

Government 2.0 @ State



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Social Media in the State Department

What is the purpose of “social media” in the State Department?

- Knowledge management
- Collaboration
- Expertise location
- Sharing information
- Reaching new audiences



Wikis, blogs, instant messaging,
Facebook, Second Life, email, telegrams...

Really, all media are social – radio is social, film is social, even letter-writing is social

Obviously, we are seeing a new turn in web media – content production more diffuse, increased collaboration, which is why many companies are turning to “enterprise 2.0”

Blogs, wikis, IM, social networking tools like Facebook, virtual worlds like Second Life – most people would consider these to be “social media” tools, and these are all currently in use – internally or externally – by State Dept.

But older communication tools, like email –or even really old technologies like telegrams, or cables, are staples of State’s current communication processes.

State’s interest in social media: for internal communication, we found that many of these tools would allow us to better manage our knowledge. There were very few if any institutional mechanisms for collecting and distributing one’s tacit knowledge. These tools also allowed people to collaborate (on drafting documents, for example). Also allowed people to find others who had expertise or interest in particular topic areas. For external communication, we found that such tools gave us access to new, often younger audiences, and allowed us to participate in ongoing dialogue with the (networked) world.

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- **Basic Roles**
 - Make and execute foreign policy
 - Provide consular and passport services
 - Manage official U.S. presence abroad
- **57,000+ employees worldwide**
- **Produces high volume of knowledge**

The organizational chart of the United States Department of State is a complex hierarchy. At the top is the Secretary of State, who oversees the Deputy Secretary of State and the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration. Below these are several offices, including the Office of the Inspector General, the Office of the Chief of Protocol, and the Office of the Chief of Mission. The chart also shows the structure of the Department's various bureaus, such as the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, and the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation. At the bottom of the chart are the names of the heads of these bureaus and offices, along with the names of the heads of the Department's various embassies and consulates around the world.

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First, in order to talk about Enterprise 2.0, or Social Media in Government, we need to know a bit about the enterprise, or government agency, in which this social mediation takes place. This is a little primer on the State Dept: large institution, bureaucratic. 57,000+ employees in over 240 posts around the world. Many foreign employees.

We mainly produce information. Over 2 million cables a year; now up to a billion emails a year.

Org chart: this is only the top strata of the Department.

State Department Social Media Programs

- Diplopedia wiki
- Communities @ State blogs
- Facebook
- ReferenceDesk & Virtual Libraries

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Going to just run through a few of State's different social media programs, how they relate to State's KM strategy, and then Elaine will speak to the applications for the Bunche Library.

Others: Dipnote blog on the Internet, Second Life, SMART, State: Your Experience

State's Social Media: Diplopedia

- Enterprise wiki
- Voluntary content production
- User pages can serve as online profiles with networking components



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Diplopedia is State's internal, Department-wide encyclopedic wiki: over 4,100 articles, >800 registered users, >half a million page views

Primary purposes: knowledge repository, collaborative drafting

The software is MediaWiki, which many people are familiar with thanks to Wikipedia. Two main differences: this is on a Department-only network (potentially 45,000 users), and we require editors to log in (for attribution)

This is the main page of Diplopedia. I know the Intellipedia folks are going to talk in a few minutes about how an interagency wiki works, but I'm going to take this opportunity to preempt them by explaining why it's a good idea to have your own intra-agency wiki as well. (smile)

There are at least two formal interagency wikis – MAX and Intellipedia. I've worked in both, and they're great. However, there are some things in your agency, dep't, what have you, that are worth taking ownership of and saying, "This is part of our knowledge strategy." An analogy I like (and that I think is appropriate for this forum) is that a government entity only using an interagency wiki is like government libraries saying all we need is the LC. The Library of Congress is awesome, but we at State need Bunche! Jimmy Wales, the co-founder of Wikipedia, testified before Congress in December 2007 about Government 2.0, and he stated that interagency wikis are great for horizontal collaboration and information sharing, but there is a definite need for so-called "vertical" information sharing as well...that's the stuff that gets around the bureaucracy within an institution and allows everyone to contribute what they know to help the organization to be more effective and efficient, and leverage the knowledge that they're investing and invested in to continue their good work.

Diplopedia and Knowledge Management

- Information in context
- Transformational Diplomacy: anytime, anywhere
- Work smarter

So, here's an example of a use if the wiki that helps a lot on the agency level.

This is the front page of our Deskikipedia Portal; it's a subject briefing page within Diplopedia that Desk Officers utilize for everything from how to reserve a conference room to how to find complicated economic statistics. Unlike a "typical" wiki article, portal pages concatenate articles with shared subjects so the topic can be navigated by browsing instead of simply searching. This is especially helpful for onboarding, as many times people don't realize what they don't know until they see it.

Information in context is incredibly important. The role of a desk officer at State is to be the conduit of information between posts (embassies, consulates, etc.) and Washington. This is a space where current desk officers can learn best practices from those with experience in the same or similar positions, and they can ask questions and share their work with others doing similar tasks.

State's Transformational Diplomacy initiative encourages officers to get out from their offices and do the work of the Department in the field; they can access this information from laptops and Department-issued BlackBerrys.

Work Smarter, Not Harder, is a big refrain in the Web 2.0 world, and this is a way to encourage that activity. Essentially, on a simple level, we're saying: hey, don't spend two hours trying to figure out who to call about this or that issue. Check out this resource, and there are instructions on how to find the information, or look and see who updates your area of interest and make sure you contact him or her. It allows for a repository of knowledge as well as some degree of expertise location.

State's Social Media: Communities @ State

- Internal, multi-author blogging program
- Most blogs allow inter-agency participation
- Transcends geographic and temporal boundaries

47 active blogs, over 15,000 entries, over 2,000 comments

Software is Movable Type

Many blogs conform to internal institutional structure and are organized by office or mission, such as the one pictured – Transformations, which is the Office of eDiplomacy’s reporting and discussion blog. Some, however, are “self-forming communities” organized around job function or topics of interest (ex. SYS Blog, OMS Blog, Children in War, Labor Diplomacy).

Generally, we’ve seen a higher ratio of entries to comments than you might expect. To some degree, this may have to do with institutional culture.

All the blogs are indexed, full-text, so they can be searched by keyword, and they also use topics for organization. So, for instance, if you just want to see what eDiplomacy has been working on in regard to GIS, you can click “Mapping” and see the historic work of our office in that area. It’s a very different way of showing the work that an office does from the traditional Intranet one-dimensional webpage.

State's Social Media: Facebook

- Careers in Foreign Affairs group
- Department of State social network





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The Careers in Foreign Affairs group is HR's organized effort to use Facebook for recruiting

But even before that, people in the Department started a Department of State social network on their own (currently >1,500 members)

Integrated with the State:Your Experience program, so testimonials from officers can be linked to their Facebook profiles on the Internet

Enterprise setting provides a different context for Web 2.0

- Cultural norms
- Institutional history
- Constraints (economic, bureaucratic, etc.)
- Established processes for content production

Enterprise 2.0 \neq Web 2.0



When academics first started to think about these new media, they studied them as new “genres.” One study from 2005 looks at the genre of the “web log.” We still think of these tools in this way – we expect blogs or wikis to look or act a certain way, based on what we find on Blogger or Wikipedia. But the technology itself isn’t going to force people to use it in specific ways, and isn’t going to determine a particular set of practices. Wikipedia is a product not just of MediaWiki, but also Internet culture. When we take tools like MediaWiki or Movable Type or Second Life and move them to the enterprise, we are situating them in an entirely different culture, with different norms, a different history, different constraints, and different processes for content production.

The lesson: don’t expect Enterprise 2.0 to mimic Web 2.0.

Institutional Culture at State

- Cables and telegrams
- “Clearance culture”
- Hierarchies of approval
- “Need to know”



So these tools, as used in the State Department, are bound to reflect the existing institutional culture of the State Dept. As I mentioned earlier, State is a large institution with many codified bureaucratic practices of producing content. The institution is still very invested in its first real-time global communication technology: the trans-atlantic telegram. Even though they are now electronic messages that traverse the Internet, State still calls these official messages “cables,” or “telegrams,” and uses the same rigid formula for authoring these messages as it did during the Second World War and the Cold War. At State, we refer to our culture of content production as a “clearance culture,” but we could also easily call it a “cable culture.”

What we've learned...

- Bonum in se
- Encourage and reward participation
- Recognize early adopters and positive deviants
- Understand when bureaucracy is best





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All too often, librarians and technologists are accused of embracing the newest technology as an end in itself without regard to how it works for users. In a “Government 2.0” world, you have to recognize what’s useful to your agency, so that deployment of a new technology can be seen as a Good in Itself instead of another hassle or another password to learn. You have to be ready to show how a tool can be a Good in Itself, and then show how adapting it for use in your context helps to meet your organization’s mission.

So, with that, encourage and reward participation. Some users formed a Welcoming Committee, which personally welcomes each new editor to Diplopedia. The picture at the top right of this slide is what appears on every new users talk page; it’s a joke about the perception of diplomats as “cookie pushers”, who welcome people to the culture by way of a warm personality and friendly discussion. It’s apt.

The community of users has created a number of different designations to encourage others to participate, which they can then post as badges on their profile. The Office of eDiplomacy also sponsors an internal award for “WikiChampions”, those who encourage others to contribute and collaborate: it’s a no-cost recognition, but it shows support for the ways they use the tools and tells them that encouraging other people to use Diplopedia is as important as using it themselves.

A recent article in the Harvard Business Review discussed “positive deviance”: ways that employees go around the “way things have been done” to make the organization better. Launching tools like Diplopedia and Communities are a great way to find the early adopters and positive deviants in your organization, no matter where they are. When you know who is interested in new technologies and improving the Department, you can then ask them for input when you’re working through a new issue or trying to figure out how best to deploy a new idea.

Where we're going...

- Moving towards “need to share”
- Connect tools to maximize efforts and exposure
- Remain flexible and adapt tools to users' needs
- Leverage and learn from knowledge leadership strategy



Future: in order to allow these cultures and tools to successfully co-exist, we need to connect them. Right now many of these tools stand alone and separate from one another, and this problem is furthered by a lack of Active Directory integration. But we're making progress.

One of the things that really helps hang everything together is enterprise search. Also, HR has connected Facebook to their profile application by allowing users to add their personal Facebook badge to their professional profile. We've begun to connect the blogs and the wiki through RSS feeds and wiki badges. We're making plans to connect both blogs and Diplopedia to the HR profile application, so that users can display the entries and articles they write – their demonstrated work – with their professional profile. These are all ways of encouraging and rewarding participation in these programs (esp. considering that participation in these very new programs is not yet officially recognized in the institution). We hope to continue in the spirit of organic growth that we've started with by listening to users and modifying these tools to fit people's needs as they arise.

One area that's becoming more and more important is mobility, and the use of mobile technologies. The Communities and Diplopedia work seamlessly with Department-issued laptops and BlackBerries to get people information anytime and anywhere, and this credo will likely be increasingly important in the future.

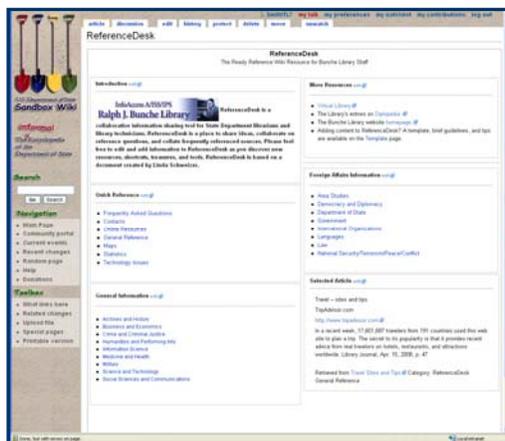
Of course, the ultimate goal is to leverage and learn from the knowledge that people share via the use of these tools. As more and more people start to use these things, we're getting more information about how they see themselves within the organization (via categories and tags), how they do their work (via articles and blog posts), and how they relate to their information environment as a whole. Beyond the obvious, i.e., making tacit knowledge explicit to help others, we're starting to see patterns emerge that will help users on an enterprise level to do their work.

The Foreign Affairs Professional Reading List, which Elaine will talk about it, is a great example of information in context and ways to learn from everyone in the enterprise.

Now I'll turn things over to Elaine, who can speak to the ways that Bunche Library specifically is utilizing these tools and how other government libraries might consider using these technologies.

Another Wiki: ReferenceDesk

- **The ready reference wiki resource for Bunche Library Staff**
- **Hosted on State's "Sandbox"**
- **Collaborative**
- **Repository for FAQs, contact information, and further resources**



Converted from a 300 page Word Document

Allows for the library staff to collaborate by contributing answers to frequently asked questions, contacts, and tips and tricks for databases

Hosted on the "Sandbox" wiki, so it's not indexed by the State search engine: finished articles can then be moved to Diplopedia as a reference for all

Bunche Library @ Communities

- Online resources targeted for a specific bureau or subject
- Collaborative effort of librarians and bureau staff
- Linked to various bureau and post web pages



The Bunche Library manages one instance of the Communities @ State blog. It highlights the Virtual Libraries project, wherein customized javascript brings in RSS feeds on areas of interest to bureaus and posts, based on region or topic; for example, Management innovations or Near Eastern Affairs. It also promotes new acquisitions, goings-on at the library, and other projects.

Foreign Affairs Professional Reading List




<http://www.afsa.org/readinglist.cfm>

- Professional Development Resource
- Contributions from throughout Department
- Available for continued dialogue
- Diplopedia as neutral space



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Available to the public, but can be interacted with via Diplopedia. Joint project between P, AFSA, Library, and eDip.

Phenomenally successful: the page on Diplopedia received more than 3,000 page views within two days, and there were a small number of really thoughtful and useful comments on the Discussion page within a week. For example, one person at a post in Asia suggested that we change the pdf of highly recommended titles to fit on one page instead of three, to save some paper and ink cartridges. It was a great idea, and we implemented it the next morning. We've also received a number of other suggestions for further reading and the idea to start a professional viewing list as well.

Beyond the contribution level, though, Diplopedia was selected as presenting a “neutral space” for the location of this list on our Intranet. Although it was sponsored and created by a number of offices, we didn’t want it be perceived as being “owned” by a specific office or bureau, but rather by the whole Department. Diplopedia was a perfect spot to make that understood.



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