towards NATO admission became imperative. The Romanian military decision makers established a coherent public relations structure, top to bottom.

The Romanian Armed Forces underwent a transformation process in the years preceding the accession in the Alliance and more decisively after, in order to create military structures interoperable with those of the other NATO partners. Since 1994, Romania has participated with troops in various military missions mandated by the United Nations in Angola, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Afghanistan, which significantly improved its interoperability with NATO. These efforts comprised also the training of the public relations officers to effectively deal with the Romanian and the international media during their deployments. In addition to compulsory national training, the Public Relations personnel had to undertake adequate training to meet NATO and multinational operational public relations requirements.

Concurrently, the tremendous technological advance of the modern means of mass communication, the expansion of the Internet, World Wide Web and New Media created new opportunities for public relations practitioners to reach instantaneously larger audiences. Meanwhile, in a dynamic information environment, besides evident advantages, the new communication technologies create unexpected challenges that the Romanian Military Public Relations have to be prepared to respond to adequately. It is important that Romanian Military Public Relations are constantly aligning their policies, structures, and procedures training to keep pace with the changes imposed by the emergence of social media.

#### Romanian Military Public Relations Benchmarks<sup>16</sup>

The Romanian Ministry of Defense decided in late October 1991 to introduce public relations in the Romanian Armed Forces by establishing the Section of Information and Public Relations of the Armed Forces (SIPRAF) directly subordinated to the defense minister. The measure came in response to the increasing need for communication and public transparency in the military and for a fast convergence with the modern armed forces standards, to meet the challenges of the new international security and informational environment.

On 30 October 1993, under General Order and the Order of the Minister of Defense General Staff, SIPRAF became the Directorate of Information and Public Relations of the Romanian Armed Forces (DIPR) and from 30 April 1997 to 20 February 2007 it became the Public Relations Directorate (PRD). Since 20 February 2007, the

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<sup>16</sup>Romanian Ministry of Defense, translated to English, [http://www.mapn.ro/structuri/dirp/repere\\_istorice.php](http://www.mapn.ro/structuri/dirp/repere_istorice.php) (accessed 1 November 2012).

structure is known as the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR). DIPR is responsible for the organization and the management of the information and public relations system within the MOD and its subordinated structures, in accordance with Law no. 544/2001 for free access to information of public interest, and Law no. 346/2006 on the organization and functioning of the MOD.

The Romanian Armed Forces maintains a solid print, radio, television, internet-based media presence in the domestic and international media landscape. There are several military newspapers at each level of command, also available online. The Romanian MOD started its first Web presence in 2000 in compliance with Romanian laws regarding free access to information of public interest of the public institutions. The Cinematographic MOD Studio and a number of regional and national TV editorials were used for enhancing the internal and external audiences understanding and awareness on the Romanian armed forces, while MOD M100 Video Channel became the main internal communications video asset. In 2009 DIPR created the first YouTube video channel for worldwide online video distribution and in June 2012 initiated the MOD Facebook page.

DIPR works closely with similar institutions operating in security and the national defense environment to develop inter-institutional crisis communication contingency plans. As of 1 January 2004, the public relations in the military are recognized as a standalone military specialty. DIPR's primary mission is to advance the MOD aims by informing MOD personnel, Romanian citizens, and the institutions and organizations legally constituted about the Romanian Armed Forces objectives, goals and missions.

Currently, the Romanian Armed Forces Public Relation system includes the DIPR at MOD level, public relation offices for each of the services, public affairs

compartments for each division or equivalent, public relations officers at brigade or equivalent level and public affairs officers (overlapping functions) at battalion level or similar structures.

DIPR professionals have not only contributed to attaining the purpose and goals of the MOD, but also have been precursors in the development of the public relations profession in Romania. The first Public Relations book in Romania, published in 1997, had as a co-author the MOD DIRP Director at that time. The military public relations specialists created a valuable tool for organizational communication analysis, named “image analysis”. Several of the military public relations specialists, upon retirement, joined a career in the private sector or the education system, contributing to the development of public relations and communication in Romania.<sup>17</sup>

Summary:

With freedom of speech regained in 1989, the Romanian media flourished concurrently with the tremendous development of the Internet and information technology and the Public Relations both in the public and in the private sector. The Romanian Armed Forces have also created a robust Public Relations system able to face the challenges introduced by a more competitive traditional media. However, with the emergence of social media, the Military Public Relations needs to adapt once again, taking the right steps ahead to take advantage of the opportunities and to counter the risks associated with these new ways of communication. As long as NATO and most of its members have already introduced social media in their Public Relations practices, it

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<sup>17</sup>Geopolitics.ro, <http://www.geopolitics.ro/geopolitica/conflicte/3117.html> (accessed 1 November 2012).

becomes apparent that Romania as a NATO member should use this expertise. Therefore the implementation of social media becomes essential for the Military Public Relations practitioners to best communicate with the audiences in order to promote the Armed Forces objectives, goals and missions.

The introductory chapter aimed to familiarize the reader with the evolution of Public Relation in Romania, to further understand the environment as social media is implemented. Chapter 2 reviews the Public Affairs/Relations doctrines and procedures for social media used in the U.S. Army, NATO and Romanian Armed Forces. The research explores the social media communication tools and describes the communication processes associated with social media in order to propose relevant recommendations for social media implementation in the Romanian Armed Forces.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In a globalized world, with persistent changes in the informational environment, social media is a topic of interest for Government, military, academia, communication experts and even the media itself that has produced a considerable body of literature in recent years. This study examines the documents with significance in this chapter and later in chapter 4, analyzes their importance and relevance in order to provide a potential solution to the research question: How does the Romanian military Public Relations adapt in the new context generated by the emergence of the social media? The literature review is divided into two major categories.

The first major category explores social media communication tools best suited for military organizations and describes the communication processes associated with social media. This section reviewed books and articles from various sources, including the Internet, published by subject matter experts in communications, public relations and information technologies.

The second major category investigates NATO Public Affairs, U.S. DOD Public Affairs and Romanian Military Public Relations policies and standing operating procedures (SOPs) for social media. There are many official publications describing how to use social media, but only those with relevance to the research topic are addressed here. The literature reviewed in this chapter provides the data needed to create a social media model for the Romanian Armed Forces.

## Category I

### Theoretical Considerations of Web Communication and a Social Media

The first category of literature familiarizes the reader with the basics of communication and social media. The research investigates web communication and social media. It starts with theoretical considerations of web communication and a definition of social media. The research continues by outlining the social media tools and some thoughts are shared about the opportunities and risks associated with social media. Finally the research focuses on the method for auditing the organization's social media systems.

### The Internet and the World Wide Web

Whereas the Internet as a network existed in the United States of America since the 1960s, it became available for the public in 1991 as the World Wide Web, also referred to as "the Web". At the beginning, the access to "the Web" was quite limited, being primarily available for the government, military and academic organizations. In 1993-1995 several private Internet service providers, opened up the Web to the public in most of the major U.S. cities, granting the general population access to information technology and communications.

The proliferation of wider spectrums of new communication technologies ranging from satellites to smartphones creates significant implications for public relations that necessitate the adaptation of practices and policies. Whether in the form of blogs,

podcasts or YouTube videos, social network platforms or mash-up media the Internet and World Wide Web have revolutionized how the public accesses information.<sup>18</sup>

### The Collapse of Control and the Democratization of Information

In 2004, Web 1.0 based on centralized websites was superseded by Web 2.0, opening a new era for the Web seen as “a platform built around collaborative creation of content and information sharing.”<sup>19</sup> Web 2.0 describes a new way in which users started to utilize the Web as a platform where content and applications such as personal web pages, are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a collaborative and participatory fashion. In Web 2.0 web pages are replaced by blogs, *wikis* and other collaborative projects, probably the most democratic manifestation of User Generated Content.<sup>20</sup> The *wikis* are websites which allow users to add, remove, and change text-based content while social bookmarking applications which enable the group-based collection and rating of Internet links or media content.<sup>21</sup> Mark Poster in his book *The Information Subject* introduced the notion of a Second Media Age to define the major changes produced by Internet expansion and

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<sup>18</sup>John V. Pavlik, Ph.D, “Mapping the Consequences of Technology on Public Relations” (Study for the Institute for Public Relations Research and Education, September 2007), <http://www.instituteforpr.org/topics/mapping-technology-consequences/> (accessed 15 October 2012), 3.

<sup>19</sup>Peter R. Scott and J. Mike Jacka, *Auditing Social media-A Governance and Risk Guide* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2011), 10.

<sup>20</sup>Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, “The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media,” *Business Horizons* 53, no. 1 (January/February 2010), <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0007681309001232> (accessed 1 November 2012), 61.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 62.

envisioned a paradigm shift in media and public communication environment well before the emergence of Web 2.0. Poster saw Web 1.0 associated with the First Media Age, as a regime of mass media influencing mass audiences, characterized by (1) centralized content production, (2) state control (or by capitalist control in concert with the state), (3) one-way distribution of information, to (4) audiences conceived as a mass, and (5) media designed to influence social consciousness and reproduce existing social structures.

In contrast, for Poster the Second Media Age is characterized by two-way decentralized networks of communications, beyond state control, where individuals' interaction is helpful for the effective functioning of the society.<sup>22</sup> For Merholz "Web 2.0 is primarily interesting from a philosophical standpoint. It's about relinquishing control, it's about openness, trust and authenticity."<sup>23</sup>

Scholars have acknowledged the effects of Web 2.0 in the 21st Century as far-reaching, impacting media institutions, journalism, politics, advertising, public relations, communities, and individual social and cultural capitals. Web 2.0 media enables and fosters a public participatory culture and democratic civic engagement, termed e-democracy.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Mark Poster, *The Information Subject* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: OPA G+B Arts International, 2001), 82.

<sup>23</sup>Peter Merholz, "It's not about the technology," August 2005, <http://www.peterme.com/archives/000560.html> (accessed 20 November 2012)

<sup>24</sup>Jim, Macnamara, "Public Communication Practices in the Web 2.0-3.0 Mediascape: The Case for PRevolution," *PRISM* 7, no. 3 (2010), [http://www.prismjournal.org/fileadmin/Social\\_media/Macnamara.pdf](http://www.prismjournal.org/fileadmin/Social_media/Macnamara.pdf) (accessed 15 November 2012), 2.

## Communication Models

Web 1.0 established the classic one-way communication model with the information flowing one-to-one or one-to-many, from the institution to citizens. In the Web 1.0 age, communication was essentially a monologue, but in the Web 2.0 age, with the emergence of social media the one-way monologue has changed to many dialogues.

Here are some practical examples of one-to-one and one-to-many communication. A public affairs officer responding to a journalist is a case of one-to-one communication. The same public affairs officer while maintaining a web presence for an organization, providing official, updated and accurate information to the citizens visiting the organization's official portal is a one-to-many communication example. Significant for these two communication models is that the organization can decide and control the content of the information released to the public.<sup>25</sup>

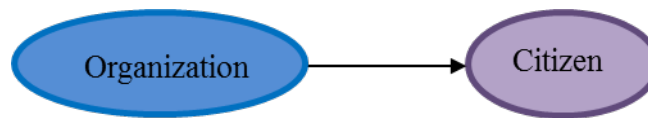


Figure 1. One-to-One Communication Model (one-way)

*Source:* Dr. Jörg Jacobs and Valeria Diefenbach, *The Use of Social Media in Public Affairs-A German Perspective* (Strausberg, Germany: Bundeswehr Academy for Information and Communication, 2012), 5-2.

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<sup>25</sup>Dr. Jörg Jacobs and Valeria Diefenbach, *The Use of Social Media in Public Affairs-A German Perspective* (Strausberg, Germany: Bundeswehr Academy for Information and Communication), 5-2.

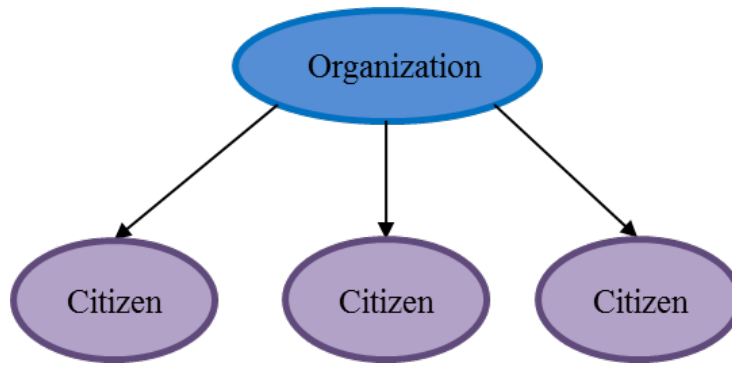


Figure 2. One-to-Many Communication Model (one-way)

Source: Dr. Jörg Jacobs and Valeria Diefenbach, *The Use of Social Media in Public Affairs-A German Perspective* (Strausberg, Germany: Bundeswehr Academy for Information and Communication, 2012), 5-2.

With the rapid development of communications technology, organizations lose the monopoly in information distribution. The many-to-many communication model depicted below illustrates how information is produced and disseminated in uncontrollable ways for the initial sender. Once the information is released it can be re-distributed on any social media platform by third parties. The only way to find out what is being discussed about the organization on social media platforms is to become part of the discussion. This is what makes the difference to traditional media in the real world. It is no longer the case of one-way communication, like posting a press release on the official web portal. In the age of Web 2.0, anybody can talk in real time anywhere about everything, and there will always be somebody.<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, public affairs need to find solutions to cope with these viral dialogues, develop monitoring capabilities and find ways to measure communication

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 5-2.

effects, and ultimately to develop a model for sustainable communication management in the age of Web 2.0.<sup>27</sup>

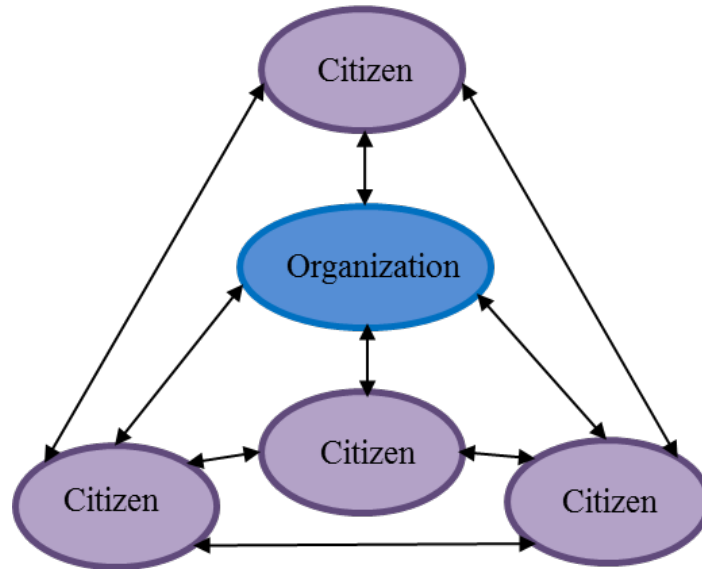


Figure 3. Many-to-Many Communication Model (two-ways)

Source: Dr. Jörg Jacobs and Valeria Diefenbach, *The Use of Social Media in Public Affairs-A German Perspective* (Strausberg, Germany: Bundeswehr Academy for Information and Communication, 2012), 5-2.

### Defining Social Media

According to Scott, there is no single accepted definition of social media. However, it can be said that “social media is the set of Web-based broadcast technologies that enable the democratization of content, giving people the ability to emerge from consumers of content to publishers. With the ability to achieve massive scalability in real time, these technologies empower people to connect with each other to create (or co-

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 5-3.

create) value through online conversation and collaboration.”<sup>28</sup> Within the online community, people not only read or listen, they stay connected and express their opinions and thoughts through social media. Therefore the role of social media is to help foster relationships and to facilitate interactions among people and organizations. Social media is currently the fastest growing aspect of the Internet and includes various categories of online tools such as blogs, video and photo-sharing sites, social networking sites, aggregators, RSS feeds, free media monitoring, etc. When the Internet became available to the public in 1993, Websites, forums and e-mail enabled millions of users to enjoy their first online experience. From 1995 to 1999, the incredible boom of Web technologies served as the springboard for the evolution of social media in the XXI century.<sup>29</sup> In 1996 the first instant messaging experiments provided valuable guidance to future social media organizations, showing that social media is not only about member’s connectivity “but also allows them to become publishers of content, join the conversations and form relationships.”<sup>30</sup>

### Social Media Tools

The following paragraphs describe the most common social media online tools such as blogs, online video and photo-sharing sites, social networking sites, aggregators, RSS feeds, wikis, social bookmarking, free media monitoring, etc.

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<sup>28</sup>Scott and Jacka, 7.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 9.



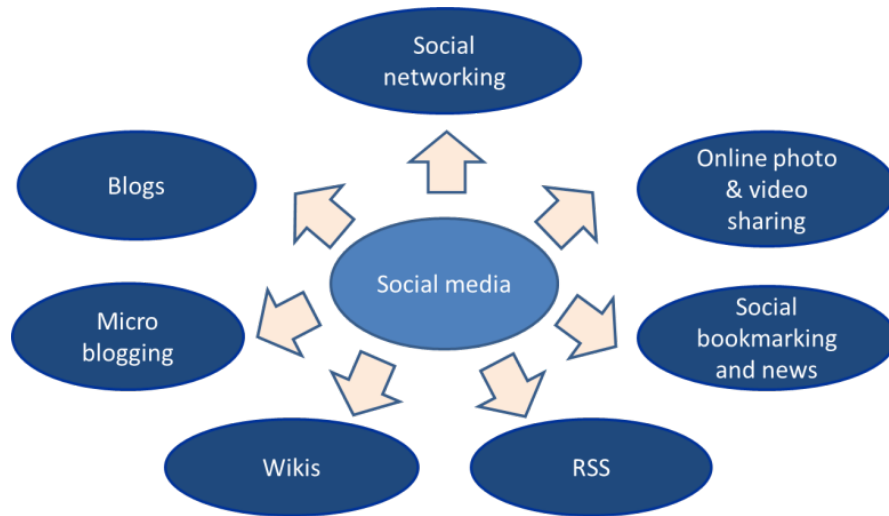


Figure 4. Social Media Platforms

*Source:* Created by the author.

## Blogs

The term “blog” is the abbreviation “Weblog” created by the pioneering blogger Peter Merholz in 1999. Online Diary, launched in 1998, was the first online blogging community to allow readers to comment on a blogger’s post. The ability to add comments was significant as it helped individuals to polemicize or debate online around a common interest or topic.<sup>31</sup> Blogs have grown as an important tool in the realm of public opinion and “the power of the people has become the power of the bloggers” according to blogger Stephan Spencer.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Scott and Jacka, 10.

<sup>32</sup>Stephan Spencer, CEO expert, author, professional speaker, <http://www.stephan-spencer.com/archives/2005/01/13/study-on-blog-readership-rss-aggregator-usage/> (accessed 1 November 2012).

In 2003, Wordpress allowed even individuals not savvy with programming to start blogging within minutes and created the concept of “citizen journalism” and User Generated Content (UGC), which “can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media.”<sup>33</sup>

In 2006 Twitter was launched. Twitter is a form of micro blogging that enables individuals to “follow” other people and to send blog updates and information using 140-150 character text messages from a mobile device. Twitter is a powerful tool used by organizations to listen to real time conversations of their customers. After 2008 the release of smartphones provided the Internet on mobile devices enabling people to interact in social media.<sup>34</sup>

Technorati's State of the Blogosphere 2011 report on consumers trust and attitudes toward the media states “compared with other media, blogs continue to outpace other social media and many traditional media in terms of trust and generating consumer recommendations and purchases. Facebook remains somewhat influential, but less so than blogs and Twitter has seen a drop in influence over the past year.”<sup>35</sup>

Individuals use blogs primarily to share expertise and experience on an area of interest with others (31 percent), while Entrepreneurs primarily use their blog to attract new clients to their business (29 percent). More than 60 percent of Corporate and

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<sup>33</sup>Kaplan, 61.

<sup>34</sup>Scott and Jacka, 15.

<sup>35</sup>Technorati Media, “State of the Blogosphere 2011: Part 1,” <http://technorati.com/social-media/article/state-of-the-blogosphere-2011-part1> (accessed 1 November 2012).

Entrepreneur bloggers believe they will have expanded visibility in their business through blogging.<sup>36</sup>

### Social Media Platforms

In 2004, the Friendster and LinkedIn social media platforms were launched and addressed most of the issues that their predecessors were confronted with. LinkedIn was the first social networking platform that enabled professionals to get connected and collaborate online. It also proved valuable to human resource recruiters.<sup>37</sup>

In August 2004, the Facebook platform was launched at the Harvard University campus as a platform designed to help students to interact that expanded to other campuses. Facebook was the answer to many of the frustrating deficiencies of previous social media platforms. Facebook's popularity resides in the "addictive combination of instant status updates with third party social games and applications"<sup>38</sup> that allows users to scan events and activities posted by their friends while enjoying interactive social gaming applications with other users. Facebook's success can be attributed to the more mature audience, as more than 60 percent of the audience is over the age of 35. By October 2012, Facebook had surpassed 1 billion active users around the world and continued to proliferate. Facebook is the largest and most visited social networking site in the world cutting across demographics with high popularity within all segments of society. Approximately 81 percent of its monthly active users are outside the U.S. and

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Scott and Jacka, 11.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 13.

Canada. Facebook counted 584 million daily active users on average in September 2012. Also, some 604 million monthly active users had accessed Facebook mobile products as of September 30, 2012.<sup>39</sup> Internet World Stats states that Romania has 9,642,383 internet users within a population of 21,848,504. Among them were 5,077,660 Facebook users.<sup>40</sup>

## Bookmarking

Another social media tool created in 2003 was social bookmarking that gave users the ability to book mark a Web page using freely chosen keywords or “tags.” A bookmark, does not store data, it is only a simple link to a Web page allowing the user to access the information at a later date and time. Bookmarks “can be saved privately, shared within select groups, or made public, allowing users to search through the bookmarks by popularity, category, tag, or date.”<sup>41</sup>

## Real Simple Syndication

Real Simple Syndication (RSS) which originated in 1997, is another social media tool used to update and monitor blog posts, news headlines, audio, and video content and to streamline communications between publishers and readers. The user subscribes to a feed by entering the feed’s link into a reader program that checks and retrieves the new content posted online and presents it to the user.

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<sup>39</sup>Facebook Inc., “Facebook Newsroom,” <http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts> (accessed 7 December 2012).

<sup>40</sup>Internet World Stats, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats9.htm#eu> (accessed 7 December 2012).

<sup>41</sup>Scott and Jacka, 11.

## Photo and Video Content Sharing Platforms

In 2004, Flickr was launched. It is basically a photo sharing site that includes billions of photos, videos and community content addressing primarily photographers and videographers. After 2005, the focus shifted from building platforms and tools to changing the way the users connect, converse and build relationships. In terms of social media tools, YouTube, the video-sharing Web site, was launched in 2005 enabling everyone to become publisher of video content.

The rise of digital video production and online distribution through web-sites such as YouTube is enabling organizations to use information in video format to communicate directly with consumers and the public bypassing traditional media filters or gatekeepers.<sup>42</sup> Soundcloud and Slideshare are used to share music and presentations. The list is far from comprehensive, but it does provide an idea about the large variety of social media tools that need to be considered.

## Consequences Emerging from the Proliferation of Social Media

Social media “has evolved in a global phenomenon and a major cultural shift in how people connect and communicate.”<sup>43</sup> The new avenues created by social media empower individuals with publisher abilities resulting in significant implications to their organizations. Organizations have lost overall control of their messages but communications in real time mitigate this somewhat and offer the opportunity to

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<sup>42</sup>Pavlik, 11.

<sup>43</sup>Scott and Jacka, 16.

strengthen relations and to gain a better understanding of the publics' opinions and expectations.

By facilitating two-way symmetrical communications or interactive dialogs with various public audiences, social media offers a profound opportunity for public relations professionals to move from the traditional media monologue to an open, effective and balanced dialogue for the mutual advantage of both audiences and organizations.<sup>44</sup>

According to Grunig, the two-ways symmetrical model uses communication to negotiate with the public, resolve conflict, and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its public.

Social media is also changing the relations with public audiences as they can now publicly discuss about an organization with each other. In most cases it falls under the public relations department to develop strategies in order to deal with these unexpected messages on the Web.<sup>45</sup>

### Risks Associated with Social Media

In such an open and transparent communication environment, risks are inherent. First, customers dissatisfied with or disappointed by the company's services may decide to engage in virtual complaints in the form of protest websites or blogs resulting in potentially reputation damaging information in online space. Secondly, organizations that

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<sup>44</sup>Pavlik, 14.

<sup>45</sup>Rian van der Merwe, Leyland F. Pitt, and Abratt Russell, "Stakeholder Strength: PR Survival Strategies in the Internet Age," *Public Relations Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 39-48.

encourage employees to be active on blogs must be aware of the consequences of staff members writing negatively about the organization.<sup>46</sup>

According to Deloitte LPP 2009, the opportunity of collaborative projects does not come without risks. In Ethics and Workplace Survey it acknowledges “that there is great reputational risk associated with social networking as 74 percent of employed Americans surveyed believe it is easy to damage a brand’s reputation via sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.”<sup>47</sup> Surprisingly, though 58 percent of corporate executives agree that reputational risk and social networking should be a boardroom debate, only 15 percent are addressing it. Despite the evident risks, only 17 percent of the organizations have programs dedicated to monitoring and mitigating risks related to social networks. In addition, the survey mentioned that only 22 percent of the organizations had formal policies, protocols and procedures to dictate how employees can use social networking tools and 27 percent of employees surveyed disregard the ethical consequences of posting comments, photos, or videos online—and more than one-third do not consider their boss, their colleagues, or their clients.<sup>48</sup>

While sharing videos, pictures, opinions, experiences, and comments on social networks is a personal issue, a single inappropriate post can create devastating ethical consequences for individuals as well as organizations. Consequently, it is important for

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<sup>46</sup>James C. Ward and Amy L. Ostrom, “Complaining to the Masses: The Role of Protest Framing in Customer-Created Complaint Web Sites,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 33, no. 2 (2006): 220-230.

<sup>47</sup>Deloitte LLP. “Social Networking and Reputational Risk in the Workplace, [http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-UnitedStates/Local%20Assets/Documents/us\\_2009\\_ethics\\_workplace\\_survey\\_220509.pdf](http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-UnitedStates/Local%20Assets/Documents/us_2009_ethics_workplace_survey_220509.pdf) (accessed 15 December 2012), 46.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 8.

executives to be cognizant of the implications and the risks associated with social media and to identify ways to mitigate risks while best leveraging social networking sites to an organizations' advantage. With the advent of social media, the traditional communications processes and policies require a comprehensive review to ensure that an "organization has the adequate governance, risk and control measures in place to capitalize on opportunities while protecting against excessive risk."<sup>49</sup>

Technological changes have significant implications for the structure, culture and management of organizations, mainly from a public relations standpoint. As online technologies have become ubiquitous and powerful, the new media enables open and transparent internal and external organizational communications, transcending time and distance constraints. Materials online might be read by the organization's expanded community. Internal and community communications relinquished printed materials while offering more materials online.<sup>50</sup>

When individual users share personal information which is inadvertently compromised, it may impact on their privacy. Such practices are likely to raise concerns over privacy and trigger public protests, legal challenges, increased regulation, and reputation damage for those involved.<sup>51</sup> Global Positioning System (GPS) implementation in smartphones and the applications with location based services (LBS) allow the users to check in locations and share them with friends on social networks.

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<sup>49</sup>Scott and Jacka, 18.

<sup>50</sup>Pavlik, 12.

<sup>51</sup>Macnamara, 7.



However, over sharing one's location to anyone through social networks creates some risks to individual privacy.<sup>52</sup>

### How Social Media Changed the Communication Paradigm

John Harrison and Martin Hirst, in *Communication and New Media—From Broadcast to Narrowcast*, argue that the era of mass communication is over. In the digital era, mass audiences are atomized to singular citizen consumer audiences owning a smartphone. Consequently, in these new conditions, when the “new media” eclipses “the old media” the message can be tailored in such a manner as to approach a particular individual.<sup>53</sup>

Social media and Web development fundamentally changes the way “people connect and converse with corporations, governments, traditional media and each other.”<sup>54</sup> Before the emergence of the social media, customarily “organizations and the traditional broadcast media had a stronghold on the message”<sup>55</sup> and “communications were simple monologue or, at the most, a very controlled two way conversation.”<sup>56</sup> In the past, people used one-to-one communications to share information, opinions or commentaries on their topics of interest mostly by phone, in person, through mail, and

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<sup>52</sup>Scott and Jacka, 16.

<sup>53</sup>John Harrison and Martin Hirst, *Communication and New Media From Broadcast to Narrowcast* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), v.

<sup>54</sup>Scott and Jacka, 3.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

only recently by e-mail. This method did not offer the ability to reach widespread masses and communication was limited to the person's "immediate sphere of influence."<sup>57</sup>

The Internet forums, online chat, and personal Web sites marked the shift from one-to-one to one-to-few, favored dialogue and empowered individuals with the ability to expand their messages outreach to masses. The broadband internet outfitted people with ubiquitous access to the Web and provided the capability to upload almost instantly audio-video, photo or text content, making virtually everyone a genuine publisher. This new trend forced organizations unwillingly to accept a change in their communications strategy, even though it meant less control of the messages.<sup>58</sup>

#### How to Build a Social Media Strategy

Breakenridge developed the Social Media Strategy Wheel in 2009, as an expedient tool to assist PR professionals to visualize the core components necessary to audit and improve or to develop a social media strategy in their organizations.

Breakenridge recommends PR professionals to examine the following seven focus areas for developing and implementing a social media strategy: audit, research and discovery process, goal, objective setting and budgeting, monitoring/tracking, channel distribution, communications messaging and content optimization, levels of engagement, and benchmark measurements.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Scott and Jacka, 3.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>59</sup>Deirdre Breakenridge, *Social Media and Public Relations-Eight New Practices for the PR Professional* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press, 2012), 157.

To effectively use the wheel, the PR professionals must work from inside the circle and move outward. PR should begin with the audit/discovery and research to evaluate resources and techniques that worked in earlier initiatives. The information exposed in this phase serves to create a stronger program with goals and objectives, to identify appropriate target audiences, and the budgetary requirements necessary to launch the effort. The seven major areas of the wheel are the areas to help formalize the strategies and tactics to successfully reach the established goals. PR should develop a strategy first, by going through each section of the wheel and only then determine communications tactics to reach target audiences through the various social media channels.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.



copyright 2010 Mango Marketing

Figure 5. The Social Media Strategy Wheel, Deirdre Breakenridge

Source: Deirdre Breakenridge, *Social Media and Public Relations-Eight New Practices for the PR Professional* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press, 2012), 157.

One might infer that the areas of the wheel could be used to audit and improve any communication strategy, which is perfectly accurate. However, social media is more than PR, it is about joining communications with technology, and requires a different mindset for planning as it has to take into account the behavioral preferences of the target audiences. For each of the seven focus areas of the wheel, in order to frame the focus area for analysis, Breakenridge suggests a set of indicative benchmarks that could assist PR professionals to audit the effectiveness of their current social media systems. These seven

focus areas and benchmarks will be used during in chapter 4 to categorize and order the data collected on seven dimensions in order to facilitate the analysis.

1. Audit, research and discovery: Is the portion of the process where policies are identified and fleshed out to create an environment that respects and protects all parties involved and to evaluate resources and techniques that worked in earlier initiatives in social media.
2. Goal, objective setting and budgeting: Serves to create a stronger program with goals and objectives, to identify appropriate target audiences, and the budgetary requirements necessary to launch the effort.
3. Tracking and Monitoring Strategy: Setting up a monitoring and tracking strategy enables to expose a better approach to storytelling and participating with groups in social media communities, and to identify the key topics and relevant information important to the audience.
4. Distribution/Channel Strategy: Understanding on what social media platforms and how the groups participate, collaborate, and share information can help to create a channel and distribution strategy for greater opportunities to engage.
5. Communications/Content Optimization Strategy: A communications and content strategy should help PR professionals to develop and optimize content and messaging for maximum impact on the audiences, taking into considerations their preferences and the critical issues of the influencers and brand advocates.
6. Engagement Strategy: Describes the best ways to engage with an audience or actions do we want them to take: to learn about the brand, provide

endorsements, create their own content, share your information, or develop a mutually reciprocal or strategic relationship, etc. The engagement strategy, define the types of engagement that lead to higher-level adoption and business outcomes versus lower-level participation in communities.

7. Measurement Strategy: A measurement strategy needs to be put in place to track/benchmark program success. It determines the metrics to map back to higher-level goals and objectives and enables to show the value of the PR/social media program by tracking metrics that reveal leads, sales, registrations, learning, strategic relationships, reputation management, and thought leadership.<sup>61</sup>

## Conclusions

It is largely agreed in the PR environment that social media is a communications' department responsibility within organizations. Classic communication, characterized by one-way information flow from an organization to a public audience has changed through the means of social media into dialogues or two-way communication. A public relations officer giving information to a journalist, via e-mail, by phone or interview is a one-to-one communication example, while maintaining and updating official web site of an organization is a case of one-to-many communication. It is up to the organizations to decide which information will be given to the public and how to pass that information.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.,157-159.

<sup>62</sup>Jacobs and Diefenbach, 5-2.

Pavlik confirms the continuing importance of Web site presence in public relations and organizational communication.<sup>63</sup>

Macnamara highlighted that “networks are people—not technology” and that “there is no mass audience, and in reality it never was” adding a social dimension to published content. He identified a number of recommendations of Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 for public relations practitioners: new skills to engage in online conversations, true two-way communication, a breakdown of the control paradigm, new forms of media monitoring and analysis, and issues of privacy and reputation.

The basic skills of 20th century public relations practice such as writing news releases, statements, speeches, and organizing interviews and news conferences, are losing terrain to social media. PR practitioners need to acquire new skills to effectively engage in conversations online to represent their organizations and to correct erroneous information while concurrently learning how to defend against criticisms. Media relations are changing, as bloggers and other social media authors are not included in media databases, do not accept news releases and rarely attend interviews or news conferences. The fast growing number of social media platforms and blogs “illustrate the need for public relations practitioners to extend media monitoring and media content analysis beyond traditional press clippings and broadcast content.”<sup>64</sup>

The major difference with traditional media is in the viral nature of social media and in the level of interaction and interactivity of these platforms where conversations spread quicker and easier, reaching much larger audiences than ever before and the

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<sup>63</sup>Pavlik, 10.

<sup>64</sup>Macnamara, 8.

control over the message is lost. Organizations without a social media presence today are missing the opportunity to spread their messages and to make their brand recognizable.<sup>65</sup>

Breakenridge's Social Media Strategy Wheel presents the seven focus areas and benchmarks that should be used by PR professionals when auditing a social media system, while concurrently providing a seven dimensions conceptual framework to categorize and order the data collected to facilitate the analysis in chapter 4.

### Category II

In addition to understanding the fundamental relationship between social media and communications it is also necessary to understand how government sponsored PR agencies have developed their policies and SOPs to deal with the rise of social media. This section explores the evolution of thought in NATO Public Affairs, U.S. military Public Affairs and Romanian Military Public Relations in relation to the emergence of social media.

#### U.S. Department of Defense Public Information Policy on Social Media

In 2011, the U.S. Army abandoned strategic communication for inform and influence activities. For the former U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) "victory in the long war ultimately depends on strategic communication by the U.S. and its partners."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Hubspot, "How to Leverage Social Media for Public Relations Success," [http://www.hubspot.com/Portals/53/docs/hubspot\\_social\\_media\\_pr\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.hubspot.com/Portals/53/docs/hubspot_social_media_pr_ebook.pdf) (accessed 28 December 2012).

<sup>66</sup>U.S. JFCOM and Joint Warfighting Center, *Commander's Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy*, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil> (accessed 15 December 2012), I-1, 6.



The U.S. Army uses inform and influence activities to create, strengthen, or maintain favorable conditions for its interests and objectives using as a primary means, messages. The information communicated for inform and influence activities is the purview of public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals only.

In February 2010, the DOD re-issued a Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) providing guidelines for military use of social media. This DTM is re-issued annually and it authorizes the use of social media in the DOD. However, the 2012 extension is not a permanent solution but it allows the military to continue using social media until a more permanent list of rules and regulations is established.<sup>67</sup>

The Army's Chief of Public Affairs, Major General Stephen R. Lanza, stated that effective communication requires more than the ordinary press release. In this context, to tell the Army story to the public requires the Army to engage with diverse audiences using alternate ways across a variety of social media platforms. So what is social media for the U.S. military? Social media is a subset of the new media information environment within which the military now operates. The Army, as a service, has defined social media as "dialogue-based web platforms, sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, and Twitter."<sup>68</sup>

The United States opened up access to social media across all military services in 2009, before social media education and policy were fully developed and implemented. Other countries took a more cautious approach, gradually allowing access to certain

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<sup>67</sup>Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, *U.S. Army Social Media Handbook, version 3* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2012), 3.

<sup>68</sup>Public Relations Society of America.

social media, in order to let policy to catch up with activity. Civil liberties and the desire for military and information dominance have driven social media policy development in the United States. Documents from all military organizations emphasized that social media policy is in its infancy and policy development should be guided by principles such “Build a little; test a lot” and “Missions drive requirements.” The document shows the milestones in the progress of US cyber and social media policy: the first military accounts appear in social media (2007); “Barack Obama’s election as President of the United States is credited significantly to the use of social media, which was legitimized as a serious way for governments to communicate”<sup>69</sup> (2008); general urgency of moving forward into the cyber and social media space (2009), the year of planning the official strategy and draft policy started to emerge, along with the beginnings of an organizational structure that is designed to evolve with the progress of social media in the military (2010), the year of implementation and trial (more official activities and first official cyber curriculum); Increased resourcing of social media activity (2012).<sup>70</sup>

The next paragraphs succinctly review the public affairs mission, role and responsibilities, functions, tenets, and relation with other information functions, as depicted in the U.S. DOD doctrines. The purpose of presenting this information is to help the reader to understand how social media is nested in Public Affairs activities.

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<sup>69</sup>George Patterson, “Analysis and Insights,” *Review of Social Media and Defence*, <http://www.defence.gov.au/pathwaytochange/docs/socialmedia/3.%20Analysis%20and%20insights.pdf> (accessed 21 March 2013).

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

U.S. DOD Public Affairs Mission, Role,  
Tenets, Principles and Responsibilities

According to J.P.-3.61, the mission of joint Public Affairs is “to plan, coordinate, and synchronize US military public information activities and resources in order to support the commander’s intent and concept of operations.”<sup>71</sup> The PAO role is to advise the commander on the implications of his decisions, actions, and operations on foreign and domestic public perceptions and to plan, execute, and evaluate PA activities and events to support overall operational success.<sup>72</sup> Also, US DOD civilian and military leadership is responsible to provide to the American public, accurate and timely information of its activities and thus contribute to the public’s understanding of military operations.

General Petraeus, in his guidance in 2008, underscored the importance of social media in the accomplishment of mission related tasks. He gave directions to “fight the information war relentlessly” and to “be first with the truth.”<sup>73</sup> Evidently, social media can play a crucial role in supporting the commander’s intent. Understanding that social media changes the way information flows and speeds up the news cycle, commanders can be better prepared to counter deceitful or negative reporting if they engage and maintain an active online presence.

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<sup>71</sup>Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-61, *Public Affairs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), X.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, II-1.

<sup>73</sup>David H. Petraeus, “Multi-National Force Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance,” *Military Review* 88, no. 5 (September–October 2008): 210–212.

Public Affairs activities are divided into three functions: public information (includes media relations activities designed to provide information to the domestic and international publics), command information (directed to the internal audiences), and community engagement supported by planning and analysis and assessment throughout the course of operations. PA should be incorporated in the planning process (Joint Operational Planning Process or Military Decision Making Process) from the very beginning. These functions indicate who the potential audiences are to communicate to through social media.

J.P. 3-61 explains the relationship between Public Affairs and intelligence, visual information, combat camera, information operations and special information, to support the overall mission. In the U.S., the Public Affairs in conjunction with Information Operations are responsible for generating the information requirements needed to assess the public perceptions of foreign audiences and to further integrate that information into mission planning. Public Affairs facilitate the advance of informed perceptions about military operations, undermine adversarial propaganda and thus contribute to the achievement of national, strategic, and operational objectives.<sup>74</sup>

The PA tenets complement the DOD principles of information and describe best practices resulting in more effective and efficient execution of PA operations and relationships with the media. The PA tenets are: tell the truth, provide timely information and imagery, practice security at the source, provide consistent information at all levels, and tell the DOD story.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-61, II-1.

<sup>75</sup>Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Social Media Handbook*, 11.

US DOD policy on Public Affairs acknowledges that traditional media are still the principal means of communicating with the public, however with the proliferation of information sources, the Internet provides numerous options and challenges for unfiltered communications with audiences.<sup>76</sup> There is a plethora of references in Field Manuals, handbooks, manuals and military regulations with regards to the conduct of internet based activities and social media.

Although the Public Affairs community has not updated its primary doctrinal manual (Field Manual 46-1 Public Affairs Operations) since 1997, it has provided some relevant documents to inform the Army about social media. In June of 2012, the Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs published the third version of *The United States Army Social Media Handbook*. The handbook incorporates a summary of the Army's approach to social media providing directing guidance and relevant case studies to explain how the Army has used social media. This document emphasizes social media's role from a Public Affairs perspective outlining how the Army can use social media as a tool to disseminate its themes and messages in a timely, transparent and attributable manner and how to use social media for crisis communications.<sup>77</sup>

In addition to the *Army Social Media Handbook*, the Public Affairs community has updated the manuals that describe the mandatory skills for enlisted Public Affairs practitioners, including two tasks that explain how to establish and maintain a unit

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<sup>76</sup>Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-61, II-2.

<sup>77</sup>*The United States Army Social Media Handbook, Version 3, 1.*

emerging media site.<sup>78</sup> These recently updated Public Affairs documents offer excellent theoretical resources to understand how the Army approaches social media.

The Army revised and published two important documents for Psychological Operations: Field Manual 3-05.30, in April 2005 and Change 1 to Field Manual 3-15.302 in August 2009. Even though these Field Manuals do not explicitly talk about social media, they recognize the role of the Internet in communicating and assessing influential themes and messages.<sup>79</sup>

In discussion about attributable or non-attributable Interactive Internet Activities, Appendix A of Field Manual 3-05.30 categorizes the Military Information Support Operations (MISO) products as overt and covert.<sup>80</sup> This can lead to the assumption that Military Information Support Operations personnel seek to use social media capabilities to transmit non-attributable messages to influence target audiences or to counter adversary's messages.<sup>81</sup>

The Army has initiated the Doctrine 2015 Strategy to categorize its manuals differently, by reducing their length and number, and leveraging emerging technology to

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<sup>78</sup>Department of the Army, STP 46-46RZ14-SM-TG, *Public Affairs Broadcast Specialist/Chief Public Affairs NCO* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 3-110, 3-131.

<sup>79</sup>Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.302, *Tactical Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, Change 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 5-6, 6-35.

<sup>80</sup>Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.30, *Psychological Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), A-1–A-3.

<sup>81</sup>Dennis G. Wille, "Every Soldier a Messenger: Using Social Media in the Contemporary Operating Environment" (Monograph, School for Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2011), 20.

make them more collaborative and accessible with respect to doctrine.<sup>82</sup> In this context, Field Manual 3-13, *Information Operations* becomes Inform and Influence Activities, meanwhile transferring the portions with the technical dimension of Information Operations into a new manual, Field Manual 6-01, *Cyber/Electromagnetic Operations*. Field Manual 3-05.30 becomes Field Manual 3-58, *Military Information Support Operations*. Field Manual 46-1 becomes Field Manual 3-61 for the doctrine manual for Army Public Affairs. Field Manuals will focus on tactics and procedures. Complementary to the Field Manuals the Army will publish regulations with techniques that will allow the service members to submit their inputs to these manuals using a *wiki* platform in a more collaborative manner.<sup>83</sup>

Within the Army, there are three career specialties that conduct inform and influence tasks as part of their primary functions: public affairs, military information support operations (MISO), and information operations officers. These specialties cooperate to create themes and messages that support the commander's intent. Each of these three career field specialties is doctrinally designed to focus on its specific portion of the Strategic Communication effort. Social media capabilities are integral to the mission execution of the professionals that make up these three specialties. In the Strategic Communication framework, the Army's shares Inform and Influence Activities tasks between Public Affairs Officers (PAO) and Military Information Support

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<sup>82</sup>Martin E. Dempsey, *37th CSA's Thoughts on the Future of the Army* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army, 2011), 8.

<sup>83</sup>United States Army Combined Arms Center, "Doctrine 2015 Information Briefing." <http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm/ref/collection/p16040coll2/id/0> (accessed 5 December 2012), 5-7.

Operations (MISO). Public Affairs Officers (PAO) execute the inform activities tasks while Military Information Support Operations (MISO) officers execute the influence activities tasks.<sup>84</sup>

The Army empowers and authorizes these three specialties to execute in an official capacity social media related tasks, while at the same time allowing all service members to engage in social media activities in an unofficial capacity.<sup>85</sup> U.S. military units due to the experience gained are now using social media extensively, not only in major headquarters, but also at lower commands to promote their activities to their families and communities.

The military evaluated the risk and opportunity that social media created when individuals created content using official government computers. There is a clear risk that service members may unintentionally divulge sensitive information that violates the basic principles of operations security. Some voices asked to ban service member's access to social media from military networks in an attempt to curb operations security violations. Others admitted that access to social media could tell domestic audiences of the military's story. Ultimately, the military recognized that the opportunities provided by social media overshadow the risks and allowed the military to access social media from official military networks. Although the military conservative culture tends to control in detail the information released to audiences about the organization, social media broke the old communicational paradigm, and total control over the messages disappeared. Of

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<sup>84</sup>Wille, 21.

<sup>85</sup>Department of Defense, Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) 09-026, *Responsible and Effective Use of Internet-based Capabilities*, Change 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 22 February 2011), 1–2.



course, in granting permission to access social media, the military created guidelines and regulations that individuals must adhere in order to maintain that access.

Social media policy allows all service members to speak freely about their activities and interests. However, Soldiers need to know that even though they join a social media platform when off duty, they still represent the Army and resolving personal disputes online, “talking negatively about supervisors or releasing sensitive information is punishable under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice.”<sup>86</sup> The Army uses social media to tell the Army’s story, but it also uses social media to listen to the audiences’ thoughts and opinions. There are some great advantages brought by social media: it is an inexpensive, effective and measurable form of communication.<sup>87</sup>

The information exposed intends to familiarize the reader with the principles of U.S. DOD Public Affairs, both in operational and non-operational environment, the PA relation with other information disciplines under *Strategic communications* and explains the role of social media to support communication efforts to achieve the commanders’ intent within PA framework. The next section reviews how NATO Public Affairs system has adapted to the emergence of social media.

#### Social Media in NATO Public Affairs Policies

NATO’s approach to communication is clearly stated in the NATO Strategic Communication (STRATCOM) Policy, as “the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities—Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs

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<sup>86</sup>Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Social Media Handbook*, 2.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

(PA), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (Info Ops) and Psychological Operations (PsyOps)—in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO’s aims.”<sup>88</sup> In NATO, the Military Public Affairs (PA) is part of the wider NATO Strategic Communications effort, which together with the other information disciplines, aim to enhance coherence of all information and communication activities and capabilities, both civilian and military.<sup>89</sup> The Military Committee is the supreme authority that establishes the overall policy for NATO military PA.

The underlying policies for NATO social media are comprised in: *NATO Strategic Communications Policy*, dated 29 September 2009, MC 457/2 *NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs Policy*, dated 8 February 2011, ACO Directive (AD) 95-2, *Strategic Communications*, dated 18 April 2012, *Guidance on the use of social media within ACO*, ACO Directive AD 95-3, 2009 and *NATO ACO/ACT–Public Affairs Handbook*—dated July 2010.

To accomplish its Public Affairs tasks, the Alliance uses a wide spectrum of communication tools, including social media, defined as “web-based technologies used for social interaction and to transform and broadcast media monologues into interactive, social dialogues.”<sup>90</sup> The definition clearly states that social media is capable of engaging target audiences directly and can transform media monologues into interactive dialogues.

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<sup>88</sup>NATO, Allied Command Operations (ACO), Directive ACO 95-2, *NATO Strategic Communication (STRATCOM) Policy*, 18 April 2012 (SHAPE, Belgium: NATO Graphics and Printing, June 2010), 2.

<sup>89</sup>NATO International Military Staff, MC 457/2, 10.

<sup>90</sup>NATO Allied Command Operations and Allied Command Transformation, *Public Affairs Handbook* (SHAPE, Belgium: NATO Graphics and Printing, 2010), 347.

In this context, social media is considered capable of providing a “swifter updating of information and near instantaneous responses, compared to traditional means. Contemporary audiences increasingly demand to be part of the discussion rather than the passive recipients of information. Social media facilitates such engagement and enables us to reach both existing and additional, potentially significant, audience groups.”<sup>91</sup> In the “war of hearts and minds,” NATO encourages, facilitates and when possible becomes part of discussions in order to advance its missions and objectives by gaining followers and possibly devoted supporters.

#### Public Affairs Mission, Functions, Role and Responsibilities, Principles in NATO

This section briefly reviews the Public Affairs mission, functions, role and responsibilities, principles and the relation with other information functions, as depicted in the NATO Public Affairs doctrines. The purpose of this information is to assist the reader in understanding how social media complements and supports NATO Public Affairs activities.

According to NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs, “the *mission* of NATO military PA is to support commanders by communicating accurate information in a timely manner to audiences to improve public awareness and understanding of the military aspects of the Alliance’s role, aims, operations, missions, activities and issues, thereby enhancing organizational credibility. Audiences can be allied, international,

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<sup>91</sup>NATO, Allied Command Operations, ACO Directive AD 95-3, *Guidance on the use of Social Media within ACO* (SHAPE, Belgium: NATO Graphics and Printing, 2009), 5.

regional, local or internal, depending on the issue or activity.”<sup>92</sup> Military PA at each level of command is directly supporting the commander and should never be delegated or subordinated to other staff functions.<sup>93</sup>

NATO Military Policy on Public affairs clearly states that PA is not an Info Ops discipline. Even though PA and Info Ops are related functions, both supporting the Alliance mission objectives, they remain separate. Although both are conducting message development and media analysis to counter adversary disinformation their efforts differ with respect to audience, scope and intent. In NATO, PA is the primary coordinator of all military information activities to ensure consistency in the messages to external audiences and to promote credibility of the campaign. PA is never involved in planning or executing Info Ops, PsyOps, or deception operations, the lines of authority remain separate.<sup>94</sup>

NATO military Public Affairs functions include the planning and conduct of:

- (1) external communications including media relations and outreach activities,
- (2) internal communications, and (3) community activities. In NATO the outreach activities are viewed as a force multiplier, aiming to foster strategic relations with key external stakeholders (think-tanks, academia, military-related associations, and other non-news media entities), who are invited to comment as unbiased subject matter experts on NATO issues.<sup>95</sup> These outreach activities can continue discussions even on social media

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<sup>92</sup>NATO International Military Staff, MC 457/2, 10.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 11.

platforms or forums to stimulate public debate when moderated by the aforementioned external stakeholders in support of NATO objectives.

The basic principles of NATO military public affairs include: tell and show the NATO story, provide accurate information in a timely manner, ensure that information provided is consistent, complementary, and coordinated, conduct work mindful of multinational sensitivities and respectful of the local and regional cultural environment. These principles apply for social media use as well.

To generate broader interest in NATO, Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) offered the opportunity to access links to the NATO Secretary General's Corner, on Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media networks, in order to receive reports about upcoming events, NATO stories, as well as a portal for online discussions.<sup>96</sup> Social media “broke down barriers between officials and citizens” enabling anyone anywhere to participate in conversations and share ideas about decisions that could affect them.<sup>97</sup> NATO has authorized its military and civilian staff to use the organization’s computers to access social media since September 2010.

The information generated by traditional media is routinely monitored and analyzed. NATO has recognized that it is equally important to monitor and analyze the information generated by interactive discussions on social media platforms. This provides NATO the capability to gain understanding of public trends in Member and Partner

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<sup>96</sup>NATO North Atlantic Council, *NATO Public Diplomacy Strategy 2010-2011* (NATO HQ, Belgium: NATO Graphics and Printing, 2009), 1-9.

<sup>97</sup>Dr. Stefanie Babst and Elizabeth Linder, “NATO and Facebook Join Forces in the Global Digital Age,” *Huffington Post*, posted 19 April 2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-stefanie-babst/nato-facebook-collaboration\\_b\\_1437764.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-stefanie-babst/nato-facebook-collaboration_b_1437764.html) (accessed 28 December 2012).

nations in order to develop programs tailored to the specifics of the political environment in each country.<sup>98</sup> PDD uses Social media applications to reach out to broader segments of the public. To ensure the stories for the public are current and attractive, PDD stresses the need to identify and maintain sufficient information and imagery acquisition, production and dissemination capabilities with access to the NATO and coalition operation area and to coordinate and organize the use of social media tools.<sup>99</sup>

NATO's PDD directs the continual use of traditional communication channels such as TV, radio, websites and print media to explain NATO policies while concurrently building long-lasting relationships and networks, complemented by the application of corporate communication approaches and techniques that could include, social media applications. The NATO TV Channel on the internet (NITV) together with the NATO website enabled NATO to disseminate and market its multiple products effectively to global broadcasters. Today, NITV is NATO's key communication tool to distribute news stories, videos and reports to the global public.<sup>100</sup>

NATO also recognizes the importance of “citizen journalists” who may not be accredited media, but who can get engaged in the security debate, post information, news, views or opinions to the Internet using personal blogs. These “citizen journalists” can be as competitive and influential as the most established and recognized media

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<sup>98</sup>NATO International Staff, *Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications*, August 2010, [http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical\\_reports/TR855z2.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR855z2.html) (accessed 25 November 2012), 6.

<sup>99</sup>NATO North Atlantic Council, 1-8.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, 1-11.

organizations, sometimes even more so.<sup>101</sup> By empowering more people to communicate, NATO ensures it is the first and the best source of information about the Alliance. Doing so allows military leaders to maintain awareness, accuracy and the ability to refine the information released as necessary.<sup>102</sup>

The primary document that provides guidance for the use of social media within Allied Command Operations(ACO) for all NATO civilian and military staff, including all NATO personnel deployed on NATO operations is ACO Directive AD 95-3. Social media is complementary to traditional communications and is viewed as a means by which internal and external communications and messaging can be enhanced and commanders can outline their broad intent and promote the concept of Mission Command.<sup>103</sup>

All NATO military and civilian staff may use of social media to discuss and portray the profession and day to day activities. However, staffs using social media should not: compromise operational and/or organizational security, or put the safety of anyone at risk, reveal confidential discussions, or compromise ongoing negotiations, comment on the policies of the Alliance and of NATO nations as they relate to security issues, or violate the national laws of the country of origin of the staff member. The policy states that violation of these guidelines by personnel under NATO authority is

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<sup>101</sup>NATO International Military Staff, MC 457/2, 23.

<sup>102</sup>NATO International Staff, *Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications*, 9.

<sup>103</sup>NATO, ACO Directive AD 95-3, 2009.

subject to appropriate sanction.<sup>104</sup> In this regard, NATO policy on Internet use warns that information or imagery shared by deployed service members, embedded journalists and media, through personal websites, social media networks, blogs, and e-mails may provide adversary analysts with insights into NATO current operations, equipment, capabilities, tactics and intentions, or may provide information that puts personnel in specialist roles or their families at risk.<sup>105</sup>

ACO subordinate headquarters develop their plans for the use of social media tools, as appropriate to their particular circumstances, within the guidelines provided. Commanders are required to select the most appropriate social media tools for their headquarters to ensure that appropriate risk mitigation and risk management procedures are in place.

Internal communication requirements will be met through the use of ACO's current intranet services and other traditional means while “external communications requirements will be met through use of traditional means and the full range of computer-based technologies, including social media, via the public internet.”<sup>106</sup> There are four primary internal communications objectives: (1) To convey the Commander’s intent and philosophy to staff; (2) The timely passage of information from senior leadership to staff, and for dissemination of time sensitive news; (3) To improve the level of awareness and understanding of staff of their role within the NATO “corporation”; (4) To foster a sense of empowerment among the staff, and to promote internal innovation and interaction.

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<sup>104</sup>NATO, ACO Directive AD 95-2, 6.

<sup>105</sup>MC/457/2 *NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs*, 23.

<sup>106</sup>NATO, ACO Directive AD 95-3, 5.



For external communications the directive specifies three primary objectives:

- (1) To broaden and deepen the understanding of ACO's role with external audiences,
- (2) To engage with external audiences, to explain our mission and generate additional support, and to temper opposing views,
- (3) To solicit ideas from external audiences that may help ACO develop its thinking on specific issues and to nurture 3rd party advocates.

ACO AD 95-3 recognizes that compared to traditional media, “social media is quicker in updating information responding almost instantaneously, is less-complex technically and less expensive.”<sup>107</sup> The directive states that prior to posting information in an official capacity, some steps are to be followed: identify the specific audience for the information, determine the appropriate social media tool to use, and to perform content review of the information prior to posting. The directive establishes responsibilities for Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) social media management. SHAPE PAO remains the entity responsible with the ACO official website, SACEUR's Blog, the SHAPE Facebook site and SHAPE Twitter. Only SACEUR and designated personnel are authorized to publish comments on behalf of SHAPE on these social media tools.

The ACO directive makes recommendations to NATO personnel with regards to the use of social media. Staffs have the liberty to maintain personal websites and blogs, but access to such tools from NATO communications and information systems requires individuals to gain prior approval from Commanders. Also, personnel are advised to be cautious in providing personal opinion which could be misconstrued as the NATO

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<sup>107</sup>NATO, ACO Directive AD 95-3, 5.

official position. A disclaimer message, should be used when personnel are identifiable as NATO service members. Information published on the Internet should be Unclassified or Non-Classified Releasable to the Public and should respect OPSEC and copyright laws. The style has to be conversational with credible contributions to actively engage others to comment, discuss or argue. Equipping the individual with the means, training and relevant guidance to release information is mandatory to safely exploit social media. Empowering individuals with information release authority requires carefully managed standardized operating procedures.

The directive clearly addresses technical and security considerations, proposes measures to implement this policy and provides guidance for posting comments and maintaining security online. The implementation has to consider personnel familiarity and confidence in the use of social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etc), to weigh empowerment versus technical limitations, to foster innovation and creativity and to allow a degree of experimentation until experience is gained and then shared within the command. Commanders are required to monitor and report progress bi-annually.

#### NATO Experimentation in Social Media Analysis and Monitoring

A Strategic Communications Limited Objective Experiment (LOE) took place in Chicago and at ACT, Norfolk, VA during the Chicago Summit held from 19 to 21 May 2012. ACT and ACO began the planning of a Strategic Communications capability development program based upon the DOTMLPFI framework early in 2010. It was designed as a discovery experiment to evaluate possibilities offered by a social Media Monitoring Cell to support the development of a STRATCOM capability within NATO.

The experiment utilized social media analysis during scheduled broadcasts of the Secretary General’s Summit speeches and press conferences. It assessed the utility and methods for applying social media internal feedback process that can quickly evaluate the public perception of NATO key messages in near-real time to help ensure that a truthful and accurate understanding is achieved in a timely manner. The LOE focused on four different objectives: (1) Evaluate media analysis capabilities demonstrated by selected social media analysis tools; (2) Evaluate processes and procedures, demonstrated by the social media monitoring cell, to support real-time media analysis; (3) Evaluate the implementation of the social media monitoring cell output; and (4) Identify resources and training requirements to support the social media analysis process. Upon conclusion of the STRATCOM LOE event, the experiment team worked on data collection and analysis and capitalized on the experiment results and findings encapsulated in a final report. The team identified a set of social media monitoring capabilities related to specific tool features that may be useful to NATO.<sup>108</sup>

The experiment results identified the following tool feature advantages: key word search capabilities, text analysis—an analytic method used to determine the frequency and co-occurrence of words in results from key word searches, trend analysis—a selected set of search terms/parameters over specified time periods, key influencers—identifies sources of social media who are frequently quoted or from whom a high number of messages can be traced, semantic network analysis—an analytical method that uses common semantic

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<sup>108</sup>NATO, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), “Chicago Summit Strategic Communications Limited Objective Experiment (LOE) Final Report,” 17 July 2012, [http://www.act.nato.int/images/stories/media/socialmedia/final\\_report.pdf](http://www.act.nato.int/images/stories/media/socialmedia/final_report.pdf) (accessed 22 February 2013), 1-43.

structures in language to identify communities of interest, export capabilities—the ability to extract and use a tool’s collection of data in another analytical framework or tool is a likely requirement for future NATO work in social media monitoring and analysis, geography—the ability to identify the geographic origin of data sources, visual display—graphical output of this complex data set is useful for translating results to key decision makers. There are also some tool feature challenges the final report points out: sentiment analysis—by design, this capability is likely to gauge general attitude toward a specific topic, however more work is needed in this area, real-time data collection vs. delayed analysis results—the key discovery is the amount of time the tools and humans operating the tools require to make sense of large volumes of data. The challenges include the tools selection to the situation’s specific and appropriate language capabilities for social media monitoring and analysis. For resources, the LOE highlight the requirement of specific skillsets for monitors, analysts, and the employment of a social media monitoring cell. The final report recommends NATO to assign a STRATCOM Capability Development Team at ACT, responsible with the expansion of a program to provide a Social monitoring capability for NATO training and exercises that would incorporate operational considerations much earlier in the social media monitoring and analysis development cycle.<sup>109</sup>

The final report suggests free and commercial social media analysis solutions. Commercial solutions include Lithium Social Media Monitoring—conducts automated sentiment analysis, Sysomos—offers a real-time, multi-lingual database of social media, Radian6—offers an integrated platform to provide near real-time access to social media

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

analysis including demographics, geo-location, and influence; free social media analysis provided by <http://www.socialmention.com>, features metrics including reach, sentiment, passion, and strength, TrendsMap, provides a geographic visualization of a twitter search with a streaming view of the current conversation. <http://trendsmap.com>, Google Trends, shows search traffic related to keywords according to geographic location, <http://www.google.com/trends>.

The literature reviewed demonstrates that NATO views social media as complimentary to traditional media, and an important tool for NATO to advance its objectives. NATO PA at all levels is responsible for conducting social media activities in an official capacity. The use of social media by regular service members requires specific regulations to mitigate inherent risks. ACO Social Media Guidance, although not fully comprehensive, offers valuable theoretical support for this research. NATO continues experimentations to better integrate Social media in domestic and operational Public Affairs, in the wider framework of STRATCOM. These findings about how NATO implemented social media in Public Affairs activities will help to enhance the use social media in Romanian Military Public Relations.

#### Romanian Armed Forces Public Relations Policies for Social Media

This section is a snapshot of the current implementation of social media in Romanian Military Public Relation activities. This information assists the reader in understanding the current use of social media in the Romanian military by exposing relevant documents and regulations underlying Public Relations and social media

activities to include the statistics and demographics requisite to depict the use of social media in Romanian.

Romanian military Public Relations policy is generally aligned with NATO Public Affairs policy, mostly on the operational side, with particularities for domestic public relations as imposed by Law 544/2001 for free access to information of public interest. In December 2012, the MOD approved the updated M 184/2012, a document that updates the regulations for public information and public relations activity within the MOD. This document for the first time authorizes the use of social media in the Romanian Armed Forces and establishes specific tasks for the public relations officers “in implementing and managing new media communication tools and social media.”<sup>110</sup> The research is limited to the unclassified policies complemented by the author’s personal observations and insights on the Romanian Military Public Relations system.

The mission of the Information and Public Relations System of the Romanian Ministry of Defense is “to assist commanders/leaders in communicating timely and accurately the information of public interest to personnel, citizens, institutions and organizations legally established in order to improve the public's awareness and understanding of military issues, role, objectives, missions, operations and activities, thereby helping to strengthen the credibility of the military.”<sup>111</sup> Public information is supposed to be released to the public in a timely, accurate, comprehensive and non-

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<sup>110</sup>Romanian Ministry of Defense M 184, *Regulations for Public Information and Public Relations Activity within the MOD* (Bucharest Romania: MOD Printing Office, 2012), 7.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

discriminatory manner. The functions of public relations include public information, internal information, community relations, and support to public diplomacy.

Although the Romanian Armed Forces maintain an active web presence at all levels of command, frequently posting audio, photo, video and text content, these basic Web 1.0 tools still use a one-way communication method. The implementation of Web 2.0 tools to encourage dialogue with larger audiences and to generate a viral dissemination of MOD themes and messages is still under scrutiny within Romanian military Public Relations. Romania has started slowly with social media, taking time to customize its social media approach, based on its own unique regulations and existing policies.

In 2009 the Romanian MOD created a dedicated channel on YouTube, uploading several military videos every month, and on 30 July 2012 started to publish official content on Facebook. It was a significant endeavor for the military institution to become more proficient in the use of two-way communications methods. Even though, these social media tools such as Facebook and YouTube started to pass on information to the audiences, a real two-way dialogue has not yet been achieved. The result is that social media tools are not used as effectively as they should, resulting in a limited dialogue with intended audiences. These channels more or less duplicate the information published on the MOD official portal.

Romanian PR practitioners gained experience in the realm of social media by applying the strategy of learning through experience. At this moment social media communication is governed by the old public relations policies, standards and procedures only slightly modified. An extended examination of PR policy is under development to

assess the risks and opportunities of social media, and the resources required to maintain a real time dialogue with audiences. It also seeks to identify how to minimize OPSEC risks, to circumvent any political implications and to implement the lessons from other NATO countries in terms of social media to more effectively implement social media to the advantage of the Armed Forces. A final doctrinal product endorsed by the MOD will become compulsory practice for all PR officers and service members in the military.

The development of the internet network and the growing number of Internet users in Romania presents an excellent opportunity to expand the use of social media at the corporate level, in public institutions and in the military. In Romania there were 8,578,484 internet users, representing 39.2 percent of the population, by June 2012.<sup>112</sup> Romania is among the countries with high Internet speed, ranked fifth in Europe and ninth in the world with an average Internet speed connection around 6.4 Mbps in the last quarter of 2011, according to a report of the American Company Akamai. The same report highlights the increase of internet speed for mobile connections, with over 62 percent and the amount of data downloaded via mobile platforms up to 118 Mb.<sup>113</sup> Internet usage and population statistics reveal an increase from 3.6 percent in 2000 to 35.6 percent in 2010 of the country's population.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>European Travel Commission, "Romania," *New Media Trend Watch*, <http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/markets-by-country/10-europe/80-romania> (accessed 10 January 2013).

<sup>113</sup>Akamai, *The State of the Internet: 4th Quarter, 2012 Executive Summary*, <http://www.akamai.com/stateoftheinternet/> (accessed 15 January 2013).

<sup>114</sup>Internet World Stats.



Of the 8,578,484 internet users, 41.5 percent use the internet daily, 5.3 percent use the internet a few times a week and 10.9 percent use the internet several times a month. The most active age group is the 18-24 year-olds, who make up 35 percent of the online community. The 25-34 age group comprises 33 percent of internet users while the 35-45 age group represents 32 percent of users. Overwhelmingly, Romanian internet users are educated to the university degree level; employees with university degrees account for 38 percent of the online population, with students and post-graduate scholars representing a further 22 percent of users. Over 20 percent of Romanians access the internet while on the move (via mobile networks, public access points e.g. Internet cafes).

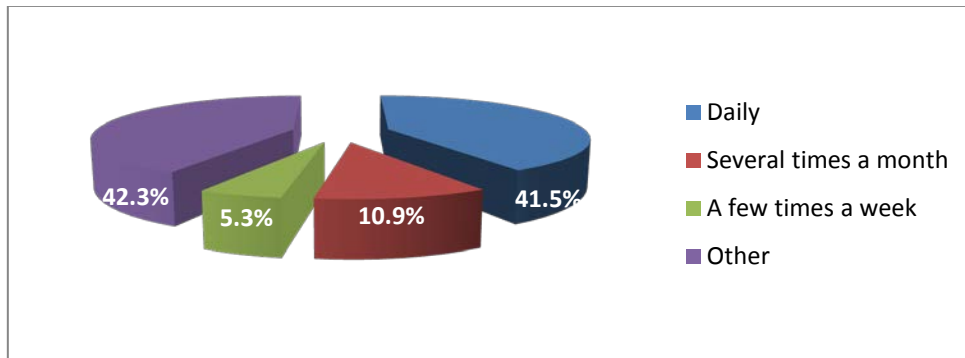


Figure 6. Romania–Internet Use

*Source:* Created by the author based on the information provided by European Travel Commission, “Romania,” *New Media Trend Watch*, <http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/markets-by-country/10-europe/80-romania> (accessed 10 January 2013).

The social media landscape in Romania provides valuable information about the best suited platforms for engaging domestic audiences to the largest extent.<sup>115</sup> In

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<sup>115</sup>European Travel Commission.

Romania the Internet is used for information gathering (38.6 percent), e-mail (37.4 percent) and entertainment and social networking (34.1 percent). 33.8 percent of internet users are active on social media in all its various forms (e.g. reading/writing blogs, social networking/sharing multimedia content). Photo sharing is more popular than video sharing, with 73 percent using services such as Google Picasa or Flickr. The top 5 social networks are: Facebook–5,388,740 users, Trilulilu–2,669,667 users, TPU.ro–2,358,356 users, Hi5–1,628,825 users, Twitter–570,000 users. Facebook members come from a wide cross-section of the population.<sup>116</sup>

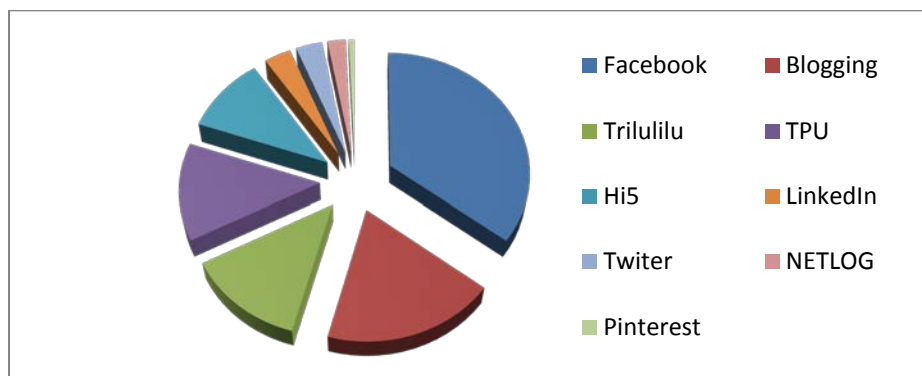


Figure 7. Romania Top 10 Social Networks

Source: European Travel Commission, “Romania,” *New Media Trend Watch*, <http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/markets-by-country/10-europe/80-romania> (accessed 10 January 2013).

Socialbakers social networking statistics show that Facebook penetration in Romania is 24.54 percent compared to the country's population and 62.81 percent in relation to number of Internet users. The total number of Facebook users in Romania is

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

5,388,740 and grew by more than 493,920 in the last 6 months, 34th in the ranking of all Facebook statistics by Country. Facebook users are 51 percent male and 49 percent female.<sup>117</sup> The 25-30 age group is the largest group on Facebook, accounting for 29.57 percent of users. The second largest age group using Facebook in Romania is the 31-40 group, representing 20 percent of users, 13-24 year-olds account for 22 percent of the users.<sup>118</sup>

Blogging is a popular online activity in Romania, although it is primarily the domain of educated, higher-income groups. Blog readers in Romania tend to be younger, with the 20-35 age group participating most actively (73.7 percent), followed by the 25-31 age group (27.1 percent) and the 31-45 age group (18.6 percent).<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>Socialbakers, "Romania Facebook Statistics," <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/romania> (accessed 29 December 2012).

<sup>118</sup>Social media Training, "Social Media in Romania," August 2012, <http://socialmediatraining.ro/2012/08/31/social-media-in-romania-august-2012/> (accessed 28 December 2012).

<sup>119</sup>European Travel Commission.

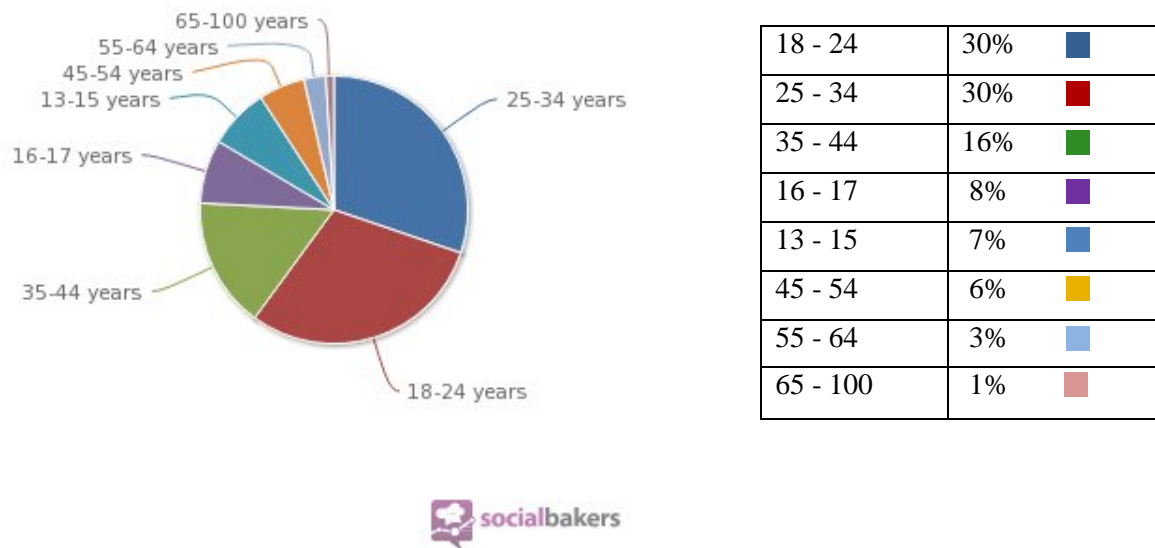


Figure 8. Romania Facebook Users' Demographics by Age and Gender

*Source:* Socialbakers, "Romania Facebook Statistics," <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-pages/> (accessed 29 December 2012).

### Summary

Romania offers great prospects for a wide range of Internet based activities as a result of the tremendous development of the Internet networks and the mounting number of Internet users. MOD PR Directorate is the authority responsible to issue and amend PR and social media policies and ensure an official MOD social media presence. The recent updates for the military PR policies provide the basics for the use of social media, however a more inclusive policy devoted solely to address the use of social media is necessary. The MOD social media channel was recently introduced as a complimentary tool for public relations, primarily being used by services headquarters. The policy also encourages the use of social media at all levels of command. The primary MOD official

distribution channels are Facebook and YouTube for video sharing. There is substantial experimentation underway, yet it is premature to capitalize on the lessons identified. Social media tracking, monitoring and measurement capabilities, essential for an effective application of social media tools, are embryonic and require special attention for the near future.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, the study examined two categories of literature in order to collect data necessary for the analysis in chapter 4. The present chapter initially exposes the theoretical references necessary for the methodology used in this study: qualitative research, the comparative method, the case study as a specific method for the research strategy, and document analysis as a method for collecting data. Subsequently, chapter 3 describes the phases covered in the analysis of the collected data. The ultimate purpose of the study is to create a model that Romania Military Public Relations should adopt to improve its PR capabilities with respect to the emergence of social media.

#### Theoretical References for Methodology

This study is qualitative research. In social and human sciences, the terms qualitative and quantitative designate the two grand paradigms. Currently, there is not a unitary definition of qualitative research, which is commonly presented in comparison with quantitative research.

According to Pierre Paille, in the *Dictionary of Qualitative Methods*, qualitative research designates those empirical researches, of social and human sciences, corresponding to five characteristics: (1) the research is conducted primarily in a comprehensive vision; (2) it approaches the subject in wide open and comprehensive manner; (3) includes data collected using qualitative methods, specifically through methods that do not involve any quantization; (4) analyzes data qualitatively, the words are directly analyzed by using other words, without counting; (5) eventually it leads to a narrative or to a theory, and not to a demonstration. The qualitative researcher is expected

to draw upon multiple sources of evidence to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods.<sup>120</sup> The primary collection methods utilized in qualitative research include: participative observation, intensive interview, (auto) biography, and the qualitative analysis of documents. Data from these collection methods are complex, of depth, and are narrated in a natural language, with few statistics data and graphic representations.

A good qualitative analysis discovers patterns, coherent themes, meaningful categories, and new ideas. In general, good analysis leads to a better understanding of a phenomenon or process. Creativity, divergent thinking, keen perception of patterns among ambiguity, and strong writing skills are helpful for qualitative data analysis.<sup>121</sup> Data qualitative analysis implies three phases: (1) Data reduction, where data is selected, simplified, conceptualized and transformed. This phase is about coding data, which is the process of disassembling, conceptualizing and re-assembling to create new data. The codes are tags or labels for assigned units with similar meaning from the collected data. Corbin and Strauss describe three coding procedures: (a) open coding—the process of breaking down, examining, assigning codes for each text unit, and comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the codes; (b) axial coding—a set of procedures whereby data is put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories; (c) selective coding—after the selection of core categories, are coded only with the elements related to these categories while ignoring the others. (2) Data

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<sup>120</sup>Glenn A Bowen, “Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method,” *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009).

<sup>121</sup>“Qualitative Data, Analysis, and Design,” [http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/43144\\_12.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/43144_12.pdf) (accessed 19 March 2013), 353.

display is an organized and compressed assembly of information, immediately accessible to understand what is happening. Data can be displayed in a quantitative, narrative or as a matrix style. (3) Drawing conclusions: conclusions can appear in the early stages of data collection and as the data is analyzed these incipient conclusions become a set of coherent of conclusions.<sup>122</sup>

The study utilizes as a research method, the comparative method. This method is frequently used in social sciences, having as an underlying goal to search for similarity and variance. The essential problem in the comparative method is constituted by the variables taken into account. When a phenomenon is researched from a comparative perspective, the variables of concern for understanding and explaining the phenomenon must be chosen. The values of these variables are related to the cases studied and the way they vary is of interest for the researcher. Charles Ragin has identified three strategies for general research, that could be adapted for comparative research: (1) qualitative research for the study of similarities and differences—studies in depth a small number of cases, using a large number of dimensions in order to prepare their profile using as a specific method the case study; (2) comparative research—studies a moderate number of cases, in order to explore the patterns for similarities and differences to understand their inherent mechanisms, using as a specific method the focused comparison; (3) quantitative research—studies several cases to find regularities between a low number of variables, using as a specific method statistical analysis.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup>Matthew B. Miles and Michael A. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 10.

<sup>123</sup>Charles C. Ragin, *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press 1994), 48-49.



The present study utilizes the first of Ragin’s research strategies with a specific method: the case study. The case study is the best suited method for an in-depth and comprehensive investigation. The case study represents a detailed and intensive analysis of a specific entity. However, many methodologies consider the case study not as a method per se, but rather a method that uses other methods such as: documents analysis, participative observation or the interview.

The author chose for comparison the cases of social media in NATO and the U.S. military, because these two cases are the first in the military environment that responded to the emergence of social media by taking decisive steps towards implementing social media in their systems. Romania as a NATO member and an U.S. ally can take the NATO and U.S. military’s experience with social media to assist it in its efforts to align its communication policies and capabilities with NATO.

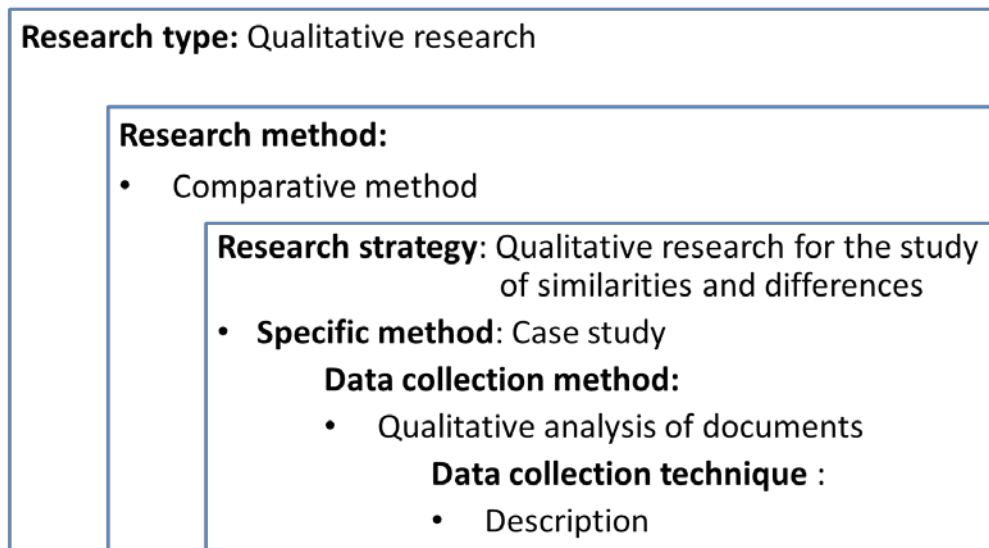


Figure 9. A Logical Model of the Qualitative Research

Source: Created by the author.

The method used for the collection of data in this study is document analysis while the technique used is description. Particularly applicable for case studies, document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge.<sup>124</sup> The document analysis refers to the collection of information about events, phenomena, organizations, programs, etc. This analytic procedure entails finding, selecting and appraising and synthesizing data contained in documents.

The study examines two categories of literature. The first category examines books, articles, and blogs in order to elicit the opinion of communication and social media experts with regard to the implications of social media on Public Relations. The second category of literature examines two functional social media models currently being used in NATO, the U.S. military and in Romanian military Public Relations. The data is collected from NATO, U.S. military and Romanian official, unclassified, releasable documents, to include military regulations, memoranda, handbooks, doctrine reference publications, joint publications, articles etc.

#### Phases of the Qualitative Data Analysis

The study uses Breckenridge's Social Media Strategy Wheel as a conceptual framework of reference for the qualitative analysis of all data collected in chapter 2. The data is categorized and analyzed on the seven focus areas (dimensions) present on the

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<sup>124</sup>Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet M. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008), 1.

wheel, that were described in the literature review: (1) audit, research and discovery process; (2) goal, objective setting and budgeting, (3) monitoring and tracking, (4) channel distribution, (5) communications messaging and content optimization, (6) levels of engagement, and (7) benchmark measurements. Initially, the data pertaining to the military systems is analyzed in phases one to three, distinctly on the seven focus areas (dimensions), proposed for examination by Breakenridge:

#### Phase 1: NATO and U.S. Military Social Media Systems Case Study

The qualitative analysis of data pertaining to NATO and U.S. military systems leads to a profile, a sum of characteristics for each of the analyzed systems, using the open and selective coding procedure. These characteristics are depicted in a matrix.

#### Phase 2: Romanian Military Social media Case Study

The qualitative analysis of data pertaining to Romanian military social media system leads to a profile, a sum of characteristics for this system, using the selective coding procedure. These characteristics are depicted in a matrix.

#### Phase 3: Comparison of NATO/U.S. Military and Romania Social Media Systems

The profiles created for NATO and U.S. military social media in Phase 1 are compared and contrasted with the Romanian military social media profile created in Phase 2. The variables (criteria) for comparison are the characteristics identified for each profile. Then, the data pertaining to communication and social media experts is analyzed in the next phase:

#### Phase 4: Analysis of the Opinions of Communication and Social Media Experts

The qualitative analysis of the experts' opinion with regards to social media and communication provides a set of recommendations for creating a model for Romania Military Public Relations. This phase is necessary because social media is an ever evolving environment, and the experts' opinion can provide additional insights and recommendations essential to development of a social media model, that might not have been considered by NATO and U.S. military functional social media systems.

In chapter 5 the research will compile the conclusions resulting from the comparison of the current Romanian Military utilization of social media with the U.S. Army and NATO social media system (Phase 3) with the recommendations of communication and social media experts (Phase 4), taking into account the peculiarities of the Romanian mediascape. Thereby, the study offers a social media model Romanian Military Public Relations should follow to best adapt to social media, accomplishing the ultimate goal of the research. Chapter 5 will demonstrate conclusively that the study answered all of the secondary questions and therefore also, the main question. The study concludes with recommendations for further research and implementation of the proposed social media model to improve the effectiveness of social media use in the Romanian Armed Forces.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the data collected in the literature review in chapter 2 by applying the methodology presented in chapter 3 with the ultimate goal of creating a new model for the Romanian Military social media. A qualitative analysis of NATO, U.S. and Romanian military social media systems is conducted, followed by an analysis of public relations and communication expert opinion in regards to social media, considering the seven dimensions proposed by Breckenridge. Finally, the profiles created for each of the social media systems is compared and contrasted. The ensuing conclusions are assembled and coupled with the expert's recommendations a model is developed to improve social media in the Romania Armed Forces.

#### Qualitative Analysis of NATO, U.S. and Romanian Military Social Media Systems

The following section analyzes NATO, U.S. and Romanian military systems using the seven dimensions proposed by Breckenridge. Each dimension in the study iterates phases I to III as described in the methodology. The analysis aims to identify a sum of characteristics for each of these systems in order to create profiles that are straightforwardly compared and contrasted resulting in the relevant conclusions required to develop a model for the Romanian military social media.

#### Audit, Research and Discovery

According to Breckenridge, the audit, research and discovery area is that portion in the examination of social media systems where policies are identified and fleshed out

to create an environment that respects and protects all parties involved and to evaluate resources and techniques that worked in earlier initiatives in social media.

NATO and U.S. Department of Defense: The NATO communication model recommends the coordinated and synchronized conduct of PA activities, including social media, under Strategic Communications, with PA in the lead role. Social media is complementary to traditional communications and is viewed as a means available to commanders to enhance communications and messaging with internal and external audiences in order to outline their broad intent and promote the concept of Mission Command. NATO meets internal communication requirements through the use of the Intranet services and other traditional means while the external communications requirements are met through the use of traditional means and of the full range of computer-based technologies, including social media.

In terms of research and discovery, NATO notably conducted an experiment of social media analysis during scheduled broadcasts of the Secretary General's speeches and press conferences at the Chicago Summit to evaluate the public perception of NATO key messages in near-real time. NATO's research for the implementation of social media resulted in a recommendation to allocate time for experimentation in order to familiarize personnel with the use of social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etc) and then to share this experience within the commands.

U.S. DOD encourages social media experimentation at all command levels as well. Each social media presence is required to have "a term of use statement" to inform visitors of what is authorized when interacting on the platform. The social media findings are under continuous scrutiny to determine how to maximize the effectiveness of social

media use in achieving communication objectives. This requires the updating of policies, ADP/ADRP, field manuals, issuing social media handbooks, and providing the Public Affairs with adequate capabilities to exploit social media opportunities for the military organization. The primary purpose of audit, research and discovery is to determine how to integrate social media communications to achieve strategic, operational or tactical objectives.

The United States opened up access to social media across all military services in 2009, before social media education and policies were fully developed and implemented. The social media policy development process was driven by civil liberties and the desire for military dominance of information. Documents reviewed from all military organizations emphasized that social media policy is in its infancy and that policy should develop guided by the following principles: “Build a little; test a lot” and “Missions drive requirements.”<sup>125</sup> The military focused concurrently on structures and roles, research and planning, writing and implementing policy, and education. Some milestones worthy of mention are: the establishment of an Information Domination Corps, education strategy, cyber curriculum, senior officer training, cyber workforce, and billet realignment.

DOD articulates its communication strategy with the other elements of national power to support the objectives of the National Security Strategy. DOD codifies its communications vision and objectives in the *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)* reflecting the overarching U.S. National Security Strategy. The central idea was that the U.S. should be the leader in technology, not playing catch-up. Similar to NATO, operational level Public Affairs supports the commander’s intent and the concept of

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<sup>125</sup>Patterson, 117.

operations by planning, coordinating, and synchronizing U.S. military public information activities and resources.<sup>126</sup> This is aligned with the principle of a singular voice, to ensure that the leader's intent is reflected in every staff product, words and deeds are synchronized closely between commands and there is no difference between what PA is saying, what G5 is planning and what G3 is doing.<sup>127</sup>

DOD carefully audited social media use and re-issued a Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) in 2010. Like NATO, DOD authorizes the use of social media providing general guidelines for social media in the military and directing services to take the initiative and establish their own rules and regulations in this field. U.S. Army Public Affairs in particular has created a Social media registration check list that establishes the standards to be met for any type of social media presence.

Specific to the U.S. Army the main Strategic communication actors in the operational environment performing inform and influence activities (IAA) tasks are Public Affairs (PA), Information Operations (IO), and Military Information Support Operations (MISO). Public Affairs Officers (PAO) execute the inform activities tasks while Military Information Support Operations (MISO) officers execute the influence activities tasks. Similar to NATO, Information Operations integrates the efforts of both PA and MISO (PsyOps in NATO), while PA is responsible for the synchronization and coordination of messages. In a non-operational environment PA is conducting regular

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<sup>126</sup>Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-61, x.

<sup>127</sup>Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Public Affairs, *Memorandum for Commanders at the Combatant Commands, Communications Synchronization—A Local Coordination Process*, 28 November 2012, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/files/fp\\_uploaded\\_documents/121206\\_brooksmemo.pdf](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/files/fp_uploaded_documents/121206_brooksmemo.pdf) (accessed 20 January 2013).



inform activities tasks. This is a valuable approach to inform and influence activities under the overarching Strategic Communications effort and is worthy of extrapolation in the Romanian military as well.

The U.S. Army authorizes PA, MISO and IO staff to execute social media related tasks in an official capacity, while at the same time allowing all service members to engage in social media activities in an unofficial capacity. Similar to NATO, DOD policy allows staff to access unclassified networks from Internet-based capabilities across all DOD Components.

The U.S. Army's Public Affairs performed an audit on communications concluding that effective communications requires more than the ordinary press release. For the U.S. military social media is a part of the information environment within which the military has to operate relentlessly and to "be first with the truth." Social media platforms offer everyone the unique opportunity to be first with the news, however accurate. In today's operational environment Public Affairs are less likely to be capable of reporting, for example, collateral battle damage resulting from military operations as timely as the international media. This is challenging for the PA practitioners, who sometimes have to react instantly with the truth to counter deceitful or negative reporting, and social media achieves this.

Table 1 Audit, Research and Discovery Process Matrix–NATO and U.S. DOD

	Characteristics	Results
NATO	State of social media experimentation and research	✓ Research and experimentation continues within Strategic Communications concept (ex. NATO Summit Chicago 2012 LOE);
	Social media application	✓ Social media use envisaged in the operational and domestic environment;
	Inform and influence activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ PA leads coordination and synchronization in Strategic Communications;</li> <li>✓ Social media enable PA to be more responsive and “first with the truth”;</li> <li>✓ Inform(PA) and influence(IO) activities separated;</li> </ul>
	OPSEC/Cyber Security	✓ NATO Members OPSEC / Computer network operations;
	Access policy	✓ Policy grants access to social media from NATO information and networks systems;
	Rules of engagement for 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties	✓ Terms of use policy;
	Specialties to perform social media	✓ Public Affairs;
	Social media policy	✓ NATO PA Handbook and NATO Social media Guidance
U.S. DOD	State of social media experimentation and research	✓ Social media experimentation continues Strategic Communications;
	Social media application	✓ Social media used in the operational and domestic environment;
	Inform and influence activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ PA leads <i>communication synchronization</i> in Strategic Communications;</li> <li>✓ Inform and influence activities conjoined;</li> </ul>
	OPSEC/Cyber Security	✓ OPSEC policies updates/ Computer network operations;
	Access policy	✓ Policy in place to grant access to social media on DOD networks–Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM);
	Rules of engagement for 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties	✓ “Terms of use statement” for social media engagement on platforms, for all parties involved;
	Specialties to perform social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ PA, IO and MISO staff authorized to perform social media activities;</li> <li>✓ Social media can be utilized by other information actors to gain information superiority;</li> </ul>
	Social media policy	✓ Social media handbook;

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion: The characteristics of the NATO social media profile for the audit, research and discovery dimension consists of social media policies with regards to PA, OPSEC, cyber security, access, and the level of experimentation. The U.S. military social media profile for this dimension is similar to NATO but adds some new characteristics: rules of engagement that define the military specialties authorized to perform social media activities while concurrently developing and publishing comprehensive social media handbooks.

The Romanian Military: Romanian Armed Forces doctrine has not yet adopted an all-inclusive approach towards communication in order to integrate all information and communication stakeholders (PR, Psychological Operations, and Information Operations) within the concept of Strategic Communication. However, different working groups are held regularly. MOD Public Relations policies are generally aligned with NATO Public Affairs policies, mostly for the operational environment, with particularities for domestic public relations as imposed by domestic regulations. MOD Public Relations conducted thorough research prior to the MOD issuing the policy that authorizes the use of social media, and codified specific tasks for public relations officers to implement and manage social media communication tools.

PR practitioners in Romania gain experience in the realm of social media by applying a strategy of learning through experience. However, an extended examination of PR policy is yet under examination to assess the risks and opportunities of social media, and the resources required. Until a comprehensive social media handbook is published PR practitioners must rely on former PR policies, standards and procedures. MOD PR policies provide social media users the basic guidance to minimize OPSEC risks and to

circumvent inadvertent political implications. These policies, however, do not specifically address social media users. The PR practitioners from the MOD and the National Defence Academy continue to research social media taking into consideration lessons from the corporate environment and NATO countries to more effectively utilize social media to the advantage of the Armed Forces. The author did not find any reference to an official survey for the use of social media in the MOD since its implementation in 2012.

Table 2 Audit, Research and Discovery Process Matrix–Romania

	Characteristics	Results
<b>Romania</b>	Level of social media experimentation and research	✓ Social media research and experimentation incipient;
	Social media application	✓ Social media use only in domestic environment;
	Inform and influence activities	✓ Inform activities separated from influence activities
	OPSEC policies	✓ PR policies extended to Social media/ Computer Network Operations policy;
	Access policy	✓ Permanent for military and civilian staff;
	Rules for engagement for 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties	-
	Specialties to perform social media	✓ Military Public Relations;
	Social media policy	-

Source: Created by the author.

Conclusion: The Romanian military is in the early development stage of research and experimentation, using only one social media platform to conduct inform activities in the domestic environment. The old Public Relations, OPSEC and Cyber security policies, allow access to social media spaces using MOD networks military and civilian staff. Military Public Relations are the social media managers applying current PR policies in order to perform these additional tasks.

Table 3 Audit, Research and Discovery Process Comparison Matrix

<b>Audit, research and discovery process</b>	<b>NATO</b>	<b>U.S. DOD</b>	<b>Romania</b>
State of social media experimentation and research	Initiated under Strategic Communications	Extensive	Incipient
Social media application	Domestic and operational	Domestic and operational	Only domestic
Inform and influence activities	Separated	Conjoined	Separated
OPSEC Cyber Security	Specific regulations	Specific regulations OPSEC Check list	Not specific
Access policy	Temporary	Permanent	Permanent
Rules for engagement for 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties	Terms of use statement	Terms of use statement	-
Specialties to perform social media	PA	PA, IO, MISO	PR
Social media policy	Social media handbook	Guidance on the use of social media within ACO AD-95-3	-

*Source:* Created by the author.

Comparison conclusion: In the operational environment, U.S. Army social media policies uniquely integrate the PA, MISO and IO communication efforts within inform and influence activities. PA leads the synchronization and coordination effort while IO integrates the efforts of both PA and MISO. NATO envisions a similar approach to social media under Strategic Communications, but clearly delineates the PA function, staffs and activities from IO. Similarly, in the non-operational environment U.S. PA, NATO PA, and Romanian PR conduct regular inform activities. All communication efforts, including social media, are linked and support the achievement of NATO or U.S. strategic objectives. The U.S. Navy instituted structural changes in information operations by establishing the Center for Information Dominance. Both NATO and the U.S. military recognize the change entailed by Social media and continuously update PA, OPSEC, Cyber Security, and network access policies, while concurrently realigning billets and

devoting time and effort to social media experimentation. The Romanian military started incipient research and experimentation on social media focused on the domestic domain. Unlike NATO and the U.S. military where inform and influence activities fall within Strategic Communications, in the Romanian military social media is just another Public relations tool. Military Public Relations staffs are the social media managers, provisionally extending PR policies in order to perform these additional duties. The Romanian military's cautious approach to social media is similar to that taken by the U.S. military and NATO, both of whom slowly opened up access to these new communications tools even though they lacked an official policy. Unlike the U.S. military and NATO the Romanian military's PR efforts are not connected with IO and PsyOps. The Public Relations, OPSEC and Cyber security policies were adjusted slightly to address social media but there is no specific social media and social networking policy in place.

### Goal, Objective Setting and Budgeting

The goal, objective setting and budgeting area of the wheel serves to create a stronger program by setting goals and objectives to identify appropriate target audiences, and the budgetary requirements necessary to launch or adjust the social media communication effort.<sup>128</sup>

NATO and U.S. Department of Defense: In order to advance NATO's goals, the NATO Military Committee endorses the Strategic Communication Policy that defines the relationship between its main components, Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (PA),

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<sup>128</sup>Breakenridge, 159.

Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (Info Ops) and Psychological Operations (PsyOps). Social media complies with the Public Affairs mission, function, roles and responsibilities, principles, and is nested in NATO Public Affairs activities. The NATO social media policies presented in the literature review constitute a valuable resource to enhance social media use in all NATO member countries. Although all NATO members endorse the NATO communication strategy, each of these countries may have a different approach when designing their own national communication strategies. NATO has held several Strategic Communication Conferences, attended by NATO members and several other partners' focused on tracking the progress of this overarching communications approach. The NATO Public Affairs Handbook provides comprehensive explanations on how PA activities can support NATO commanders both in the operational and non-operational environments. NATO, however, has not yet developed and issued a handbook addressing social media.

To develop a social media strategy, the U.S. DOD considers the strategic framework of ends, ways, and means. The ends are the goals pursued by the commander devising the strategy. Besides setting communication goals and objectives, the U.S. DOD and all services set as a goal periodic updates of doctrine to address the conduct of internet based activities and social media. Public Affairs retain the responsibility to update social media policies. The third version of *The United States Army Social Media Handbook* (June 2012) provides guidance for PA use of social media to disseminate themes and messages. U.S. military units now use social media extensively, not only in major headquarters, but also at lower commands to communicate their messages to their families and communities.

The NATO Public Affairs Handbook and the U.S. Army's FM 46-1 both enumerate the audiences they are attempting to interact with recognizing that each audience may have different concerns, levels of understanding, and technology capabilities. To win the hearts and minds of the audiences, both NATO and the U.S. Army encourage online discussions to advance their missions and objectives. The U.S. DOD and NATO understand the inherent value in engaging key influencers through the voice of authorized and credible subject matter experts to advance its objectives. NATO and the U.S. Army have demonstrated an understanding of the necessity for robust information and imagery acquisition, production and dissemination capabilities that empowers social media managers to rapidly respond with the truth to counter dishonest or negative reporting.

Updated Public Affairs manuals describe new skills for social media managers that require specific training. U.S. Army social media managers are required to complete two courses: the computer-based Social Media and Operations Security Training Course and the DISA Social Networking Class. In this way the U.S. Army mitigates OPSEC risks and creates basic skills in social media managers. U.S. Army Commanders must ensure that those personnel who publish information on external online presences receive mandatory OPSEC training. Current NATO policy recommends commanders delegate message and content release authority to the lowest level, but unlike the U.S. Army, does not introduce any specific social media training.

In the U.S. Army, social media activities are funded from Public Affairs budgets. Budgets in the U.S. DOD and NATO for social media and related operations increased significantly after 2011. The annual budget for all NATO operations and activities is



approved by North Atlantic Council (NAC) following consultation and endorsement of NATO member countries. In recent years NATO has highly emphasized the primacy of Strategic Communication to coordinate all communication efforts within the Alliance and the need to keep current on new media platforms and technologies.

Table 4 Goal, Objective Setting and Budgeting NATO and U.S. DOD

	Characteristics	Results
NATO	Communication Strategy	✓ Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy integrated at strategic and operational level to advance NATO objectives;
	Ways	✓ Demarcation between inform and influence activities;
	Branding	✓ Social media strategy to promote NATO brand worldwide;
	External support	✓ Foster relations with key external stakeholders (academia, media) to comment impartially on NATO’s issues; engagement of key influencers to promote the Alliance
	Education and training	✓ Regular PAO and OPSEC training;
	Social media message release authority	✓ Delegated to PA Office;
	Objectives for Operational Environment	✓ Public Affairs/social media included in mission planning;
	Budget	✓ NATO collective budget approved by North Atlantic Council;
U.S. DOD	Communication Strategy	✓ Communication Strategy supports National Defense Strategy;
	Ways	✓ PA to inform domestic audiences and to create informed perceptions to foreign audiences to “win hearts and minds”;
	Branding	✓ Social media branding strategy for DOD services, units and specialties;
	External support	✓ Engagement of key influencers to promote U.S. Army
	Education and training	✓ ALARACT–Army Operations Security (OPSEC) and Training for External Official Presence Sites (EOP);
	Social media message release authority	✓ Delegated to the lowest level;
	Objectives for Operational Environment	✓ Social media considered in communication strategy and mission planning to enhance commander operational environment understanding;
	Budget	✓ DOD budget approved by U.S. Congress; Budget substantially increased for social media in 2012.

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion: The NATO and U.S. military profiles for the Goal and Objective Setting and Budgeting dimension include the following characteristics: a clear communication strategy, the social media role in organizational branding, the updating of social media policies, the role of social media in the Strategic Communication framework, the capabilities required to exploit Social media opportunities for military organizations, the education strategy (cyber curriculum, senior officer training), and budget considerations.

Romanian Military The main goal of the Romanian military Public Relations is to maintain DIRP as the Armed Forces main hub of accurate and timely information for the public by countering any misinformation and providing users the opportunity to get an informed opinion. The social media budget allocation is included in the budget for Public Relations activities. Currently, DIRP has not envisaged specialized social media personnel and training.

Table 5 Goal, Objective Setting and Budgeting Matrix–Romanian PR

	Characteristics	Results
Romania	Communication Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ MOD Communication Strategy advance MOD objectives;</li> <li>✓ DIRP to be the first and the best source of information about the Romanian Armed Forces;</li> </ul>
	Ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Public Relations/social media conduct only <i>inform</i> activities;</li> </ul>
	Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Communication strategy to enhance Armed Forces branding;</li> </ul>
	External support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Key influencers (opinion forms, veterans, etc.)</li> </ul>
	Education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Regular Public Relations and OPSEC training;</li> </ul>
	Social media message release authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identical to PR press release(Commander’s approval)</li> </ul>
	Objectives for the Operational Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Public relations included in mission planning;</li> <li>✓ Social media not included yet in mission planning.</li> </ul>
	Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ MOD budget approved by the Parliament;</li> </ul>

Source: Created by the author.

Conclusion: In the Romanian military social media activities are nested in Public Relations activities. The main goal of Romanian military Public Relations is to diversify its presence on social media platforms and to engage directly with wider and more varied audiences. This allows the MOD to convey themes and messages more effectively and to promote the army brand. Social media implementation requires additional capabilities in terms of personnel and training. First and foremost, it requires establishing a social media Cell at MOD level, adequately equipped and manned. Secondly, all PR practitioners, performing social media tasks need institutional training organized by DIRP.

Table 6 Goal, Objective Setting and Budgeting Comparison Matrix

Goal, Objective Setting and Budgeting	NATO	U.S. DOD	Romania
Communication Strategy	Integration of Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy at strategic and operational level;	Integrated in the National Security Strategy	MOD Communication Strategy
Ways	Strategic Communications framework Inform and influence separate functions	Strategic Communications framework Inform and influence to facilitate the advance of informed perceptions	Inform domestic and foreign audiences
Branding	Promote NATO worldwide	Promote Army units identity symbols (emblems, logo) “Army Strong”	Promote Romanian military identity symbols
External support	Foster relations with key external stakeholders, and engage key influences to promote NATO	Engage key influencers to promote U.S. Army	-
Education and training	General training	Two mandatory courses for social media managers	General training
Social media message release authority	Delegated to PA Office	Delegated to the lowest level	Same as PR
Objectives for Operational Environment	Social media to support mission planning and execution;	Social media to support mission planning and execution;	-
Budget	Collective contribution of NATO members, approved by North Atlantic Council;	DOD budget for inform and influence activities;	MOD annual budget for PR;

Source: Created by the author.

Comparison conclusion: All three analyzed cases envisage reaching wider internal and external audiences to advance their objectives. Specifically, NATO and the U.S. military rely heavily on the support of key influencers to convey unbiased subject matter expert opinion on these organizations to the public. Similar to NATO, Romanian military public information activities are separated from influence activities. NATO and the U.S.

military use social media to promote their brands through a variety of means, including every service members' social media presence. The U.S. military has established specific social media and OPSEC training for social media managers, deployed forces, military families, and senior officers, while NATO and Romania adhere to non-updated policies. In Romania, message release authority lies with the commanders, while in NATO is delegated to the PA Office and in the U.S. military at the lowest level possible. The U.S. military has established new structures to exploit social media opportunities in support of commanders such as the Information Domination Corps and cyber workforce.

### Monitoring and Tracking

The Tracking and Monitoring Strategy focus area serves to set up a monitoring and tracking strategy enabled to expose a better approach to storytelling and participating with groups in social media communities by identifying the key topics and relevant information important to the audience.<sup>129</sup>

NATO and U.S. Department of Defense: For NATO it is equally important to have the capability to monitor and analyze the information generated by traditional media and on social media platforms. This capability enables NATO to gain understanding of public trends in member and partner nations to develop programs tailored to the specifics of the political environment in each country. The Allied Command Transformation (ACT) concept of the overall NATO Strategic Communication Policy identified a number of required military capabilities for social media and Social networking. The capability requirements include: social network analysis of selected audiences, the

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<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 157-159.

detection and monitoring of messages of those who have influence within the NATO and coalition operational area, coordinating and organizing the appropriate use of social Media tools, determining the appropriate medium and method for communicating messages, actions and signals, and delegate message and information release authority to the lowest practical level.

The research identified the free and commercial social media analysis solutions tested by NATO PA for monitoring and tracking social media effects. These tools are used to conduct automated sentiment analysis thereby providing metrics that include reach, sentiment, and strength, allowing near real-time access to demographics, geo-location, and influence.

The Army uses social media to tell the Army's story while at the same time utilizing social media to listen to the audiences' thoughts and opinions both in operational and non-operational environments. Social media is an inexpensive, effective and measurable form of communication. Social media is a powerful branding tool for the U.S. Army as long as the service members and their families receive appropriate training and guidance for proper online conduct. General Petraeus highlighted that maintaining an active social media presence during deployments enables commanders to understand the societal trends and potential threats within their AORs, consequently gaining a better situational awareness of these environments. Social media is recommended as a useful tool in winning the hearts and minds of the indigenous population and in achieving information dominance over adversaries. These insights correlated with other branches products such as intelligence, visual information, combat camera, Information Operations and special information support the commander's intent. An example from a sister

service, is the U.S. Navy's structural changes that established the Center for Information Dominance, to deliver full spectrum Cyber Information Warfare, and Intelligence Training to achieve decision superiority. The online community is a good indicator of the predominant moods and emerging issues of audiences. In the U.S. Army, Public Affairs in conjunction with Information Operations generate the information requirements to assess the public perceptions of foreign audiences needed for mission planning. Public Affairs facilitate the advance of informed perceptions to undermine adversarial propaganda.

Social media success is more than counting the number of clicks on a website. It is about trends and human feedback. Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube provide free analytics in the form of numbers, graphs and charts to track views, impressions and comments, highlighting the success of a specific social media campaign.<sup>130</sup> The literature explored did not reveal whether the U.S. military uses additional social media monitoring tools for tracking online conversations to gauge the public sentiment with regards to U.S. Army brand or presence in the operational environment, but it is obviously technically possible.

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<sup>130</sup>Department of the Army, *Social Media Handbook*, 7.

Table 7 Monitoring and Tracking Matrix–NATO and U.S. DOD PA

	Characteristics	Results
NATO	Monitoring and tracking strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Organize appropriate tools for social networks analysis;</li> <li>✓ Identify key influencers in OE, detect and monitor messages;</li> <li>✓ Assessment of public trends of foreign audiences for mission planning;</li> </ul>
	Monitoring and tracking applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Integration of social media analysis in operational environment;</li> <li>✓ Determine the appropriate medium and method for communicating messages;</li> <li>✓ Identify trends and topics of relevance get and feedback for Member and Partner nations;</li> </ul>
U.S. DOD	Monitoring and tracking strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Gain better situational awareness and information superiority;</li> <li>✓ Integrate assessment of <i>public perceptions</i> of foreign audiences for operational planning and execution of operations;</li> </ul>
	Monitoring and tracking applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Understand social moods and emerging issues and human feedback;</li> <li>✓ Understand society trends and potential threats within their AORs</li> </ul>

Source: Created by the author.

Conclusion: The major characteristics considered for the NATO and the U.S. military’s profile are the presence of a viable social media monitoring and tracking strategy and of defined applications. This strategy can support the commander’s intent providing quantifiable insight about the population perceptions, trends or emerging issues using cyber capabilities. For the non-operational environment it helps identify relevant social trends and topics for the audience and adjust the messaging.

Romanian military: Romanian PR practitioners use free monitoring and analysis tools embedded on social media platforms such as Facebook, Google Trends, etc. DIRP and PR at subordinate commands conduct media monitoring as part of their inherent tasks to assess media products; however, there are no specific identified tasks with regards to social media monitoring and tracking. Without a clear strategy and the tools to



assess public sentiment, social media monitoring and tracking cannot generate insights on the public trends, critical to calibrate MOD’s messages and themes.

Table 8 Monitoring and Tracking Matrix Romanian MOD PR

	Characteristics	Results
Romania	Monitoring and tracking strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No monitoring and tracking strategy or dedicated tools ;</li> <li>✓ PR personnel is monitoring and moderating social media manually, in their own time;</li> </ul>
	Monitoring and tracking applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ PR make use of the embedded social media features;</li> </ul>

Source: Created by the author.

Conclusion: The Romanian profile at present does not have a monitoring and tracking strategy in place. There are no specified tasks and billets for monitoring. Social media managers on their own time monitor and moderate social media. This practice is unsustainable in the long run due to the expected increase of audiences and online content. This vulnerably needs to be addressed because it is time consuming and relies on the commitment and the availability of social media managers. It requires billet realignment and the cooperation of other branches such as computer networks and communications.

Table 9 Monitoring and Tracking Comparison Matrix

Monitoring and tracking	NATO	U.S. DOD	Romania
Monitoring and tracking strategy	yes	yes	no
Monitoring and tracking applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify key influencers, social networks analysis, detect and monitor; messages;</li> <li>✓ Calibrate PA messages and themes;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Understand social perceptions and emerging issues and potential threats; within their AORs;</li> <li>✓ Calibrate PA messages and themes;</li> </ul>	-

Source: Created by author.

Comparison conclusion: The comparison reveals that both NATO and the U.S. military are devising social media monitoring and tracking strategies to enable social network analysis of selected audiences, detect, monitor and track messages, of those who have influence within the operational area, coordinate and organize appropriate use of social Media tools, to establish a policy and to designate the staff for efficiently monitoring and tracking the conversations. These are the primary tasks the Romanian military should stringently strive in the immediate future.

#### Channel Distribution

The Distribution and Channel Strategy is the portion of social media systems analysis that helps PR to understand the platforms that groups use to participate, share information, and collaborate. It assists PR in creating a channel and distribution strategy for greater opportunities to engage.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup>Breakenridge, 157-159.

NATO and U.S. Department of Defense: NATO recommends the use of all relevant channels, including traditional media, internet-based media and public engagement, to build awareness and understanding; and thereby gain support to develop decisions and operations consistent with agreed upon NATO policies, procedures and principals.<sup>132</sup> NATO offered audiences direct access to NATO top leadership, by creating the NATO Secretary General's Corner, on Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media networks, allowing audiences to participate in online discussions and share ideas about decisions that could affect them. This initiative fosters the e-democracy participatory culture, recognizing the influence and power of the citizen journalists as non-accredited media.

The U.S. Army PA acknowledges that telling the story to the public requires the Army to engage with diverse audiences using a variety of social media platforms. Unique in the analyzed cases, the U.S. Army established a mandatory registering procedure for all organizational Social media sites through the Social Media Directory. This measure aims at eliminating the proliferation of unofficial hoax military-related social media accounts, and is also helpful for the branding of unit command pages.

Social media does not supersede the role of traditional media. NATO continues the use of traditional communication channels such as TV, radio, websites and print media to explain NATO policies, complemented by corporate communication approaches and techniques. Although, NATO TV Channel on the internet (NITV) together with the NATO website, remain the key communication tools to produce and distribute news stories, videos and reports to the global public and global broadcasters, social media use

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<sup>132</sup>NATO, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), 7.

can multiply the effects. In the U.S. Army, DVIDS is the largest network of Public Affairs elements equipped with portable satellite transmitters located in-theater and at a distribution hub in Atlanta, Georgia. DVIDS makes available real-time broadcast-quality video, still images and print products as well as immediate interview opportunities with service members, commanders and subject matter experts for international, national and local media. Social media is an integral part of DOD operations. DOD directed the establishment of the DOD Social media Hub, a site designed to help the DOD community use social media and other Internet-based Capabilities (IbC) responsibly and effectively, both in official and unofficial capacities (<http://www.defense.gov/socialmedia/>)

NATO headquarters are responsible to develop their own plans for the use of social media tools, as appropriate to their particular conditions, within the guidelines provided, ensuring that appropriate risk management procedures are in place. SHAPE PAO remains the entity responsible for social media management including the ACO official website, SACEUR's Blog, the SHAPE Facebook site and SHAPE Twitter. Only SACEUR and designated personnel are authorized to publish comments on behalf of SHAPE on these social media tools. This approach is analogous to the U.S. Army as well. The Army's highest ranking leaders chose to reach out to audiences through video, Twitter, Facebook and blogs, engaging those individuals who prefer social media platforms for news rather than traditional media outlets.

The PAO is responsible for the management of these social media platforms. There is the opportunity to strengthen community relations with Soldiers, Veterans and Families while sharing personal experiences on a more informal platform such as the U.S. Army's official blog, and Army Live.

Table 10 Channel Distribution Matrix–NATO and U.S. DOD PA

	Characteristics	Results
NATO	Social media platforms currently utilized	✓ Communication across a variety of social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, blogs, etc.;
	Capabilities	✓ NATO Channel TV offers free, broadcast quality content (video reports, operations feature stories, B-roll and interviews, NATO press conferences, lectures and speeches, extensive archive of NATO footage for the media;
	Political/military officials social media channels	✓ Social media channels for NATO political/military officials: NATO Secretary General Corner, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and blogs;
	Official websites	✓ Official websites of NATO ( <a href="http://www.nato.int">http://www.nato.int</a> ), subordinate commands: ACT, SHAPE ( <a href="http://www.shape.nato.int">http://www.shape.nato.int</a> ), and NATO operations: KFOR, ISAF ( <a href="http://www.isaf.nato.int">http://www.isaf.nato.int</a> );
	Special distribution channels	✓ NATO TV Channel ( <a href="http://www.natochannel.tv">http://www.natochannel.tv</a> )
	Social media presence approving authority	✓ NATO HQ commanders to approve social media presence within NATO guidance;
U.S. DOD	Social media platforms currently utilized	✓ Communication across a variety of social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, Slideshare, blogs (ex. U.S. Army’s official blog, Army Live, for Soldiers, Veterans and Families <a href="http://www.army.mil/blog">www.army.mil/blog</a> ), etc;
	Capabilities	✓ DVIDS channel distribution hub <a href="http://www.dvidshub.net">http://www.dvidshub.net</a> with extensive library (video, still image and print stories) and worldwide live reporting capabilities;
	Political/military officials social media channels	✓ Dedicated channels for high ranking military leaders: Twitter, Facebook and blogs (ex. <a href="http://www.army.mil/leaders/csa">http://www.army.mil/leaders/csa</a> );
	Official websites	✓ U.S. Department Of Defense ( <a href="http://www.defense.gov/">http://www.defense.gov/</a> ) U.S. Army ( <a href="http://www.army.mil/">http://www.army.mil/</a> )
	Special distribution channels	✓ DVIDS channel distribution hub <a href="http://www.dvidshub.net">http://www.dvidshub.net</a> ;
	Social media presence approving authority	✓ Registration mandatory for all organization social media sites on Social Media Directory;

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion: NATO and U.S. military profiles are defined by six characteristics as enumerated in the matrix. Both NATO and the U.S. military have the technical capabilities to collect information and imagery but only the U.S has a satellite distribution capability. The U.S. military requires mandatory registration for any new social media

presence in order to establish a centralized database, and to ensure the authenticity of the source and content. The U.S. model has developed as a wide network where commands, active duty personnel, veterans and military family social media platforms are used to multiply communication effects.

Romanian Military: The Romanian units' primary distribution channel is the official website, basically a one-way communication method that does not employ the Web 2.0 interactive features introduced by social media. Military units maintain an active web presence at all levels of command, frequently posting audio, photo, video and stories. This does not allow a dialogue with larger audiences nor generate a viral dissemination of MOD themes and messages. Social media policy is still under development within Romanian military Public Relations. In 2009, the Romanian MOD created a dedicated video channel on YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/user/MApNRomania>, uploading several military videos every month. The first MOD social media presence started on 30 July 2012 with the publishing of official content on Facebook. This was a significant endeavor for the military institution to become more proficient in the use of two-way communications methods.

DIRP has an extensive archive of photo and video footage and a strong audio-photo-video capability to conduct imagery collection for both domestic and operational activities. These capabilities help the Romanian Armed Forces to maintain a solid print, radio, television, internet-based media presence in the domestic and international media. There are several military newspapers at each level of command, also available online. The Cinematographic MOD Studio and a number of regional and national TV editorials are used for enhancing the internal and external audiences' understanding and awareness

on the Romanian Armed Forces. The MOD maintains the M100 Video Channel as the MOD internal communication video channel. The MOD does not possess satellite broadcasting capabilities and therefore partners with the mainstream media for live broadcasting.

The Romanian military’s use of the social media tools of Facebook and YouTube began the process of bringing information to ever wider audiences yet still fails to achieve a real two-way dialogue. There is still a degree of reluctance in posting personal comments on MOD posts. At the same time, the OPSEC ingrained in the military culture inhibits real social media engagement, while commanders/leaders are still weighing opportunities versus risks. The result is that social media tools are not used effectively more or less duplicating the information published on the MOD official portal and limiting dialogue with the intended audiences.

Table 11 Channel Distribution Matrix–Romanian MOD PR

	Characteristics	Results
<b>Romania</b>	Social media platforms currently utilized	✓ Communication across few social media platforms: Facebook, and YouTube;
	Capabilities	✓ Own information and imagery acquisition and production capabilities, dissemination capabilities partly contracted or shared with private third parties;
	Political/military MOD officials social media channels	-
	Official websites	✓ Official website of MOD ( <a href="http://www.mapn.gov.ro">http://www.mapn.gov.ro</a> ), subordinate commands: Land Forces ( <a href="http://www.forter.ro">http://www.forter.ro</a> ), Air Force, Navy, etc.;
	Special distribution channels	✓ Armed Forces Channel ( <a href="http://www.mapn.ro/armatatv">http://www.mapn.ro/armatatv</a> );
	Social media presence approving authority	✓ Social media presence decided by each military commander within DIRP guidance;

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion: The Romanian profile is characterized by a moderate number of official channels for a social media presence, a robust imagery and information acquisition capability and by the absence of a leader’s channels of distribution.

Table 12 Table 1 Channel Distribution Comparison Matrix

Channel distribution	NATO	U.S. DOD	Romania
Social media platforms currently utilized	Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, blogs, etc	Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, Slideshare, blogs (ex.U.S. Army’s official blog, Army Live, for Soldiers, Veterans and Families www.army.mil/blog),etc;	Facebook, and YouTube;
Capabilities	Own information and imagery acquisition, production and dissemination capability	Own information and imagery acquisition, production and worldwide dissemination capability	Own imagery acquisition and production capability dissemination capabilities
Social media for Political/military officials	NATO Secretary General Corner, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and blogs;	Dedicated web-pages on Twitter, Facebook and blogs <a href="http://www.army.mil/leaders/csa">http://www.army.mil/leaders/csa</a> ;	-
Official websites	Official website presence at all levels of command to include operational HQs;	Official website presence at all levels of command to include operational HQs;	Official website presence at all levels of command from Bde/Bn to MOD;
Special distribution channels	NATO Channel TV primary hub of information about the Alliance for internal and external audiences;	DVIDS network of Public Affairs elements with portable satellite capability located in-theater and a worldwide distribution hub for internal and external audiences;	MOD TV– internal communication Video Channel– M100; Armed forces TV Channel;
Social media presence approving authority	NATO HQ commanders to approve social media presence within NATO guidance;	Social media registration mandatory on Social Media Directory;	Social media presence decided by each military commander within DIRP guidance;

Source: Created by author.



Comparison conclusion: The comparison reveals the necessity for the Romanian military to diversify its presence on multiple distribution channels and the need to create a unified registry for all channels that disseminate information in an official capacity. The NATO TV Channel and U.S. DVIDS are examples of hubs that efficiently integrate production and dissemination resources and capabilities to provide consistent information to traditional media and social media. Romania has the opportunity to successfully expand the distribution channel to integrate and interconnect all commands' social media presence in a coherent information hub coordinated by DIRP.

#### Communications, Messaging and Content Optimization

A Communications and Content Optimization Strategy should help PR professionals to develop and optimize content and messaging for maximum impact on audiences by taking into consideration the sharing preferences of the audiences and the critical issues of the key influencers and brand advocates.<sup>133</sup>

NATO and U.S. Department of Defense: The content created for NATO and U.S. Army Social media comply with the principles and aims at telling their story by providing accurate information in a timely manner. It is equally essential to ensure that information provided is consistent, complementary, coordinated, and mindful of multinational sensitivities and respectful of the local and regional cultural environment. NATO utilizes a conversational style with credible contributions to encourage the audience to comment, discuss or argue. Likewise, the U.S. Army suggests that content be written in a conversational, fun and engaging language, mixing messages with items the

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<sup>133</sup>Breakenridge, 157-159.

audience finds interesting. Both NATO and the U.S. Army make use of their robust information and imagery collection, production and dissemination capabilities to reach wide audiences with timely and accurate information. This capability enables them to develop creative Social media content tailored for specific group audiences to promote major themes and entice feedback. Reviewing some of the most recent postings on NATO and the U.S. Army Facebook page reveals the abundance of events illustrating the day to day activities of these institutions and how different they are from the usual PA press releases. Social media stories concisely summarize the essence of the event in an advertising fashion by posting a captivating headline with accompanying photos. Typically, the story ends with a link to a longer version of the story on the official website. The stories cover a large spectrum of activities ranging from conferences, graduations and training events to less happier events like condolence messages for the families of fallen soldiers. High ranking military leaders are usually advised and assisted by the PAO in managing their social media presence; however the content needs to be endorsed by the respective commander prior to posting it. The message content revision in all other situations is at the PA department level.

The ACO Social Media Directive clearly recommends some steps follow prior to posting information in an official capacity: identify the audience, determine the appropriate social media tool, and review the content prior to posting. Information posted on the Internet should be Unclassified or Non-Classified Releasable to the Public and respect OPSEC and copyright laws. NATO policies map out a number of security issues, whose violation is subject to appropriate sanctions. Although NATO policies identify these risks, a comprehensive NATO Social Media Handbook has not yet been published.

Content optimization in the military always has an operations security component. The U.S. Army Social media Handbook includes a checklist for Operations Security for Official Army Pages to ensure all content posted is in compliance with organization Public Affairs guidance and Army regulations. The US Army Content Checklist is a quick reference guide for social media managers designed to make military publishers consider key points before distributing content online. In addition to OPSEC considerations the guide refers to a marketing strategy to ensure that content is suitable, effective and safe. It is also indicated to have terms of use policy in place, to establish the online demeanor for all followers. PRs have to enforce such policies by reviewing wall posts regularly and removing posts that violate the posting policy. The US social media policy regulates both professional and private use of social media is regulated.

Although under the NATO Strategic Communication framework PA, Info Ops, and Psy Ops working groups coordinate and synchronize their specific activities to conduct message development and media analysis to counter adversary disinformation, their efforts differ with respect to audience, scope and intent, and therefore will not be discussed in depth in this study. In the operational environment what is specific to the U.S. Army is that there are three career field specialties to conduct inform and influence tasks as part of their primary functions: Public Affairs, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), and Information Operations, all of whom previously operated within the Strategic Communications realm. PA has a substantial responsibility for the knowledge of and execution of social media activities and is accountable for the U.S. Army communication synchronization effort as well. These specialties cooperate in the operational environment to create themes and messages to support the commander's

intent. It is beyond the scope and scale of this research to analyze how IO or MISO can leverage social media to influence target audiences or to counter the adversaries' messages transmitting non-attributable messages. However, one of the purposes of this research is to determine how NATO and U.S. Army social media supports PA efforts based on PA tenets.

Both NATO and U.S. DOD policies on Public Affairs acknowledge that traditional media is still the principal means to communicate with the public. Social media is viewed as a force multiplier without journalistic interpretation and potential biases that provides numerous options and challenges to more directly engage with audiences. It is odious for a military culture to operate in an uncontrollable environment like social media. Social media interactive dialogues do not imply the complete relinquishment of messaging control. To mitigate this challenge NATO and the U.S. Army have established precise procedures to address the management of messaging on social media.

Table 13 Communications, Messaging and Content Optimization Matrix NATO and U.S. DOD PA

	Characteristics	Results
NATO	Strategy	✓ Strategic Communication framework;
	Optimization method	✓ Official messaging in accordance with Public Affairs principles; ✓ Strategic Communication <i>coordination and synchronization</i> of Public Affairs, Psychological Operations, and Information Operations activities;
	Message style	✓ Conversational style used is with credible contributions to engage others to comment, discuss or argue;
	Content review and approval	✓ Approving authority for dissemination at the lowest level;
	Leaders Social media management	✓ Special staff empowered to posting content on behalf of the military leaders;
U.S. DOD	Strategy	✓ Strategic Communication framework;
	Optimization method	✓ Official messaging complies with Army Public Affairs tenets; ✓ <i>Communication synchronization</i> between Public Affairs, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), and Info Ops; ✓ Operations Security Checklist for Official Army Pages
	Message style	✓ Content written with fun and engaging conversational language, mixing messages with items the audience finds interesting;
	Content review and approval	✓ Lowest level possible;
	Leaders Social media management	✓ Public Affairs Office responsibility with leaders' approval;

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion: The NATO and U.S. DOD communications, messaging and content optimization profiles considered five characteristics as presented in the matrix above. Strategic Communication coordination and synchronization in NATO and communication synchronization in the U.S. DOD aims at ensuring coherence and consistency in messaging. PAO or the designated social media managers are regularly invested with release authority, provided that they abide by the posting procedures. Both

NATO and the U.S. DOD recommend a conversational style that differs from the press release style and will tend to generate audience feedback.

Romanian military: As for the communications, messaging and content optimization, the Romanian military PR continues to adapt to the new practices required by social media using the strategy of learning through testing. The basic PR principles apply for social media content creation and optimization. Currently, the Romanian military PR utilizes Facebook as the only social media platform to interact with the public. Most of the social media posts advertise day to day activities or the headlines of stories exposed extensively in other military media products. The approval authority for message dissemination is identical to that of the press releases, remaining with the respective commanders. Currently the literature reviewed has not identified any specific techniques and procedures for communications, messaging and content optimization.

Table 14 Communications, Messaging and Content Optimization Matrix Romanian MOD PR

	Characteristics	Results
<b>Romania</b>	Strategy	✓ MOD Annual Communication Strategy
	Optimization method	✓ Coordination of PR messages at all levels at command; ✓ Official messaging in accordance with Public Relations principles;
	Message style	✓ Extension of Public Relations style in social media;
	Content review and approval	✓ Content review by DIRP; ✓ Approving authority at the highest level.
	Leaders social media management	✓ Military leaders messages posted on the institution official social media platform;

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion: The Romanian profile for communications and content optimization reveals a slight adaptation of the PR communication practices to the social media. Social media posts are used as complimentary dissemination tool to the organization’s official website, guided by the PR content creation, optimization and distribution procedures. The most attractive stories of the military publications, newspapers, and videos are distributed in an adequate format on the MOD Facebook, and shared within the military and the communities. The major communication themes and audiences are outlined in the Annual Communication Strategy.

Table 15 Communications Messaging and Content Optimization Comparison Matrix

<b>Communications messaging and content optimization</b>	<b>NATO</b>	<b>U.S. DOD</b>	<b>Romania</b>
Strategy	Strategic communication	Strategic communication	MOD Annual Communication Strategy
Optimization method	Coordination and synchronization	Communication synchronization	Message coordination
Message style	Conversational with credible contributions to engage others to comment, discuss or argue;	Content written in conversational, fun and engaging language, mixing messages with items the audience finds interesting;	-
Content review and approval	Lowest level	Lowest level	Higher level
Leaders social media management	PDD/PAO/Special Staff with NATO leaders’ approval	PAO/Special Staff with leaders’ approval	-

Source: Created by author.

Comparison conclusion: The comparison matrix of the social media communications messaging and content optimization highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the analysed systems. This generates three recommendations. The first is to integrate, coordinate and synchronize all messages with an overarching approach, similar to that used by NATO and the U.S. DOD. The second recommendation is to lower the content release authority to the PA Office level for both the organization and the leaders' social media presence. The third recommendation is for service members that use social media in an official or private capacity receive at the minimum training to circumvent any violations of OPSEC, copy right, international laws, etc.

#### Levels of Engagement

An engagement Strategy should describe the best ways to engage with an audience or to influence them to take the actions we want: to learn about the brand, provide endorsements, create their own content, share your information, or develop a mutually reciprocal or strategic relationship.<sup>134</sup>

NATO and U.S. Department of Defense: Social media is viewed by NATO as a force multiplier to support Public Affairs functions. NATO outreach activities engage diverse key external stakeholders (think-tanks, academia, military-related associations, and other non-news media entities), to comment as impartial subject matter experts on NATO issues. This helps to stimulate public debate on social media platforms to explain NATO's objectives. The feedback from the "citizen journalists" interested in debating on NATO issues is important to understand and gauge public sentiment. Similarly, the U.S.

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<sup>134</sup>Ibid.



Army invites unbiased subject matter experts to answer defense related questions that people ask on social media platforms. U.S. Army Public Affairs is in a key position to identify the areas and potential audiences that social media can engage to support PA functions: public information, command information (directed to the internal audiences), and community engagement.

The ACO directive encourages staffs to maintain personal websites and blogs. Access to such tools from NATO information systems requires individuals to gain prior approval from commanders. NATO directives advise personnel to provide a disclaimer message whenever NATO service members' personal opinion could be misconstrued as the official NATO position. The directive clearly addresses technical and security considerations, proposes measures to implement this policy and provides guidance for posting comments and maintaining security online.

The U.S. DOD's communication and engagement strategy is designed to support the policy goals of the United States through specific effects. The specific effects are to communicate in such a way as to have foreign audiences recognize areas of mutual interest while seeing the United States as a respectful partner playing a constructive role in global affairs striving to meet complex global challenges.<sup>135</sup> The US Army also stresses the importance of allowing social media communication within the organization and the community, referring to this activity as a mission essential task that builds positive morale among military personnel. Within the community family members participate, ideally with positive content, which is visible to their friends in social media.

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<sup>135</sup>The White House, *National Framework for Strategic Communication, Measuring Success*, 2009, <http://www.fas.org/man/eprint/pubdip.pdf> (accessed 1 February 2013), 6.

This paints the picture of the Army as a positive community with which to engage. Military personnel can express themselves while preserving the positive brand message of the organization. The U.S. DOD instructs personnel to “replace error with fact, not argument,” in an attempt to avoid imprecise messages that may result from online arguments.<sup>136</sup> The U.S. Army stresses the importance of honest communications and the full disclosure of one’s identity and intentions in order to build long-term trust with stakeholders and rejects impersonation. Allegations that an organization can create fraudulent accounts in social media in order to influence conversations can create doubt and resentment among stakeholders involved in social media communications. Annex A is a practical example that illustrates how the U.S. Army built a Social Media Strategy for a week, using diverse platforms, engaging different audiences, setting goals, objectives messages, and measures of performance.

The level of engagement is a balancing act between risks and opportunity. The U.S. DOD views social media more as an asset vice threat. Both the Army and Navy opted to proceed with substantial social media activity before the implementation of policy. The military evaluated the risks and opportunities that social media created when individuals create content using official government computers. There is a clear risk that service members may unintentionally divulge sensitive information that violates the basic principles of operations security. “The U.S. Army Audit Agency determined in 2011 that not all social media managers had received appropriate OPSEC training before posting content to external social media presences. ALARACT is the Army Operations Security (OPSEC) Training for External Official Presence Sites (EOP). Social media managers are

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<sup>136</sup>Patterson, 93.

required to take two OPSEC courses. The Information Assurance Training Center offers the computer-based Social Media and Operations Security Training Course. In granting permission to access social media, the military created clear guidelines and regulations that individuals must adhere in order to maintain that access.”<sup>137</sup> Social media policy allows all service members to freely discuss their activities and interests, but prohibits resolving personal disputes online. Both NATO and the U.S. DOD encourage the use of social media, on multiple platforms, for inform and influence activities.

Table 16 Levels of Engagement Matrix–NATO and U.S. DOD PA

	Characteristics	Results
NATO	Functions	✓ Support of Public Affairs functions engaging internal and external audiences(media relations and outreach activities, and community relations);
	Audiences	✓ Engage with think-tanks, academia, military-related associations, community, military families, “citizen journalists” and other non-news media entities;
	Access	✓ Access for all service members in official or private capacity, to comply with OPSEC and NATO Social media policy;
	Engagement policy	✓ Strategic Communications, ACO Directive (AD) 95-3 Social Media;
	High ranking leaders engagement	✓ NATO Secretary General
U.S. DOD	Functions	✓ Support the Public Affairs functions: public information, command information, community engagement for internal and external audiences;
	Audiences	✓ Engage with key influencers, military families, friends, veterans, community;
	Access	✓ Access for all service members in official or private capacity, to comply with OPSEC and social media policy;
	Engagement policy	✓ Strategic Communications, U.S. Army social media Handbook, 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition;
	High ranking leaders engagement	✓ DOD and services leaders

Source: Created by author.

<sup>137</sup>Department of the Army, *Social Media Handbook*, 24

Conclusion: The level of engagement for the NATO and U.S. DOD profiles is analyzed utilizing four characteristics. For both NATO and the U.S. DOD the communication strategy establishes the level of engagement, defines the audiences and the way to engage these audiences. The social media experimentation and implementation process aims at expanding internal/command information to military families, to the community and to wider audiences. High ranking leaders, service members and their families are instrumental in message dissemination and the Army brand promotion.

Romanian Military: The Romanian MOD Strategic Communication Strategy designates its audiences and the ways and means to engage them. These audiences include the veterans, military families and the community writ large. The MOD Communication Strategy established as a priority the recruitment of personnel. Even though the interest in participating in social media activities is relatively high among military users there is still untapped potential to use social media tools more efficiently.

Table 17 Levels of Engagement Matrix–Romanian MOD PR

	Characteristics	Results
<b>Romania</b>	Functions	✓ Support of Public Affairs functions: public information, internal information, community relations, and public diplomacy;
	Audiences	✓ Engage military families, specific group ages for recruitment, veterans, the community;
	Access	✓ Commands can establish social media presence, to comply with OPSEC and PR policy; ✓ Access granted to all service members from private or Defense unclassified networks and stations;
	Engagement policy	✓ MOD Annual Communication Strategy;
	High ranking leaders engagement	-

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion: The Romanian social media profile for the levels of engagement dimension is derived from the communication strategy and is aligned with basic PR principles and functions to engage with the audiences.

Table 18 Levels of Engagement Comparison Matrix

<b>Levels of engagement</b>	<b>NATO</b>	<b>U.S. DOD</b>	<b>Romania</b>
Functions	internal information, media relations, outreach activities, and community relations	public information, command information, community engagement	public information, internal information, community relations, and public diplomacy;
Audiences	think-tanks, academia, “citizen journalists”, military-related associations, community, military families	key influencers, military families, friends, veterans, community	military families, specific group ages for recruitment, veterans, community
Access	In official or private capacity	In official or private capacity	In official or private capacity
Engagement policy	NATO Public Affairs Handbook, Social media policy	Social media handbook	Public Relations policy
High ranking leaders engagement	NATO Sec.Gen.	DOD and Army leaders	-

Source: Created by author.

Comparison conclusion: The comparison matrix reveals similarities in the first four characteristics. NATO and the U.S.DOD emphasize the importance of engaging key influencers with expertise in defense issues to provide an unbiased perspective on NATO or the U.S. military. Romania has not yet evaluated the possibility of military leaders communicating more directly with their audiences in the social media space.

## Benchmark Measurements

An effective measurement strategy needs to have a tracking and benchmark program. It should identify the metrics required to map back to higher-level goals and objectives. By tracking metrics that reveal leads, sales, registrations, learning, strategic relationships, reputation management, and thought leadership the value of the PR and Social media program is demonstrated.<sup>138</sup>

One of the greatest benefits of social media as a communication tool is that the scope of public outreach is quantifiable. The disadvantage is that social media platforms own the statistics, which might not be publicly available.

Social media technologies are becoming increasingly important for the U.S. military. If military leaders fail to engage in the social media environment seriously understanding the impact of the new technologies on the nature of future conflicts, then this ground is ceded to the enemy. The U.S. DOD recognizes the importance of developing the capacity to measure success and emphasize accountability. It requires the identification of indicators to build assessments of costs and benefits over time. There are two types of indicators. Measures of Performance (MOP) compare the quantity of products with the amount of investment. Measures of Effectiveness (MoE) give insight into whether an activity is achieving the desired effect.<sup>139</sup> Measuring the success of communication and engagement efforts is frequently challenging; public perceptions are not easily observed and therefore hard to measure. Success requires persistent

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<sup>138</sup>Breakenridge, 158.

<sup>139</sup>The White House, 13.

measurement and clearly isolating the effect of communication engagement from other influences.

“The US Army tracked its own results within specific software platforms such as Flickr. It advises its social media managers to record all statistics, such as views and shares, so they are able to determine the popularity of specific content. The statistics are published in the five day content plan, which allows for analysis and distribution to stakeholders. The result is that the five day content template has itself become a measuring tool.”<sup>140</sup> The following metrics are used by the U.S. Army to determine social media success: weekly analysis of the number of views of material, weekly analysis of the most viewed photos, and measurement of direct engagement with soldiers, veterans, families and the general public by tracking inquiries.<sup>141</sup>

NATO pays considerable attention to the new media, in spite of the lack of defined benchmarks for social media. The Strategic Communications Limited Objective Experiment (LOE) conducted during the Chicago Summit led NATO STRATCOM to evaluate possibilities offered by a social Media Monitoring Cell and propose the way ahead for social media in support of the development of a STRATCOM capability within NATO. NATO intends to incorporate social media tools in its communication processes, to support political and military decision makers. NATO policies direct commanders to monitor and report social media implementation progress bi-annually.

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<sup>140</sup>Patterson, 145.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 154.

Table 19 Benchmark Measurements Matrix–NATO and U.S. DOD PA

	Characteristics	Results
NATO	Indicators	✓ Measures of Performance (MOP) and Measures of Effectiveness (MoE) indicators;
	Measurements tools	✓ Free and commercial social media analysis tools;
	Specialized structure	✓ Social Media Monitoring Cell to support the development of a STRATCOM capability (development of a social media analysis and monitoring capability);
U.S. DOD	Indicators	✓ Measures of Performance (MOP) and Measures of Effectiveness (MoE) indicators;
	Measurements tools	✓ U.S. Army five days content plan
	Specialized structure	✓ Social media check-list;

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion: NATO established measurement goals during the Chicago Summit Strategic Communications Limited Objective Experiment (LOE). There is no indication that the specialized measurement tools NATO tested during the LOE have been adopted, nor that the data collected was interpreted and utilized to improve social media effectiveness. NATO did propose the establishment of the Social Media Monitoring Cell to support the development of a STRATCOM capability but it is not yet functional. The U.S. Army similarly has taken decisive steps and has formulated the metrics to measure social media success in the five days content plan, currently used by social media managers (see Appendix A).

Romanian military: DIRP uses the traditional media monitoring cell to conduct image analysis of the military organization based on specific indicators to measure performance and effectiveness. This analysis indicates the effectiveness in the accomplishment of communication goals.



Table 20 Benchmark Measurements Matrix–Romanian MOD PR

	Characteristics	Results
Romania	Indicators	✓ -
	Measurements tools	✓ Manual measurement, using platform embedded statistics;
	Specialized structure	✓ Social media office;

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion: The Romanian profile is characterized by the absence of a coherent benchmark measurement system. Social media managers manually count the number of views and hits on each piece of information posted. A coherent measurement strategy will add value to organizational Cyber image analysis.

Table 21 Benchmark Measurements Comparison Matrix

Benchmark measurements	NATO	U.S. DOD	Romania
Indicators	Measures of Performance (MOP) and Measures of Effectiveness (MoE) indicators	Measures of Performance (MOP) and Measures of Effectiveness (MoE) indicators	-
Measurements tools	-	The Five Days Content Plan	Manually
Specialized structure	Social Media Monitoring Cell to support the development of a STRATCOM capability	Social media managers designated with PAO	MOD Social media office

Source: Created by author.

Comparison conclusion: The comparison reveals that in all analyzed systems the measurement strategy is under development. NATO and U.S. DOD experiments

contribute to the slow build-up of measurement capabilities and knowledge. The Romanian measurement capability as compared to NATO and the U.S. DOD is emergent, lacking a strategy while continuing to rely on manual measurement.

#### Qualitative Analysis of the Communication and Social Media Experts

The literature reviewed included a large amount of data covering the most important topics in today's social media. The main areas of emphasis in the literature were: the communication model introduced by the new media, the most used social media tools and the major challenges posed by social media to the PR practitioners. Using the seven focus areas of the Social Media Strategy Wheel to analyze the information examined in chapter 2 will result in the development of a model that Romanian Military Public Relations should follow to best adapt to social media.

#### Audit, Research and Discovery

It is obvious that an organization embracing social media requires that organization to make a careful analysis of the environment to understand what, where, when, who and most importantly how to make it happen. A recommendation is to conduct, a social media audit to identify the challenges or problem areas in the organization's current public relations/communication strategy. This allows the organization "to pinpoint genuine opportunities that have been working with respect to participation and engagement in the social media landscape."<sup>142</sup> In most cases implementing social media is the responsibility of the Public Relations department

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<sup>142</sup>Breakenridge, 10.

requiring the development of strategies to deal with unexpected messages on the Web.<sup>143</sup>

While the audit is clearly the responsibility of the PR department, the decision to introduce social media remains with the organization's executives. Therefore it is the PR professional's responsibility to convince their executives on the opportunities provided by and the necessity of implementing social media.

The use of social media implies that a paradigm shift is required in the communication model making it different from the model used for traditional media. *One-way* communication is no longer the norm. In the age of Web 2.0, "anybody can talk in real time anywhere about everything, and there will always be somebody."<sup>144</sup> As Pavlik mentions in his book, *Mapping the consequences of Social media on Public Relations*, PRs are required to demonstrate adaptability and openness in embracing a "two-way symmetrical communications or interactive dialogs with various public audiences."<sup>145</sup> Social media requires PR professionals to adopt a completely new mindset and approach to communication which requires moving from "the traditional media monologue to an open, effective and balanced dialogue for the mutual advantage of both the audiences and of the organizations."<sup>146</sup>

The audit should further evaluate to what degree social media can complement traditional one-way communication practices and how social media can be nested in the organization's communication strategy to better support its overall goals and objectives.

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<sup>143</sup>van der Merwe, Pitt, and Abratt, 39-48.

<sup>144</sup>Jacobs and Diefenbach, 5-2.

<sup>145</sup>Pavlik, 14.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

If the organization is satisfied with a modest web presence there is no need for social media. Conversely, if social media is deemed appropriate in the pursuit of the organization's objectives the audit should identify what social media tools are best suited for use in existing communication platforms. It is the art of the PR professionals to merge ways, ends and means to reach the proposed goals and objectives of the organization. To choose and use social media tools effectively the PR professional must clearly understand the demographic statistics of the target audience.

### Goal and Objective Setting and Budgeting

The organizations' goals and objectives should complement the other communication efforts within its communication strategy. Initially, PR should start with one social media tool until they gain experience and then expand to multiple tools. Social media enables the emitter of the message to engage specific target audiences in public debate; vital to improving the organization's communication strategy. The strategy should specify separate goals for the internal audience—the employees and for the external audience—the costumers. The newness here is that social media enables PRs to measure and to monitor precisely the level of interaction and the preferences of the public. A special chapter in the communication strategy should be dedicated to social media, with specific goals and objectives perfectly measurable.

Even though the use of most of the social media platforms is free of charge, there are some additional budgeting requirements for PR departments that might include personnel training, acquisition of wireless internet hardware, or sophisticated and costly social media monitoring programs and website analytics software.

## Monitoring and Tracking

This major focus area of Breakenridge's wheel helps PRs to identify key topics and information of relevance to audiences and how to set up a monitoring and tracking system for online conversations about a company or brand in order to conduct Cyber Image Analysis. Cyber Image Analysis is defined in PR literature as "the measurement of Internet content via chat rooms or discussion groups in cyberspace regarding a client or product or topic; the measurement of a client's image everywhere on the Internet."<sup>147</sup> PR professionals must understand the value of website tracking and analytics, and recognize that where social media monitoring ends, website analytics begin.

The shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 requires a transition from traditional mass-media monitoring to the monitoring and tracking of online conversations. The Social Media Strategy Wheel has a separate section intended to highlight the importance of monitoring and tracking for the success of a communications strategy. Social media allows individuals to discuss or debate common interests or topics. For organizations, it is necessary to start listening to what customers, employees or key influencers are saying online about their brand or their competitors. This will allow a better response to eventual inquiries or to correct their approach to costumers and markets. Therefore, social media requires listening as a critical skill for the PRs practitioner. For monitoring and tracking, PRs can use search and keywords related to the organization's name/brand, products, services, executives, competitors, or industry trends. Monitoring platforms offer information on the geography of the audience across the globe, on what key influencers say, and on the trending topics in their conversations. The selection of the right social

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<sup>147</sup>Stacks, 10.

media monitoring tools helps PRs to put a system in place based on their tracking and monitoring requirements. The data collected is used to show executives the click-through rate on the company's website and how social media data correlates to other data, including website analytics and sales.<sup>148</sup> Monitoring and tracking should prove how social media creates registrations, leads/sales, saves the company money by answering customer service inquiries, creates awareness and thought leadership, and provides a brand lift with positive media/blogger and customer endorsements.”<sup>149</sup>

Based on the budget available, PRs should consider that some platforms are subscription based while others are free of charge. “Some of the good (and free) monitoring and measurement tools include Addictomatic, bit.ly, Facebook Insights, HootSuite, Monitor- This, Social Mention, Brand Monitor, TweetDeck, Wildfire, Wordle, Topsy, BackType, and BoardReader. A few of the paid service providers with good monitoring and measurement platforms include Alterian SM2, BurrellesLuce Engage121, Cision, CollectiveIntellect, Converseon, Lithium, Meltwater, Prosyna, Radian6, Sentiment Metrics, Sysomos, and Vocus.”<sup>150</sup>

### Channel Distribution

Social media subject matter experts recommend that the selection of distribution channels be tightly linked with the strategic communication objectives of the company. PR should determine what kinds of networks and what platforms ensure the widest access

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<sup>148</sup>Breakenridge, 41.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid.

to target audiences and provide the greatest opportunity to engage. PRs need to know the preferences of customers and what form of content can be shared on each platform. In this approach, statistics and social media analytics are helpful in identifying the right channels. As mobile usage continues to increase, PRs should also consider those channels that enable wireless access to social media platforms. The costs of each distribution channel should be a selection criteria as well.

### Communications Messaging and Content Optimization

When communicating on diverse social media platforms, PR professionals as content originators must to customize the themes and content of their messages the audiences they want to reach to maximize the intended impact and generate more website activity. It is mandatory for PR professionals to know their audience, be it individuals or small online communities, prior to creating and sending out messages. Surveys and analytics are the tools best suited to understand public preferences and how to shape perceptions. PR professionals should have always in mind that in Web 2.0 the control of the messages is lost once issued messages go viral and spread throughout the cyberspace. Even though communicating through different platforms might appear less difficult than writing traditional news releases, social media use does not imply lowering communication or writing standards. Social media requires more accurate, concise and timely messages as well as adequate tracking to correct misinformation, erroneous comments or to respond to customer's queries. PR need to determine what content excites the audience and how they share that content.

## Levels of Engagement

The level of engagement is linked with the level of ambition to reach larger audiences and is usually stated in the organization's communication strategy. PR professionals should determine what goals are achievable using common PR practices and goals can be addressed utilizing social media tools. PR professionals establish what the best ways to engage with the audiences is and what type action they want the audience to take whether that is to learn about the brand, provide endorsements, or co-create content. The engagement strategy should clearly specify "how certain types of engagement lead to higher-level adoption and business outcomes versus lower-level participation in communities."<sup>151</sup> If social media becomes a tool for PR, then the usual goals are to interact with wider audiences in order to collect and analyze their feed-back, provide answers and clarification when needed or to make the audience feel part of the organization, gaining their support for future projects.<sup>152</sup>

Social media engagement contains inherent risks. The advent of social media in the corporate environment generates risks to the data (unauthorized disclosure), technology (viruses or worms), people (loss of productivity) and organization (reputational loss). The main question when coping with risks is whether the organization has an official and effective policy for the use of Social media or not. Deloitte audit reports assessed in 2012 that Social media control in the corporate environment lacks

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<sup>151</sup>Breakenridge, 159.

<sup>152</sup>Lt. Col. Mario Masdea, "The Challenge of Social Media in Security Policy Institutions: A Note of Caution" (Research Report, NATO Defense College, Rome, Italy, 2012), <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=144747andlng=en>, (accessed 15 February 2013), 2.



consistent practice. Organizations need to establish a control matrix based on use scenarios and set clear social media policy and guidance for both business and personal use inside and outside the workplace. Usually, an organizations' control approach for social media use falls into the following categories: block, no policy, limited access, controlled access. Usually PR develop and conduct a risk awareness program, establish a social media curriculum for training, and conduct social media training and awareness programs.<sup>153</sup>

### Benchmark Measurements

The measurement strategy to track/benchmark program success has to be adjusted to the strategic goals and objectives. The measurement strategy enables the organization to see the value of the PR/Social media program by utilizing tracking metrics that reveal leads, sales, registrations, learning, strategic relationships, reputation management, and thought leadership.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup>Deloitte, 23 and 30.

<sup>154</sup>Breakenridge, 159.

Table 22 Summary of the Communication and Social Media Experts' Recommendations

Areas of strategy development	Communication and social media experts
Audit, research and discovery process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Social media experimentation and research is a PR task;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Social media is two-way symmetrical communications or interactive dialogs with various publics;</li> </ul>
Goal and objective setting and budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Start experimentation with one tool, then expand to multiple tools;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The strategy should specify separate goals for the internal and external audience;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a monitoring and tracking and a measurement strategy;</li> </ul>
Monitoring and tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct <i>Cyber Image Analysis</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Social media monitoring tools helps PRs to strategically put a system in place based on their tracking and monitoring requirements;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employment of a free of charge or a subscription based monitoring and tracking solution;</li> </ul>
Channel distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Channels that enable: a wider access to the target audiences and greater opportunities to engage, wireless access from smartphones, free monitoring tools;</li> </ul>
Communications messaging and content optimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct surveys and analytics are to understand public preferences;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine what content excites the audience and how do they like to share content;</li> </ul>
Levels of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish the actions the audience to take: learn about the brand, provide endorsements, co-create content;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct social media training and risk awareness programs;</li> </ul>
Benchmark measurements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a measurement strategy and select the tools to gauge Social media success;</li> </ul>

Source: Created by author.

The environment of innovation created by social media has made it critical that PR practitioners keep up with the evolution in social media practices and technologies. These are some of recommendations of the communication and public relations experts categorized in accordance with the Breckenridge Social Media Strategy Wheel. The results serve to develop a model that Romanian Military Public Relations should follow to best adapt to social media.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

#### A Social media Model for the Romanian Military

Up until now, the study has performed a qualitative analysis of the NATO, U.S. DOD and Romanian military social media systems and an analysis of communication expert opinion using the seven dimensions proposed by Breakenridge resulting in pertinent conclusions. To best adapt the Romanian military to social media, these conclusions are assembled in a model structured on the aforementioned dimensions.

#### Audit, Research and Discovery Process

The conclusions of the study reveal the importance of conducting continuous audit and experimentation activities concurrently with the implementation of social media practices. The NATO Strategic Communications Limited Objective Experiment (LOE) conducted at the Chicago Summit is a suitable model to follow to begin a social media capability development program based upon the DOTMLPF framework. Romanian military Public Relations are required to broaden social media research and experimentation while engaging audiences on multiple platforms in public information activities. A special emphasis is required on the establishment of MOD and high ranking military leaders official social media presence.

The experimentation and research process is also instrumental in identifying Public Relations, OPSEC and Cyber security policy shortfalls and training requirements and to upgrade them accordingly. As one of the major finding of the study is the potential use of social media in the operational environment, Romania as a NATO country

member, should immediately commence the integration of PA, MISO/Psychological Operations and IO communications efforts in a Strategic Communication construct to ensure a common approach with the Alliance.

It is also recommended that DIRP conduct surveys among the MOD employees and external audiences prior to establishing a new social media presence, updating policies, or creating social media training programs. This is helpful to determine the public's preferred topics, medium and method for communicating messages or for example the employee's knowledge with regard to social media risks. DIRP has to ensure that best practices and research and discovery results are shared between services.

#### Goal, Objective Setting and Budgeting

The critical finding for this dimension is the need to establish a clear social media strategy, nested in the MOD Annual Public Relations and Communication strategy. Such a strategy should entail specific goals for monitoring and tracking, content optimization, and measurement and analysis. By having a strategy, the Romanian Armed Forces are required to conduct DOTMLPF analysis to determine the capability gap created by the emergence of social media.

The main goal of the Romanian military Public Relations is to diversify the social media platforms used and engage more directly with a wider audience to effectively convey MOD messages while simultaneously promoting the Army brand. Similar to NATO and the U.S. DOD, in the new context created by social media, Romania should adapt its communication practices by partnering with key influencers to convey the opinion of unbiased subject matter experts about the Romanian military and NATO issues.

Based on the NATO and U.S. military's experience, the MOD has to initially ensure that all doctrinal changes necessitated by incorporating social media is reflected in new or amended policies. This should include Social Media Handbooks, a Public Relations Policy, and Psychological Operations and Information Operations field manuals. Secondly, the establishment of a Social Media Cell at the MOD level adequately equipped and staffed with publishing, monitoring and analysis capability is highly required. Two new organizations, an Information Domination center and a Cyber-workforce, are required to exploit social media opportunities in support of commanders within the operational environment. Thirdly, all PR practitioners performing social media tasks need to undertake institutional training organized by DIRP. With proper training the message release authority can be delegated at the lowest level to PAO or to social media managers. Social media and OPSEC training should not be limited to senior officers, social media managers, and non-official or personnel on operational deployments; it should also include vulnerable categories like military families or cadets in the military education system. Prior to deployment OPSEC briefings are required to educate personnel about risks in the use of social media. A significant budget increase is required for social media and related operations to implement these proposed changes.

The corporate communications business conducts a massive amount of social media research. The military needs to understand and take into account this research in order to stay abreast with the latest innovations and practices. Most of the social media best practices are initially validated in the corporate environment and serves as a primary source of inspiration for PR communicators.

## Monitoring and Tracking

A monitoring and tracking strategy is mandatory to moderate content, to deliver business value and to identify emerging issues. A monitoring and tracking strategy enables DIRP to coordinate and organize the appropriate use of social media monitoring tools. This allows DIRP to then detect, monitor and track messages, to understand topics of interest and enables social network analysis. Monitoring and tracking results informs the measurement and analysis phase in order to determine social trends and ultimately to create the organization's Cyber Image Analysis.

A manual monitoring and tracking strategy that relies on the social media manager's commitment and availability is inconsistent, too narrowly focused and unsustainable in the long run due to the anticipated increase in audience size and shared content. The current lack of monitoring and tracking tools to measure and moderate distribution channels, and the insufficient human resources available to manage these channels, are risks that need to be addressed. The proposed solution is to realign billets and increase the level of cooperation with other branches, such as computer networks and communications, to enable the social media manager to produce more creative content.

Finally, depending on the budgetary allocations, DIRP should consider the employment of a free of charge or a subscription based monitoring and tracking solution. Although there is a plethora of monitoring and tracking platforms on the market, the military should construct its own.

## Channel Distribution

The study demonstrated the necessity for the diversification of the Romanian military's social media presence by using multiple distribution channels and establishing

separate channels for high ranking military leaders. The recent statistics for social media in Romania reveal the public's tremendous appetite for blogging, micro-blogging (Twitter and LinkedIn), photo sharing (Picasa and Flickr) and for mobile internet connections; all indicators for selecting the most effective and feasible new distribution channels. In the near future as the use of official social media expands, DIRP has to create a unified registry for all channels that disseminate information in an official capacity. This will assist in the reduction of the proliferation of unofficial military-related social media accounts while avoiding channel impersonation and maintaining accountability for each of the channels within the new media presence.

To efficiently integrate imagery acquisition, production, and dissemination capabilities it is a requirement for the Romanian Armed Forces to establish an information hub similar to the NATO TV Channel or the U.S. Army DVIDS to provide a consistent flow of information to traditional and social media outlets. There is excellent promise in Romania for a successful expansion of the distribution channel to integrate and interconnect all commands' social media presence in a coherent information hub directed by DIRP.

#### Communications, Messaging and Content Optimization

The most important recommendation for this dimension is for the Romanian military to establish a policy for content creation and dissemination. Communications, messaging and content optimization ensures that the content is suitable, effective and safe. Currently for NATO and the U.S. military the preoccupation for the quality of messaging seems to overshadow the other social media dimensions. As the audiences seek for genuine conversations, a prerequisite for social media managers is to develop

creative and marketing skills to keep the posts incentive, by using approved artwork, unifying it on all platforms, and mixing up the content for special events.

A second major recommendation is to integrate, coordinate and synchronize domestic, international and in-theatre messages within the overarching concept of Strategic communications. Finally, recommendations of media experts' stress the necessity of conducting periodic surveys and analysis to understand public preferences and to determine what content excites the audience and how the audience shares that content.

### Levels of Engagement

The MOD Annual Communication Strategy needs to identify the audiences and the communicators targeted for social media engagement. On behalf of the defense organization the study identified the communicators as military leaders, key influencers and military families. DIRP must evaluate the opportunities for military leaders to communicate in the social media space more directly with audiences by creating specific social media blogs and platforms. The engagement of key influencers with expertise in defense issues to provide unbiased perspectives should receive special emphasis. Family Readiness Groups in the U.S. Army is the responsibility of the military organization down to the company level. By engaging and keeping military families in the communications loop the U.S. Army creates and maintains a positive brand endorsement, strengthening the relationship between the military and the community writ large.

Second, DIRP has to communicate a policy for social media engagement. This policy must include the terms of use for users and a step-by-step methodology for social media managers to follow when publishing official posts. DIRP must assign



responsibility to a specific billet or position to efficiently moderate discussions and to remove inappropriate posts.

Finally, the experts recommend that Public Relations determine the actions we want the audience take. That could be as simple as learning about the organization or the brand, providing endorsements or co-creating content. To address service members that use social media in an official or private capacity DIRP has to institute at a minimum social media training and risk awareness programs to prevent violations of OPSEC, copy right, and international laws.

#### Benchmark Measurements

A coherent measurement strategy adds value to an organization's Cyber image analysis and measures social media success. First, the Romanian military must devise a measurement strategy that includes tools to measure online activity and engagement and provides moderating tools to eliminate inappropriate content. Second, DIRP must establish and resource a Social Media Monitoring Cell that is capable of intervention and moderating content when necessary.

Measurement results are critical for the evaluation of communication. They can be used to moderate content, identify relevant trends and topics of interest to the public and to the MOD, and finally to understand whether the social media strategy meets performance indicators.

Table 23 A Social Media Model for the Romanian Military–Summary Matrix

Dimension	Recommendations
Audit, research and discovery process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue audit, research and discovery process concurrently with social media implementation;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Broaden social media research and experimentation while engaging audiences on multiple platforms;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify Public Relations, OPSEC and Cyber security policy shortfalls and training requirements;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Integrate PA, MISO/Psychological Operations and IO communications efforts in a Strategic Communication construct;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> DIRP has to ensure that best practices and research and discovery results are shared between services;</li> </ul>
Goal and objective setting and budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> MOD Annual Public Relations and Communication strategy to include a social media section;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct DOTMLPF analysis to determine the capability gap created by the emergence of social media;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish Social Media Cell at the MOD level adequately equipped and staffed;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> MOD to ensure doctrinal changes necessitated by incorporating social media are reflected in new or amended policies;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct OPSEC briefings to educate personnel about risks in the use of social media.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> DIRP to stay abreast with the latest innovations and practices from NATO and the corporate environment.</li> </ul>
Monitoring and tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish MOD monitoring and tracking strategy;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Realign billets and increase the level of cooperation with other branches to implement the strategy;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employ of free or a subscription based monitoring and tracking tools.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Construct own monitoring and tracking tool;</li> </ul>
Channel distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a media information hub and issue a management policy;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Diversify distribution channels and establish separate channels for high ranking military leaders(Twitter/LinkedIn);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create a unified registry for all official social media channels;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Integrate and interconnect all commands' social media presence in a coherent information hub directed by DIRP;</li> </ul>
Communications messaging and content optimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a policy for content creation and dissemination;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Integrate, coordinate and synchronize messages within the overarching concept of Strategic communications;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct periodic surveys and analysis to understand public preferences;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Train social media managers to develop creative and marketing skills;</li> </ul>
Levels of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Issue a social media engagement policy;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Institute minimal social media training and risk awareness programs;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Engage the military leaders, key influencers and military families to convey defense messages;</li> </ul>
Benchmark measurements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Devise a coherent measurement strategy and tools;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish and resource a Social Media Monitoring Cell;</li> </ul>

Source: Created by author.

## Research Questions

In the introduction, five secondary questions were proposed to frame the problem surrounding the main question: How does the Romanian military Public Relations adapt in the new context generated by the emergence of the social media? The answer to the first of the secondary questions: “What lessons learned derive from implementing Social media in U.S. Army and NATO?” can be found in the conclusions of NATO and U.S. military case studies. The answer for the next secondary question: “How does the Romanian Armed Forces use Social media at present?” is given in the conclusions of the Romanian military social media case study. The study answered the third of the secondary questions: “Which are the similarities and differences between U.S. Army/NATO social media and social media in Romanian Armed Forces?” in the conclusions of the social media systems comparison. The answer to the fourth of the secondary questions: “What are the recommendations of communication and social media experts for public affairs?” are illustrated in the matrix with Summary of the Communication and Social media experts’ recommendations. Finally, the answer to the last of the secondary questions: “What adjustments are necessary for optimizing Romanian military social media?” compiles all the conclusions and recommendations of the study, distinctly for the seven dimensions of the analysis, in the social media model for the Romanian military.

### How the Study Answered to the Main Research Question?

The study reveals that the social media system in the Romanian military is in the early development phase, following approximately the same steps as that of the U.S. military and NATO in the process of researching and implementing the use of social

media. As this process started relatively recently in Romania, the study identifies several gaps in the terms of policies, human resources and material, training, education, and OPSEC, which are incorporated in the proposed social media model for the Romanian military Public Relations. It is now the decision of the MOD Public Relations Directorate to consider this social media model as a solution to assist PR in implementing social media more effectively. The research was not intended to become a social media encyclopedia, but to familiarize the reader with the key challenges and opportunities gleaned from lessons learned from NATO and the U.S. DOD that Romanian military Public Relations practitioners have to contend with when implementing new media in their daily activities.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

This is the first study on the topic of social media implementation in the Romanian military. The study sought to examine the Public Relations and communication expert's recommendations on social media, as well as how NATO and the U.S. military managed the implementation of social media and how this was reflected in their policies. The findings were assembled in a model that comprises pertinent recommendations for the Romanian MOD Public Relations Directorate.

There are several possibilities for further research. A study of the doctrine and policies of the other branches of the Romanian military concerning the impact of Social media and Strategic Communication could provide further insight into the subject area. An examination of how social media can be integrated in mission planning and execution to assist commanders in visualizing and better understanding the operational environment. Finally, research into the role of social media in strategic communication,

as well as the roles of communication specialists such as Public Affairs and Information Operations officers, could provide additional informational depth on the topic.

APPENDIX A  
U.S. Army Social Media Strategy for the week of: January 30-February 3, 2012

	Monday, 30 January	Tuesday, 31 January	Wednesday, 1 February	Thursday, 2 February	Friday, 3 February
<b>Theme:</b>	<b>History</b>  <b>Army Homefront Fund</b>	<b>MOS Feature – 35T</b> <i>Military Intelligence (MI) Systems Maintainer/Integrator</i> <b>Army Values</b>	<b>U.S. Army Reserve</b>	<b>National Guard</b>	<b>Fill In The Blank</b>
<b>Top-Line Army Message:</b>	The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. This is what makes us Army Strong.	The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. This is what makes us Army Strong.	The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. This is what makes us Army Strong.	The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. This is what makes us Army Strong.	The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. This is what makes us Army Strong.
<b>Flickr:</b>	Post 3-5 photos of Army missions	Post 3-5 photos of Army missions	Post 3-5 photos of Army missions	Post 3-5 photos of Army missions	Post 3-5 photos of Army missions
<b>Engagement Question:</b>	How do you support Wounded Warriors?	What questions do you have about MOS 35T?	How do you define hero?	What advice do you have for future Soldiers?	What advice do you have for Army Families who are PCSing?
<b>Facebook:</b>	<p><b>7AM:</b> <i>Link to external news</i></p> <p><b>11AM:</b> What comes to mind when you think of Army Aviation? Fort Sill is home to the oldest continuously operating Army airfield, almost 100 years old, and is considered the birthplace of Army combat aviation. <b>LINK TO</b> <a href="http://ht.ly/8AoUj">http://ht.ly/8AoUj</a></p> <p><b>2PM:</b> <i>Upload wall photo</i></p> <p><b>4PM:</b> Operation Homefront and the U.S. Army Warrior Transition Command (@<a href="http://www.facebook.com/armyAW2">http://www.facebook.com/armyAW2</a>) help provide financial aid to Wounded Warriors and their Families. Read the stories from families who benefited from the fund and tell us how you support Wounded Warriors? <b>LINK TO</b> <a href="http://ht.ly/8Ap7I">http://ht.ly/8Ap7I</a></p> <p><b>7PM:</b> <i>Share content from an Army organization's Facebook page</i></p> <p><b>9PM:</b> <i>Link to Flickr photo</i></p>	<p><b>7AM:</b> <i>Link to external news</i></p> <p><b>11AM:</b> Train to be the eyes and ears of the U.S. Army as a Military Intelligence Systems Maintainer/Integrator. What questions do you have for (<a href="http://www.facebook.com/goarmy">http://www.facebook.com/goarmy</a>) about this military occupational specialty? <b>LINK TO</b> <a href="http://ht.ly/8AlsM">http://ht.ly/8AlsM</a></p> <p><b>2PM:</b> <i>Upload wall photo</i></p> <p><b>4PM:</b> No one is more professional than I. I am a noncommissioned officer, a leader of Soldiers. <b>LINK TO</b> <a href="http://www.army.mil/values/nco.html">http://www.army.mil/values/nco.html</a></p> <p><b>7PM:</b> <i>Share content from an Army organization's Facebook page</i></p> <p><b>9PM:</b> <i>Link to Flickr photo</i></p>	<p><b>7AM:</b> <i>Link to external news</i></p> <p><b>11AM:</b> <i>Share time-sensitive content from the U.S. Army Reserve Facebook Page</i> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/usarmyreserve">https://www.facebook.com/usarmyreserve</a></p> <p><b>2PM:</b> <i>Upload wall photo</i></p> <p><b>4PM:</b> How do you define "hero"? (@<a href="http://www.facebook.com/USACEHQ">http://www.facebook.com/USACEHQ</a>) crew members of the Dredge McFarland rescued a boater who had reportedly been floating in 48 degree water for nearly three hours. <b>LINK TO</b> <a href="http://ht.ly/8AmFh">http://ht.ly/8AmFh</a></p> <p><b>7PM:</b> <i>Share content from an Army organization's Facebook page</i></p> <p><b>9PM:</b> <i>Link to Flickr photo</i></p>	<p><b>7AM:</b> <i>Link to external news</i></p> <p><b>11AM:</b> <i>Share time-sensitive content from the National Guard Facebook Page</i> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/TheNationalGuard">https://www.facebook.com/TheNationalGuard</a> or <b>RESHARE</b> Facebook post: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/TheNationalGuard/posts/279335988795425">https://www.facebook.com/TheNationalGuard/posts/279335988795425</a></p> <p><b>2PM:</b> <i>Upload wall photo</i></p> <p><b>4PM:</b> What advice do you have for future Soldiers? "Take the job seriously because when you get overseas there's no second chances," said U.S. Army Ranger and Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Leroy Petry. <b>LINK TO</b> <a href="http://ht.ly/8AoLW">http://ht.ly/8AoLW</a></p> <p><b>7PM:</b> <i>Share content from an Army organization's Facebook page</i></p> <p><b>9PM:</b> <i>Link to Flickr photo</i> <b>HISTORICAL FACT:</b> On this day in 1942, the first U.S. Troops arrive in Britain to support the Allies in WWII.</p>	<p><b>7AM:</b> <i>Link to external news</i></p> <p><b>11AM:</b> <i>Fill in the Blank: When PCSing, you should always _____.</i></p> <p><b>2PM:</b> <i>Upload wall photo</i></p> <p><b>4PM:</b> Military operations on glaciers? Soldiers training at the (@<a href="https://www.facebook.com/USANWTC">https://www.facebook.com/USANWTC</a>) at (<a href="https://www.facebook.com/USArmyAlaska">https://www.facebook.com/USArmyAlaska</a>) prepare for such a mission. <b>LINK TO</b> <a href="http://ht.ly/8kGcf">http://ht.ly/8kGcf</a></p> <p><b>7PM:</b> <i>Share content from an Army organization's Facebook page</i></p> <p><b>9PM:</b> <i>Link to Flickr photo</i></p>

<p><b>Twitter:</b></p> <p><i>Tweet links to stories from the Army.mil lineup. As appropriate, incorporate #USArmy, #military, #War, #Afghanistan, #Soldier, #milhealth, #WoundedWarrior and #SOT hashtags.</i></p>	<p>From @WarriorCare: #Yoga is an alternative therapy for #WoundedWarriors with post traumatic stress <a href="http://ht.ly/8Ak9k">http://ht.ly/8Ak9k</a></p> <p>Our #MilitaryMon picks highlights #USArmy Senior Leaders: @GENRayOdierno @SMACHandler @GENBobCone @GENAnnEDunwoody #MM</p> <p>"The Army found that after 10 years of war, Soldiers are getting broken," said Capt. Ken Huenink of @Missouri_NG. <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjCq">http://ht.ly/8AjCq</a></p> <p>The #USArmy @FieldBand has big plans for 2012 <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjDF">http://ht.ly/8AjDF</a> What song(s) would you like them to perform?</p> <p>Did you know that Fort Sill is the birthplace of #ArmyAviation? <a href="http://ht.ly/8AoUj">http://ht.ly/8AoUj</a></p>	<p>The #USArmy in #Alaska has a proud and often cold history. Check out these historic images on @Facebook: <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjHh">http://ht.ly/8AjHh</a></p> <p>From @MilitaryOneSource: #Troops who deploy and move frequently are vulnerable to identity theft. Protect yourself <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjAa">http://ht.ly/8AjAa</a></p> <p>From @DVIDSHub: #SpecialOperations Chaplain memorialized in ceremony <a href="http://ht.ly/8Av18">http://ht.ly/8Av18</a></p> <p>Train to be the eyes and ears of the #USArmy as a #Military Intelligence Systems Maintainer/Integrator <a href="http://ht.ly/8AIsM">http://ht.ly/8AIsM</a> @GoArmy</p> <p>#Military kids now have their own #socialmedia playground that helps them deal with challenges of deployment. <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjSI">http://ht.ly/8AjSI</a></p>	<p>From @SMACHandler: The #USArmy of the future will be smaller than today's, but it will still need to take in tens of thousands of volunteers every year <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjUM">http://ht.ly/8AjUM</a></p> <p>Video from @ABC: #Troops face the threat of IEDs daily with 15,000 bombs discovered in 2011 <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjW3">http://ht.ly/8AjW3</a></p> <p>Cast your vote for the #USArmy #MilSpouse of the Year! <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjZ7">http://ht.ly/8AjZ7</a> @MilSpouseMag</p> <p>Freedom is not free. <a href="http://ht.ly/8Ak3H">http://ht.ly/8Ak3H</a> The @FortBelvoir Survivors Outreach Services program helps Families of Fallen Soldiers thrive.</p> <p>There's a cloth diaper brigade at Fort Bliss who is saving money and helping the #environment <a href="http://ht.ly/8Ak7e">http://ht.ly/8Ak7e</a> #milfam</p>	<p>Photos: Paratroopers conduct room clearing training at Fort Polk <a href="http://ht.ly/8Akam">http://ht.ly/8Akam</a> @FortPolkPAO</p> <p>This #football referee reminds those without a #military connection to get involved <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjFI">http://ht.ly/8AjFI</a></p> <p>This small #Colorado town gives big welcome home to @TheNatGuard #troops <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjTL">http://ht.ly/8AjTL</a></p> <p>Operation Warmth - it's the #USArmy Corps of Engineers' program to deliver clothes to orphans: <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjAy">http://ht.ly/8AjAy</a> #Afghanistan</p> <p>"Take the job seriously because when you get overseas there's no second chances." <a href="http://ht.ly/8AoLW">http://ht.ly/8AoLW</a> #MOHPetry #RLTW</p>	<p>"I can honestly credit my brother for my decision to join the Army," says Staff Sgt. Andrew Payne. <a href="http://ht.ly/8AkBJ">http://ht.ly/8AkBJ</a> Who or what inspired you to join?</p> <p>Fort Bragg paratroopers bound for #Afghanistan picked up the latest skills and equipment <a href="http://ht.ly/8Ak5p">http://ht.ly/8Ak5p</a> @FortPolkPAO @FtBraggNC</p> <p>#USArmy #FollowFriday picks include: @2BCT10thMtnDiv @USAfricaCommand @USAGYongsan @europedistrict @FORSCOM @FamilyMWR @ROKreport #FF</p> <p>Video: Welcome to Day One of #USArmy Basic Training. Get ready for yelling—lots of it. <a href="http://ht.ly/8AjNb">http://ht.ly/8AjNb</a></p>
<p><b>Blogosphere</b></p>	<p><i>Army Live Blog Post Topic:</i> Did you know - Facts about the Army Corps of Engineers</p>	<p><i>Army Live Blog Post Topic:</i> Army Acronyms</p>	<p><i>Army Live Blog Post Topic:</i> Senior Leader Feature (Farewell to Gen. Chiarelli)</p>	<p><i>Army Live Blog Post Topic:</i> Army Quiz: "Working your way up the Army Ranks"</p>	<p><i>Army Live Blog Post Topic:</i> Photo of the Week</p>
<p><b>Army.mil Spotlight</b></p>	<p>Year in Photos (2011) Operation Arkansas Stories of Valor</p>	<p>Year in Photos (2011) Operation Arkansas Stories of Valor</p>	<p>Year in Photos (2011) Operation Arkansas Stories of Valor</p>	<p>Year in Photos (2011) Operation Arkansas Stories of Valor</p>	<p>Year in Photos (2011) Operation Arkansas Stories of Valor</p>
<p><b>STAND-TO!</b></p>	<p>Army Antiterrorism Conference</p>	<p>NetZero</p>	<p>Knowledge Magazine</p>	<p>Army Olympics/Paralympics Team</p>	<p>NGB Virtual Diversity</p>
<p><b>Goal</b></p>	<p>To educate &amp; engage with U.S. Army audiences</p>	<p>To educate &amp; engage with U.S. Army audiences</p>	<p>To educate &amp; engage with U.S. Army audiences</p>	<p>To educate &amp; engage with U.S. Army audiences</p>	<p>To educate &amp; engage with U.S. Army audiences</p>
<p><b>Measures of Performance</b></p>	<p>-<i>Army Live</i>: Site Visits, Page Views and Number of Blog Posts -<i>Army.mil</i>: Page views, Facebook Likes, Referral Traffic -<i>Facebook</i>: Feedback Percentage, Impressions, Likes, Comments, Shares, etc. -<i>Flickr</i>: Photo views, Comments, Number of photos marked as a favorite -<i>Twitter</i>: Number of Followers, Retweets, Tweetreach, etc. -<i>STAND-TO</i>: Total Number of Subscribers &amp; Click Through-Rate</p>	<p>-<i>Army Live</i>: Site Visits, Page Views and Number of Blog Posts -<i>Army.mil</i>: Page views, Facebook Likes, Referral Traffic -<i>Facebook</i>: Feedback Percentage, Impressions, Likes, Comments, Shares, etc. -<i>Flickr</i>: Photo views, Comments, Number of photos marked as a favorite -<i>Twitter</i>: Number of Followers, Retweets, Tweetreach, etc. -<i>STAND-TO</i>: Total Number of Subscribers &amp; Click Through-Rate</p>	<p>-<i>Army Live</i>: Site Visits, Page Views and Number of Blog Posts -<i>Army.mil</i>: Page views, Facebook Likes, Referral Traffic -<i>Facebook</i>: Feedback Percentage, Impressions, Likes, Comments, Shares, etc. -<i>Flickr</i>: Photo views, Comments, Number of photos marked as a favorite -<i>Twitter</i>: Number of Followers, Retweets, Tweetreach, etc. -<i>STAND-TO</i>: Total Number of Subscribers &amp; Click Through-Rate</p>	<p>-<i>Army Live</i>: Site Visits, Page Views and Number of Blog Posts -<i>Army.mil</i>: Page views, Facebook Likes, Referral Traffic -<i>Facebook</i>: Feedback Percentage, Impressions, Likes, Comments, Shares, etc. -<i>Flickr</i>: Photo views, Comments, Number of photos marked as a favorite -<i>Twitter</i>: Number of Followers, Retweets, Tweetreach, etc. -<i>STAND-TO</i>: Total Number of Subscribers &amp; Click Through-Rate</p>	<p>-<i>Army Live</i>: Site Visits, Page Views and Number of Blog Posts -<i>Army.mil</i>: Page views, Facebook Likes, Referral Traffic -<i>Facebook</i>: Feedback Percentage, Impressions, Likes, Comments, Shares, etc. -<i>Flickr</i>: Views, Comments and photos marked as a favorite -<i>Twitter</i>: Number of Followers, Retweets, Tweetreach, etc. -<i>STAND-TO</i>: Total Number of Subscribers &amp; Click Through-Rate</p>

Source: Excerpt from George Patterson, "Analysis and Insights," *Review of Social Media and Defence* <http://www.defence.gov.au/pathwaytochange/docs/socialmedia/3.%20Analysis%20and%20insights.pdf> (accessed 21 March 2013).

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