

August 2023

Digital Diplomacy Use by Select US Embassies and Bureaus

Observations on Best Practices, Poor Practices, and Engagement via Social Media

A REPORT BY

Hasan Syed, Israel Archuletta, Natalia Franco Castillo, Olivia Hille, Sokhna Ndoye
American University | School of International Service
Practicum Professor Earl Anthony Wayne

Executive Summary

At the request of the Bureau of Global Public Affairs, the summer 2023 Public Diplomacy practicum team at American University's School of International Service carried out an audit of social media sites on an assigned collection of US Missions and Washington based offices with the objective of identifying the best practices and practices that could be improved. The team also tried to identify other useful observations related to how USG missions and offices are generating engagement with their audiences on social media and the potential for expanded outreach.

In studying the engagement by embassies and State Department offices on social media platforms, the team first examined the social media penetration in each country examine, tried to determine the different audiences that were apparently being targeted by the embassy or State Department office/bureau, outlined the broad political and social context of target countries, and observed if the embassies and missions were closely following the objectives identified in their Integrated Country Strategies (ICS). The project team applied this methodology for the overseas missions studied and adapted it to examine the State Department Offices identified and the special platforms which the team had been asked to study, i.e., Telegram and LinkedIn.

The team found that achieving higher engagement is correlated with how well content is tailored to reflect local cultural and social contexts for the host country where the mission is located or specific audiences that care about the mission in the case of multilateral missions.

For example, the Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal has strong engagement with its audiences and often includes tailored content. The high engagement appears to be at least in part due to the ambassador directly engaging with Nepalese viewers through tailored cultural connections via the most used social media platforms in Nepal.

More broadly across the embassy's studied, the team found that a mission's use of the ambassador in social media postings correlates with generating strong engagement. The persona of the Ambassador as a 'celebrity' played a role in engagement across various Missions and the range of popular social media platforms. The project team observed that the presence of Ambassadors on

social media platforms often boosted engagement on posts, regardless of the gender of the Ambassador.

But, the team recommends balancing focus on the ambassador with an array of postings highlighting other embassy staff also engaged with the local scene.

In this connection, the team observed that Embassy postings about gender issues, especially women and girls, seemed to regularly garner good engagement across countries.

A related example of tailored content is the use of local languages and cultural icons/practices. Embassies Conakry and Embassy Rangoon social media posts, for example, attracted significant engagement when the posts were offered in French and Burmese respectively and more when local citizens or cultural icons were included.

The team observed that most embassies studied used cross platform posting of the same media content (photos, videos, messages) for all or most social media accounts. The team, however, found different degrees of evident engagement by local audiences and very often little engagement. This cross platform posting may be a successful way to get information out to a large audience, but it was very hard for the team to measure if the information was read because much of the content garnered little reaction. Embassies and Missions (e.g. USUNVIE) with some curated local content added seemed to fare better and attract more engagement.

Specifically, the team concludes that the lack of platform differentiation between what is put on Facebook and Instagram is curbing engagement from audiences that differ in age/generation and thus missing engagement opportunities. Finding ways to invest more time in selective differentiation of posts among platforms (and thus audiences) would seem to be a very valuable practice.

Multilateral missions have a bit different challenge than bilateral embassies, in part because they have real and potential audiences that are spread across many countries and often have a particular set of substantive interests. These audiences may engage differently on different social media platforms. For example, Facebook was a strong place for engagement for most country missions, but in the case of the US Mission to the UN Agencies in Vienna (USUNVIE), the Facebook posts attracted the least engagement of all of the USUNVIE accounts, even though Facebook has the most followers for the mission.

As noted, a number of embassy missions posted the same content across all platforms, without curating specific content for each platform. But the team notes as mentioned above that different social media platforms have different demographic followings, and it is a best public diplomacy practice to tailor posting to different audiences. Most embassies, however, seemed to post identical material, especially material received from Washington, despite demographic audience differences on various platforms. This does not seem to be a best practice for attracting audience attention given the low engagement which the team observed. The team assumed that this practice was being followed because of Public Diplomacy section staff and time limitations. This practice may serve to get information out to audiences, however, it was very hard for the team to measure if that was taking place.

The team also found that more engagement seems to flow if the postings do not use too much text.

In instances on Twitter or Instagram where photos and graphics are used, those that contain lots of text in the graphic or photograph, received less engagement than traditional photos without much text. Carefully crafted photographic or graphic posts with less text and carefully chosen words, produced a high level of engagement. U.S. Mission Brazil's accounts, for example, successfully use posts without lengthy captions and minimal or text-less graphics. One example of this area for improvement that the team observed was the instance when the Office of Monitoring and Trafficking In Persons posted a series about Presidential Awards for efforts to combat trafficking. These posts include many words in their graphics and this coincided with low engagement on the posts.

Consistently across platforms and embassy missions, there are higher levels of engagement on posts about visas, events, english education, fellowships, intern opportunities, opportunities to engage with the embassy and job openings. Visa process instructions and information routinely receive high engagement numbers compared to an average on that platform or embassy, likely because the audiences for those posts are very interested in obtaining visas. In this connection, social media posts where opportunities for engagement with embassy staff were observed to be popular and registered high engagement rates.

Whether events, educational opportunities and/or fellowships, those posts gain a lot of attention. Using platforms to publicize these opportunities also seems to align with an uptick in engagement across other posts by the embassy, perhaps as more viewers are actively looking at the embassy's social media page for opportunities.

The team concludes that embassies should think instrumentally about how to use viewer interest in these kinds of posts to gain attention for other high priority messaging.

The team found that Embassy Nepal was one mission that stood out with very high engagement across all platforms and serves as an example of how social media can be used to garner wide reach within a country.

The Embassy's 4.4 million Facebook followers with daily posts, plus consistent near daily posts on Twitter, Instagram, and Pro Flicker resulted in far reaching engagement and messaging across all platforms in the country.

While for a number of reasons social media is usually used for one way engagement and sharing of information, the team observed that it can be used as a tool of public diplomacy for two way engagement. For example, the team found that live Q's & A's seemed to be popular. Embassy Conakry and Embassy Brasilia hosted live Q&As on their Instagram page, which generated a large number of comments, creating a decree of two way engagement between each respective Embassy and platform users in real time.

The team realizes that staff numbers and time constraints limit what embassies can do, but concludes that embassies should look to take advantage of fora that provide for such two-way exchanges with social media audiences. This could be a good practice, used prudently.

The team also concluded that Twitter and Telegram (and WhatsApp though we did not officially audit this platform) have great untapped potential through the ability to reach expanded networks for sharing information with the use of these platforms.

Using Twitter to curate for local audiences though re-tweeting relevance to local culture can be a good practice, instead of only retweeting main State Department accounts without comment.

If the embassy staff used a few moments when retweeting some of the material to add a comment, tying a tweet into a local message that resonates with local people, the team believes this could create higher engagement rates and reach more audiences. We would suggest that posts experiment with a limited number of retweets to see if such a practice produces more engagement.

Telegram and WhatsApp are functionally similar and both provide an excellent opportunity to reach individual users through their mobile devices to promote US policy interests.

Our team found that for each of the Telegram channels we researched, every message that was posted in a channel, was read (viewed) by at least 50% of the number of subscribers in the channel.

For example, Embassy Tashkent had 20,000+ subscribers to the Embassy channel, and each message had over 10,000 views which is an extremely high rate of potential audience for embassies to reach into groups and countries without access to normal media outlets.

More use of Telegram message posts (or similar channels) can be a great way to ensure a high percentage of information will be delivered to individual subscribers - especially in authoritarian states.

Though the team did not look at WhatsApp channels or groups by any of the embassies we surveyed, our research suggests that in countries where WhatsApp is used by large populations can be used in a similar manner as Telegram.

Both messaging platforms can be used to conduct public diplomacy by delivering U.S. messages directly to individual users who can reshare messages through their own contacts. In Russian language speaking populations, Telegram is used primarily over WhatsApp.

Short videos are used across all platforms, and receive considerably more likes than other posts that long videos over several minutes. This reflects the consistently growing popularity of these short videos around the world over the last decade. Embassy Nepal's use of Instagram short video reels has been successful in growing viewer rates from 1,500 views per video earlier this year, to approximately 15,000 - 20,000 views per reel into June 2023. But not all short videos correlate with high engagement.

The INL Instagram account, for example, uses primarily short videos to communicate on the account, but it receives low view count and low engagement likely because the bureau has not fully developed and implemented a plan based on best practices in the use of short-form video to gain wider and more consistent engagement. At present, the INL account uses the short video application to post bursts of pictures, rather than video.

Short form videos clearly have excellent potential for all embassy missions and bureaus to consider, for expanding public diplomacy reach and user engagement.

On the room for improvement side, the team found a consistently low engagement on posts that articulate American values where those values differ significantly from the local culture or country's societal norms.

Many Pride posts had negative engagement across all platforms and embassies, for example, except in Brazil. Similarly, Embassy posts promoting the Juneteenth holiday garnered negative reactions

and comments, likely because this is largely an American event (and recently elevated holiday) and should be presented with context and with links to a local country's culture and history.

Our interviews with digital diplomacy experts pointed to the on-going need to find better ways to combat misinformation online. The team found the Russia-Ukraine conflict is an area where embassies can and are supporting US values and working to authenticate information on the conflict in alignment with US policy. Each embassy or account we observed consistently promoted U.S. policy of supporting Ukraine against Russian aggression on all social media platforms. Support for Ukraine was positive across all platforms that we observed.

Finally, all embassy missions also appeared to do a good job of reflecting the objectives of their respective Integrated Country (or Mission) Strategies in their social media use.

Table of contents:

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	5
US Missions, Offices, And Social Media Platforms Studied	6
Methodology	7
Main Data Table	9
Case Studies by Mission	11
Embassy of Rangoon, Burma	
Embassy Conakry, Guinea	
Mission UAE	
Embassy Kathmandu, Nepal	
Mission Brazil	
U.S. Mission to International Organizations Vienna (USUNVIE)	
Case Studies on use of Telegram	34
Embassy Moscow	
USApoRusski	
Embassy Tashkent	
Embassy Dushanbe	
Embassy Bishkek	
Case Studies on use of LinkedIn	38
Embassy Oslo	
Embassy Luxembourg	
Embassy Madrid	
Case Studies on use of Instagram	45
DRL: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor	
J/TIP: Office of Monitoring and Combat Trafficking in Persons	
INL: Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement	
Findings and Conclusions	49
Best Practices	
Areas of Improvement	
Concluding Thoughts	

Introduction:

Project Description and Objectives: Five American University, School of International Service (SIS) graduate students conducted a cross-sectional audit of selected accounts in the State Department's social media ecosystem to identify observations of social media accounts and report their findings.

The study was conducted as part of the SIS graduate practicum program. This project was supervised by Professor Earl Anthony Wayne working with the State Department's Bureau of Global Public Affairs (GPA)

The social media accounts to be surveyed were proposed by the project's clients in the Bureau of Global Affairs (GPA). As outside observers unaffiliated with the State Department, the graduate students had a relatively unbiased view to look at what select Embassy and State Department offices were posting to social media. The team endeavored to determine what posts and media tools were working well to promote engagement and to identify posts or platforms that were not performing well in a given country (or bureau subject matter) context.

As a first step in the process, the team worked to gain an understanding of the basics of public diplomacy by speaking with several experts in the field and the role of the State Department in conducting public diplomacy and ensuring the message of U.S. policy is being disseminated publicly to key audiences into the countries where the State Department has a presence¹. The team tried to get a good understanding of how social media use is just one of the tools used by diplomats to communicate to foreign audiences and also to discern the difference between PD undertaken by Washington-based offices, bilateral missions and embassies overseas, and multilateral missions.² The team did not examine the role of the US international broadcasting platforms, nor did they analyze the hashtags attached to any mission post, as they were not run by the missions themselves.

The practice of public diplomacy has occurred for millennia by diplomats, but in the 21st century, technological tools to disseminate the message of U.S. foreign policy have been transformed with new innovative platforms. In the era of social media companies, public diplomacy conducted over these media platforms is called digital diplomacy. The team worked from the definition that digital diplomacy is the digitization of information where diplomats can use technology to advocate foreign policy and shape or influence audiences³.

The project team looked at specific U.S. missions and offices to observe and analyze what social media posts performed well and which platforms seemed to reach intended audiences. The team made multiple observations across social media platforms and embassy/state office posts to determine digital diplomacy prowess and effectiveness. This report will identify findings and present them to the State Department's Global Public Affairs Bureau.

The team undertook the review without particular insight into the staffing of the PD sections or officers in charge of the digital diplomacy deployed. (The team did look at the annual report of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy which lists PD budget numbers for embassies and

¹ "Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs - United States Department of State." n.d. State Department. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-public-diplomacy-and-public-affairs/>.

² Manor, Ilan. 2017. "The Digital Power of Ambassadors | USC Center on Public Diplomacy." USC Center on Public Diplomacy | <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/digital-power-ambassadors>.

³ Manor, Ilan. 2022. "The rise of hybrid diplomacy: from digital adaptation to digital adoption." Oxford Academic. <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article/98/2/471/6540781>.

bureaus.). We understand that staffing numbers vary widely and that some posts likely have employees that are well-trained in digital diplomacy and specialized in that work, while at other embassies and in other offices, the employees may have a range of competing responsibilities. The team also did not have access to the various analytics which are available for the account owners to purchase and use. The team realizes that these tools can be very helpful for measuring the effectiveness of social media content and strongly recommends that embassies and posting offices employ them.

US Missions/ Embassies

The team was asked by GPA to look at specific U.S. Missions and offices, as well as individual social media accounts on Instagram, LinkedIn, and Telegram. Below is a complete list of Embassies and specific platforms that this report includes:

All social media:

- Embassy Rangoon, Burma
- Embassy Conakry, Guinea
- Mission Abu Dhabi, UAE
- Embassy Kathmandu, Nepal
- Mission Brazil
- U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna (USUNVIE)

Telegram use by:

- Embassy Moscow
- USApoRusski
- Embassy Tashkent
- Embassy Dushanbe
- Embassy Bishkek

LinkedIn use by:

- Embassy Oslo
- Embassy Luxembourg:
- Embassy Madrid

Domestic State Department Bureau Instagram accounts

- DRL: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
- J/TIP: Office of Monitoring and Combat Trafficking in Persons
- INL: Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement

Methodology:

The project team conducted an external analysis of posts from the social media accounts of the Missions and offices stated above. To effectively audit and gauge engagement patterns on various platforms and pages, the team created a 3 step process to analyze all posts across platforms posted within the five month period of February 1st to July 1st, 2023.

A literature review was first conducted to familiarize the team with the academic discourse on public diplomacy and digital diplomacy as tools of foreign policy. The team then began collection in the following order.

Step 1: Means of Measurement

The team acquired a general understanding of each Mission's primary objectives as directed by Washington to see if these objectives were reflected in the Mission's social media presence. Using each Mission's most recent Integrated Country Strategies (ICS), the team conducted an initial scan of pages across platforms to objectively determine if the nature of content reflected the foreign policy goals of the United States.

Country specific demographic information (i.e population, age) was collected and indexes (i.e internet penetration, digital literacy, user metrics) were selected to determine the target audiences, social media capacity and policy goals within each host country. The goal of using country specific metrics was also to help understand country specific trends.

The team also provided definitions to normalize collection:

- Definition for Engagement: engagement is defined as the collection of metrics that highlight comments, reposts, shares, and likes where reactions are above or consistent with the observed average for the intended platform

The Team then determined that likes, comments, following, and reshares were the most observable engagement metrics and used these metrics across platforms in the collection process.

Step 2: Collecting Data and Expert Interviews

Our team interviewed several journalists, diplomats, State Department officers and USG service members with expertise on U.S foreign policy, Public Diplomacy and Digital Diplomacy. Expert interviews familiarized the team with the topic of social media as a tool to conduct diplomacy and reach foreign audiences as explained by practitioners as digital diplomacy.

Engagement was then measured by averaging the total number of followers or subscribers, likes, reposts, comments within the predetermined five month timeframe.

Step 3: General Findings and Best and Worst Practices

The collection methods described above yielded observable quantitative and qualitative data, which was used to determine the most and least engaged posts. This step enabled us to identify consistent observations across Missions and Bureaus and to draw commonalities and

differences between Missions. We further categorized into best practices and worst practices, depending on how these practices appeared to affect the engagement on the platform.

Main Data Table:

Embassy	Type of Social Media	Reposting Average	Comments Average	Average of Likes	Followers
Embassy Burma (U.S. Embassy Rangoon)	Facebook	6	3167	40,904	2,200,000
Embassy Burma (U.S. Embassy Rangoon)	Flickr	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Embassy Burma (U.S. Embassy Rangoon)	Instagram	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,600
Embassy Burma (U.S. Embassy Rangoon)	Twitter @USEmbassyBurma	7.8	1072	6,482	549,500
U.S. Ambassador Nepal	Twitter	10	3	3,500	260,400
U.S. Embassy Kathmandu (Nepal)	Facebook	22	50	700	4,400,000
U.S. Embassy Kathmandu (Nepal)	Flickr	N/A	N/A	N/A	250
U.S. Embassy Kathmandu (Nepal)	Instagram	N/A	3	310	46,000
U.S. Embassy Kathmandu (Nepal)	Twitter		5	2,500	448,000
U.S. Embassy Kathmandu (Nepal)	YouTube	N/A	2	3	4790
U.S. Embassy Conakry	Facebook	7	5	80.2	322,000
U.S. Embassy Conakry	Twitter	2	1	19	33,600
U.S. Embassy Conakry	Instagram	N/A	1	43.7	3750
U.S. Embassy Conakry	YouTube	N/A	N/A	N/A	70
American Citizen Services Brasilia	Twitter	10.5	3	17	3,916
U.S. Ambassador Brazil	Twitter	37.23684211	57.78947368	698.2631579	76,700
U.S. Consulate General Recife	Instagram	N/A	11.95348837	N/A	25,600

U.S. Consulate General Rio de Janeiro	Facebook	5.132450331	6.543046358	59.86754967	283,000
U.S. Consulate General Rio de Janeiro	Instagram	N/A	19.64827586	N/A	57,400
U.S. Consulate General Sao Paulo	Facebook	1.801324503	2.105960265	21.40397351	103,000
U.S. Embassy Brasilia	Facebook	5.93610224	6.9456869	39.0670927	826,000
U.S. Embassy Brasilia	Flickr	N/A	0	1	523
U.S. Embassy Brasilia	Instagram	N/A	25.9174603	N/A	161,000
U.S. Embassy Brasilia	Twitter	6.62601626	7.130081301	139.0406504	110,600
U.S. Embassy Brasilia	YouTube	N/A	18.125	89.375	34,800
U.S. Mission to the UN	YouTube	N/A	N/A	N/A	176
U.S. Mission to the UN	Instagram	N/A	0.5	115	9,353
U.S. Mission to the UN	Twitter	3.4	1.2	10.33	15,700
U.S. Mission to the UN	Facebook	0.83	1.08	5.583	38,000
Mission UAE	Facebook	1.2	2	18	99,000
Mission UAE	Twitter	3	2.7	9	32,600
Mission UAE	Instagram	N/A	16.8	76.1	21,700
Mission UAE	Youtube	N/A	N/A	N/A	1300
Embassy Moscow	Telegram	N/A	N/A	N/A	10300
USApoRuski	Telegram	N/A	N/A	N/A	5160
Embassy Tashkent	Telegram	N/A	N/A	N/A	22000
Embassy Dushanbe	Telegram	N/A	N/A	N/A	1058
Embassy Bishkek	Telegram	N/A	N/A	N/A	6137
Embassy Oslo	LinkedIn	6	5	205	1773
Embassy Luxembourg	LinkedIn	8.6	4	170	369
Embassy Madrid	LinkedIn	13.6	15.6	254.2	1110
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor	Instagram	N/A	3.5	29	2545
Trafficking in Persons Office	Instagram	N/A	1.41	12.5	501
International Narcotics and	Instagram	N/A	0.66	26.16	1,045

*a “N/A” indicates a field that was 1) not applicable to the platform, 2) uncountable due to restrictions of viewers or comments the embassy currently has on the account and/or 3) the accounts posts were outside of our observation window (Feb 1st-July 1st). *

Case Studies by Mission and Embassy

U.S. Embassy Burma (Myanmar)

Country Context-

- Audience demographics and social media indicators:
- The majority of the population is youth i.e., 42.6% below the age of 24.⁴
 - The urban population is 31.8%, which suggests a majority of the population resides in rural areas or small towns.⁵
 - The 24.8% below the poverty line (as of 2017) points to an existing income disparity among the population.⁶
 - Regarding education, the literacy rate is 89.1%, showing a relatively high level of literacy.⁷
 - On average, individuals received 10 years of education (males) and 11 years (females) in 2018, indicating a slight gender disparity in education.⁸
 - With internet penetration at 44% (2021)⁹. It appears that digital connectivity is still in progress in this area. However, the high mobile connections at 134% implies that mobile devices are widely used for communication and internet access.¹⁰
 - Social media penetration at 38%, with Facebook as the most used social networking site.¹¹

⁴ “Photos of Burma - The World Factbook.” n.d. CIA. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/burma/>.

⁵ Brennan, Elliot. 2015. “Myanmar census reveals huge urban-rural divide.” Lowy Institute. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/myanmar-census-reveals-huge-urban-rural-divide>.

⁶ “Poverty Report- Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017.” 2019. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/publication/poverty-report-myanmar-living-conditions-survey-2017>.

⁷ “Environmental Lead Exposure and Adult Literacy in Myanmar: An Exploratory Study of Potential Associations at the Township Level.” 2018. NCBI. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6025053/>.

⁸ “Photos of Burma - The World Factbook.” n.d. CIA. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/burma/>.

⁹ “Individuals using the Internet (% of population) - Myanmar | Data.” n.d. World Bank Data. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=MM>.

¹⁰ Fife, Elizabeth. n.d. “(PDF) Consumer demand for the mobile Internet in a greenfield emerging market: the case of Myanmar.” ResearchGate. Accessed August 14, 2023. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273123171_Consumer_demand_for_the_mobile_Internet_in_a_greenfield_emerging_market_the_case_of_Myanmar.

¹¹ von Kameke, Leander. 2023. “Myanmar: social media penetration 2016-2022.” Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/883751/myanmar-social-media-penetration/>.

→ Geopolitical context

With the fall of the democratically elected government in a coup d'état by the Burmese army, the country is currently in a precarious situation as democratic backsliding continues to accelerate unabated¹². The situation is further exacerbated by the Junta's violence against pro-democracy activists¹³, deposed government officials, and members of ethnic and religious communities¹⁴, while also seeking to silence independent journalists and its critics¹⁵. The junta has banned all major private TV stations and news media outlets and restricted the public's internet access, including social media and mobile data networks¹⁶. Burma's Media Freedom Index¹⁷ was reported at 176th out of 180th,¹⁸ which possibly has deteriorated post-coup. International broadcasters like VOA, RFA, and the BBC are relied upon heavily by the public for an unbiased information consumption. According to the Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy & International Broadcasting in Myanmar, as a response to the coup, VOA worked with RFA to set up a 24/7 direct-to-home satellite channel (Ludo Meltwe) to broadcast uncensored news and critical information to Burmese audiences¹⁹. A majority of the masses consume Radio broadcasting, making it the 2nd largest consumption platform. Leveraging the popularity of its radio programming, VOA's Burmese Service began televising its radio shows on the newly established TV channel, with an emphasis on U.S. policy towards Myanmar and regional reactions to the democratic backsliding²⁰.

Analysis

Facebook²¹: The embassy creates its own content and Facebook is explicitly the embassy's leading platform in information dissemination. Targeted audiences seem to be students, working class, women leaders and visa applicants, though remaining anti-junta elites are likely targets too. It has a reposting average of 6 posts per month, of the 6 month time frame we analyzed. The average number of comments is around 3167 per month and the followers are around 2,200,000 compared with the total facebook users 20,000,000 in the entire country. This implies that the number of followers compared to the total facebook users is extremely low, with the ratio of facebook penetration of 1:10. The most engaged post was about the action taken against two state-owned banks and the Ministry

¹² Albert, Eleanor, and Lindsay Maizland. 2023. "Myanmar's Junta Is Losing the Civil War." Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/article/myanmars-junta-losing-civil-war>.

¹³ Andrews, Tom. 2022. "Myanmar junta's execution of four democracy activists condemned by UN." UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1123172>.

¹⁴ Ford, Billy. 2021. "Myanmar Coup: Military Regime Seeks to Weaponize Religion." United States Institute of Peace. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/12/myanmar-coup-military-regime-seeks-weaponize-religion>.

¹⁵ "Myanmar: Detainments escalate as press freedom continues to decline under Myanmar's military junta - IFJ." 2022. International Federation of Journalists. <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/myanmar-detainments-escalate-as-press-freedom-continues-to-decline-under-myanmars-military-junta>.

¹⁶ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/314-myanmars-military-struggles-control-virtual-battlefield>

¹⁷ "Myanmar's Military Struggles to Control the Virtual Battlefield." 2021. Crisis Group. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/314-myanmars-military-struggles-control-virtual-battlefield>.

¹⁸ "Myanmar | RSF." n.d. Reporters sans frontières. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://rsf.org/en/country/myanmar>.

¹⁹ Walker, Vivian S. n.d. "UPDATED_2022_ACPD_AnnualReport_508Ready V2." Department of State. Accessed August 14, 2023. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FINAL_2022_ACPD_AnnualReport_508Ready.pdf.

²⁰ "VOA Broadcasting in Burmese - Voice of America Office of Public Relations." n.d. inside voa. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://www.insidevoa.com/p/6434.html>.

²¹ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/usembassy.rangoon/>

of Defense for brutal atrocities. The post with least engagement was about the Joint American National Independence Day (Juneteenth), likely because it was not tailored to provide local understanding. The type of post with the most negative engagement was that of the Joint American National Independence Day which was both paradoxical and sarcastic in nature. Some of the observances include, the transformation from the mundane platitude 6 min videos to 2 min simple yet appealing videos increased the engagement. For instance, the 8min video of an interview with a burmese editor and the 1 hour video of best practices to stay safe online seem to be ineffective to reach higher engagement compared with the 40 seconds international women's day post and others. There is an excellent dissemination of data along with the local festivals and culture. The practice of posting the commemoration video of fallen heroes of the 2021 coup, has produced a rise in engagement with each successive post.

Flicker²²- has been inactive since 2016.

Instagram²³- has been inactive since 2016.

Twitter²⁴: It has a reposting average of 7.8 posts per month. The average number of comments is around 1072 per month and the average of likes per month is 6482. The followers for this platform is around 549,500, compared to 1.2 million users in Burma which relatively has a fair engagement when compared to Facebook. Most of the tweets by the embassy are retweeted (around 70%) including Blinken and Chollet the Counsellor for the Department of State. Most of the tweets are engaged by the diaspora of Burma, journalists, regional media agencies and elites. This account has the most followers out of all the accounts examined but one of the lowest number of tweets. This analysis indicates that it is possible the information being put out by the embassy is valuable to its followers. The majority of the account is retweets from the Main State page or officials in DC, which seems to be a fair engagement with the above mentioned targeted groups.

Conclusions

Overall, the embassy seems to generate a very positive engagement from the Burmese population, except for some who respond to the instability in the region in a more extreme fashion as 'trolls' (not satisfied with the US pressure on the junta and expressing concerns regarding weapons/military aid) on Facebook.

Target audiences:- The youth of Myanmar, journalists, elites, women leaders and the Regional powers (example, members of ASEAN)²⁵. In comparison with the other missions, these platforms

²² Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usembassymm/>

²³ Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/usembassymm/?hl=en>

²⁴ https://twitter.com/USEmbassyBurma?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

²⁵ "Untitled." n.d. Asean.org. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ASEAN-Committee-on-Women.pdf>.

seem to be limited to one-way communication, and the engagement with the local influencers such as famous chefs, actors, singers etc. is not being met. The mission could further effectively advocate, provided it forms collaborations and partnerships with these local influencers. To avoid the crackdown on these local influencers by the authoritarian regimes, the mission could consider collaborating with the diaspora, who might have no presence in the country.

When compared with the other embassies that the group examined, “the element of ambassador as a celebrity”²⁶ is not present in Mission Burma. Ambassador personalized accounts do help foster and bolster relations between the locals and the U.S. officials, by integrating regional and cultural customs in the narrative of an ambassador's social media feed.

The Twitter platform could be improved further by retweeting/tweeting other Burmese accounts from within the country, which is more valuable than retweeting Washington directed posts. Trending topics with most engagement are those related to US led sanctions that provide little incentives for junta’s compliance and pave the way for Chinese intervention, as it seems that the Sino-Burmese trade relations are on the rise, since the “gas-pipeline agreement”.²⁷

Flicker and Instagram have been inactive for the past 6 years. This might be a positive factor, considering the fact that the mission staff are better equipped in making decisions of whether spending resources on a platform is worthwhile or not, which varies from mission to mission. This also focuses the staffing resources on the platforms which seem to have significant usage, thereby increasing its effectiveness.

Sanctions on the MoD and MFTB:- The United States has designated Burma's Ministry of Defense (MoD) and two regime-controlled banks, Myanma Foreign Trade Bank (MFTB) and Myanma Investment and Commercial Bank (MICB)²⁸. According to some expert commentators, the sanctions pave way for a growing Chinese footprint. According to foreign policy experts, sanctions close doors for talks leading to a shift in finding “another partner of choice” which contradicts the ICS objective.

There seems to be historical context missing from all these platforms. The posts could be curated in accordance with the region's history which would make it more attractive to the audience. For instance, there are lots of posts portraying MLK, which most locals might not be aware of but where some curation could boost understanding and engagement.

Most of Embassy Burma’s Integrated Country Strategy’s (ICS) goals and objectives are being addressed in the mission’s social media posts.

²⁶ Cooper, Andrew F. “Beyond Hollywood and the Boardroom: Celebrity Diplomacy.” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 8, no. 2 (2007): 125–32. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43133740>.

²⁷ Chellaney, Brahma. 2023. “US sanctions are driving Myanmar into China's arms | The Strategist.” ASPI Strategist. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/us-sanctions-are-driving-myanmar-into-chinas-arms/>.

²⁸ Blinken, Antony J. 2023. “Sanctioning Two State-Owned Banks and the Ministry of Defense for the Burma Military Regime's Atrocities - United States Department of State.” State Department. <https://www.state.gov/sanctioning-two-state-owned-banks-and-the-ministry-of-defense-for-the-burma-military-regimes-atrocities/>.

The ICS statement: *'We will apply tools such as exchange and educational programs, including long-term investments such as the Fulbright and Lincoln Scholarship programs'* is being addressed. Consistent efforts are being made to communicate programs such as the Fulbright, Humphrey Scholar and YSEALI Professional Fellows Programs, which are designed to promote mutual understanding, enhance Fellows' leadership and professional skills, and build lasting and sustainable partnerships between emerging leaders in Southeast Asia and the United States.²⁹

Posts on International Women's Day of influential Burmese women leaders, resonate with the ICS objective of commitment to support women's participation in leadership and other areas while the 17 million \$ of humanitarian aid in response to the cyclone mocha and additional 50 million \$ resonates to mission goal 2.³⁰

Posts of sanctioning of the two state owned banks, statement on the dissolution of the NLD and sanctions on Tun Min Latt resonate with the objective 1.3 , while the posts of mourning the loss of 3800 people , embassy closure on July 19th in observance of the martyr's day and others resonate with the mission goal 1 and its 3 objectives.³¹

Embassy Conakry

→ Country Context

Audience demographics and social media indicators:

- Population: 13,500,000 million
- 65% of the population is under 25.
- 3.1 million internet users, 23% digital penetration rate (2022)
- Internet users increased +2.8% from 2021-2022
- 2.4 million total social media users
- 2.2 million Facebook users -> 333k mission page followers - Most used platform.
- 160k Instagram users -> 3750 mission page followers
- 180k LinkedIn users
- 55k Twitter country users -> 33k followers of the mission page

→ Geopolitical context

Guinea is under-going a period of political transition to restore democracy, clean up corruption, reopen social services and rebuild infrastructure after their 2021 coup and subsequent change of government. The 2022 ICS aims for mission staff to work with ministries, parties and civil society to help establish a path for democracy and stability. The U.S aims to collaborate on matters of

²⁹ 2022. Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) - Burma. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ICS_EAP_Burma_26JUL2022_Public-1.pdf.

³⁰ "The United States Providing Nearly \$17 Million in Additional Humanitarian Assistance in Response to Tropical Cyclone Mocha in Burma | Press Release | U.S. Agency for International Development." 2023. USAID. <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/may-23-2023-united-states-providing-nearly-17-million-additional-humanitarian-assistance-response-tropical-cyclone-mocha-burma>.

³¹ "Message for U.S. Citizens: Road Closures for Martyr's Day Celebration, July 19, 2022." 2022. U.S. Embassy in Burma. <https://mm.usembassy.gov/message-for-u-s-citizens-road-closures-for-martyrs-day-celebration-july-19-2022/>.

security for the protection of Guinean and American citizens. The mission also has additional goals of improving trade and healthcare in Guinea Conakry. The U.S aims to support American investment in Guinea as well as support the recovery of the Guinean economy post COVID-19. Guinea is a country with a fast rising internet penetration rate. Despite the slow development of infrastructure to support digital literacy in youth, young people are still managing to continue to grow their online presence on social media. Guinea has a large diaspora in surrounding countries, who rely on social media as an information source and a method of connection with relatives abroad³². The Ambassador is part of a committee of international partners who support the re-democratization of the Guinean government. The Public Diplomacy section had a budget in Fiscal Year 2021 of \$574,007 and aims to continue to engage the Guinean public in preparation of their upcoming election.

→ Analysis

Facebook: Mission Conakry’s Facebook³³ page had one of the highest follower counts out of the embassies observed at 322,000 followers. The page averaged 7 shares, 5 comments and 80.2 likes per post .

Shares were the highest on short-form videos and overall engagement was consistently highest on post about the English Club. Photos of Guinean citizens attending the program receive a higher number of comments and likes. The Facebook page also regularly featured different Embassy leadership in photos besides the Ambassador. Although photos with the Ambassador get the most engagement, the Chargée D’affaires or the Deputy Chief of Mission also generate engagement higher than average on the page.



³² Stremmlau, N., & Tsalapatanis, A. (2022). Social Media, Mobile Phones and Migration in Africa: A Review of the Evidence. *Progress in Development Studies*, 22(1), 56–71.

³³ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/usembassyconakry/>

Twitter: Mission Conakry’s Twitter³⁴ has 33,000 followers while the entire country has about 55,000 total Twitter users in Guinea. The page tweets a lot of policy news relating to democracy, trade, education, climate change and healthcare, reflecting the ICS objectives. Engagement is generally low on those posts with the exception of a post on the Ukraine/Russia conflict. Engagement is highest on posts with less wording.



Instagram: Mission Conakry Instagram³⁵ page seems to be the newest out of all their accounts with 3,700 followers. Similar to Facebook, posts averaged 43.7 likes and 2 comments. Captions are largely in French and take a less serious tone on Instagram with lots of emojis. The page is showing signs of growth with a steady increase of likes on more recent posts.

Conclusion

Posts with French captions first got more engagement; conversely, posts in English received lower engagement than posts in English from other embassies, showing perhaps that English usage is less common in Guinea than in other countries examined. Our observations indicate that the ICS mission objective to improve staffing needs is being pursued across mission social media pages with regular career related announcements and training programs. Tailored content featuring local music, culture, traditional clothes and popular sports was the most engaging. The page showed little signs of negative or bot comments. Sports diplomacy is featured well with photos of soccer events with youth of various age groups and genders. Most reactions come from male followers, but the page has a good representation of diverse groups of people, regions and aspects of Guinean culture. Ambassador Troy is personified in a fun and friendly manner in posts, but the posts receive an inconsistent number of reactions when they feature the Ambassador. A post with Ambassador Troy

³⁴ <https://twitter.com/EmbassyConakry>

³⁵ <https://www.instagram.com/usembassyconakry/?hl=en>

celebrating Juneteenth got more engagement than other holidays posts with a postcard format. The Ambassador's presence on the Instagram page is noticeably observable and posts are usually high quality photos and videos which could indicate a purposeful plan to engage locals. Despite Facebook having the highest follower count, Instagram had the best ratio of followers to likes.

Mission UAE

→ Country Context

Audience demographics and social media indicators:

- ◆ Population: 9,300,000 million
- ◆ 65% of the population is between 25-54, 70% male.
- ◆ 9 million internet users, 90% internet penetration rate (2023)
- ◆ 10 million total social media users³⁶.
- ◆ 7.9 million Facebook users -> 99k mission page followers, most used platform (July 2023).
- ◆ 4.94 million Instagram users (2023)-> 21k mission page followers³⁷
- ◆ 3 million twitter users (2023), 32.6k mission page followers³⁸.

→ Geopolitical context

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the United States' partner of choice on key economic, military, commercial and educational priorities in the Middle East. Located between the Persian Gulf and Arabian desert, the UAE is a highly transient country with English as a dominant language due to foreign nationals making up 88% of population.³⁹ The UAE's membership in the Arab League and its recent presidency of the UN Security Council makes multilateral cooperation on climate change, peace and security a mission priority. The U.S mission aims in its ICS to enhance the US-UAE security partnership with increased information sharing, military training programs and common weapons systems. The mission will collaborate with American businesses to bring innovative technologies and American cultural and commercial exports at the request of the Emiratis. The UAE also embraces international standards for the protection of human rights and the empowerment of women domestically and in its foreign policy.

The PD section aims to prioritize inclusive engagement with UAE officials, citizens, and residents along with prioritizing visits by senior U.S officials to the UAE. The Public Diplomacy budget for the UAE was \$3.6 million in 2021⁴⁰.

³⁶ Kemp, Simon. 2023. "Digital 2023: The United Arab Emirates — DataReportal – Global Digital Insights." DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-united-arab-emirates>.

³⁷ Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/usainuae/?hl=en>

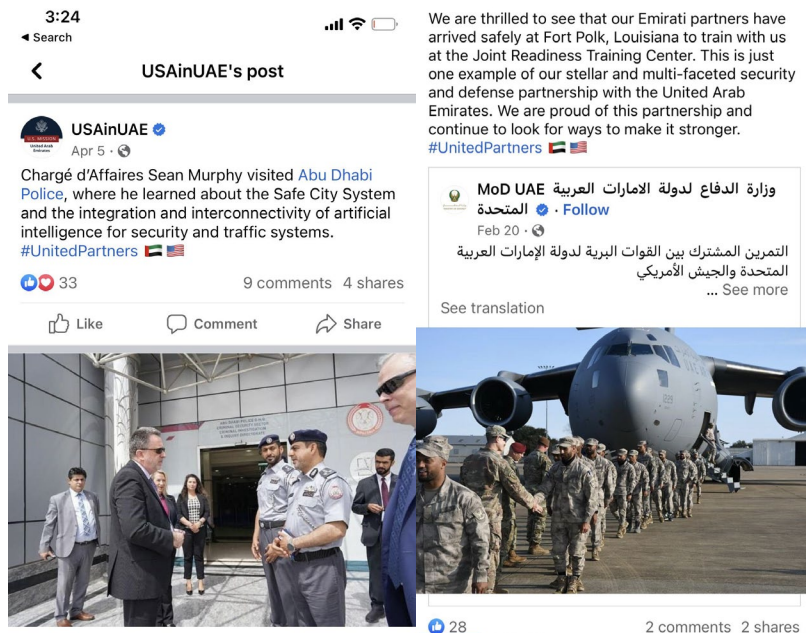
³⁸ Twitter: https://twitter.com/USAinUAE?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

³⁹ "United Arab Emirates (UAE) Population Statistics 2023: GMI." Global Media Insight, August 2, 2023. <https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/uae-population-statistics/>.

⁴⁰ "U.S. Department of State - Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy & International Broadcasting" state.gov. Accessed August 8, 2023. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FINAL_2022_ACPD_AnnualReport_508Ready.pdf.

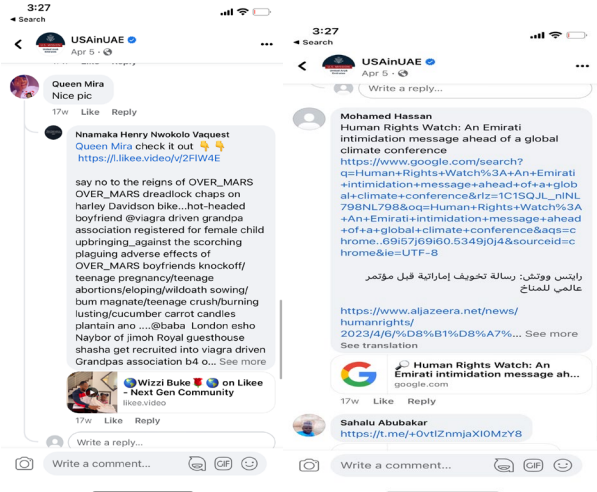
→ Analysis

Facebook: Facebook⁴¹ was the most followed page for Mission UAE, with 99,000 followers. Most posts receive engagement that range between 18-25 likes and 1-2 comments and reposts on average. The page posts 3-6 times per week and content ranges from announcements and videos, to reporting on movie premieres and officials' visits. Mission UAE's objective for continued military and security collaboration with the UAE is reflected on the Facebook page the most. A number of posts show embassy officials and U.S military members training and working with Emirates. These posts, along with other policy-centric posts, receive the highest number of bot or troll comments and strongly opinionated responses.



These posts, along with other policy-centric posts, receive the highest number of bot or troll comments and strongly opinionated responses of both positive and negative nature.

⁴¹ <https://www.facebook.com/USAinUAE/>



Cultural and religious representation is also a prominent feature of Mission UAE’s Facebook page. Content in the form of holiday postcards featured both American and Emirati holidays. Posts about Islam use Arabic music and captions; Embassy staff are seen engaging with a wide range of citizens, officials and American companies as mentioned in the ICS.



Twitter: Mission UAE’s Twitter⁴² page had 32,000 followers, 17,000 tweets and had the highest number of reposted posts from Washington and reposts in general across platforms. Using the ‘view’ analytic, we were able to determine that the page had a relatively low ratio of engagement compared to other platforms analyzed. Reposts and comments were around 2-3 per post on average. A scan of the hashtags #usembassyUAE #usinUAE shows discourse in the form of posts reacting to events hosted by the embassy or in the form of political opinions regarding U.S policies. The page posts

⁴² Twitter: <https://twitter.com/USAinUAE>

the same content as Facebook and Instagram with the addition of retweets from officials like Secretary Blinken.

Instagram: The 22,000 followers on mission UAE’s Instagram⁴³ page responded most positively to posts themed around women empowerment and climate action. The page reflects the mission’s goal of climate policy collaboration with the UAE as stated in the ICS. The page posts about Earth Day, World Ocean Day, COP28 and number of e-vehicle events and showrooms, often in partnership with American companies.



Conclusion

After external observation of several cross-platform posts (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), team observations found that Visa Q&As announcements get the highest ratio of engagement. People generally express positive reactions i.e “heart”emoji reactions on Facebook. This observation suggests that posts are reaching audiences interested in the American immigration process, for tourism or education in the US.

Announcement posts on the UAE mission page update followers on news regarding embassy and consulate closures, upcoming shows or events, visits from Washington. The mission pages across platforms had a large number of English speakers, the language barrier does not seem obvious, probably reflecting the high numbers of citizens and residents who speak English⁴⁴.

Posts with lots of words in the images got the least engagement on Instagram. Posts featuring women have an empowering attitude with focus on women in STEM, education and leadership . This is seen in the mission’s participation in hashtag campaigns like #ThevalueofherIP which drew attention to the intellectual property of women with short profile pieces posted on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

⁴³ Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/usainuae/?hl=en>

⁴⁴ A.V. 2017. "Papua New Guinea's incredible linguistic diversity." The Economist. <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2017/07/20/papua-new-guineas-incredible-linguistic-diversity>

The UAE pages seem to be more susceptible to troll comments and politically charged comments than other missions analyzed. Posts with Emirati leaders receive high engagement as well as visa Q&As. Comments from followers on posts generally do not receive replies from the account managers, even during the live Q&A format of posting. With a 90% internet penetration rate in the UAE, the mission can improve on engaging younger audiences through specific tailoring of messages on social media platforms

U.S. Embassy Kathmandu (Nepal)

Country Context

→ Audience demographics and social media indicators:

- Population: 30 million
- 48% of population under 24 years old
- 15.1 million internet users, 51.6% digital penetration rate (2023)
- Internet users increased +1.2% from 2022-2023
- 12.6 million total social media users
- 12 million Facebook users -> 4.4 million mission page followers - Most used platform.
- 2.15 million Instagram users -> 46,700 mission page followers
- 1.2 million LinkedIn members
- 533,000 Twitter users, -> 444,000 mission page followers

→ Geopolitical context

Nepal is locked between China and India, the two most populous nations on earth. Since the end of its 1996-2006 civil war and the earthquakes of 2015, Nepal has taken great strides to institutionalize its democracy. US Embassy Nepal's strategic primary goal is to strengthen good governance, democratic values, and security and stability in Nepal. Embassy Nepal also prioritizes supporting inclusive, equitable economic growth and a clean, resilient energy future in Nepal and work to help Nepal become more self-reliant, independent, and resilient as it confronts global challenges.⁴⁵

One of Embassy Nepal's public diplomacy missions in Nepal is combating foreign malign influence within the county.⁴⁶ The PD Section in Kathmandu created a first-of-its-kind program with a media-watchdog grantee to produce a report on misinformation and disinformation in Nepal and to train journalists across the country in the identification of false stories Embassy Kathmandu also leveraged social media platforms through campaigns designed to counter disinformation, generating an audience of four million followers. The Embassy also actively engages journalists through contact-building, roundtables, and interviews with officials to dispel myths about the USG. In Fiscal

⁴⁵ U.S. Department of State. 2022. "Integrated Country Studies." Nepal. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ICS_SCA_Nepal_Public.pdf.

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of State. 2022. "Integrated Country Studies." Nepal. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ICS_SCA_Nepal_Public.pdf

Year 2021, Embassy Nepal spent \$977,325 on public diplomacy, number 103 in the State Department out of 179 countries.⁴⁷

Analysis

Facebook: U.S. Embassy Nepal⁴⁸ uses five social media platforms for public diplomacy: Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, YouTube, and two Twitter accounts.

With over 12 million out of 30 million Nepalese on Facebook, Facebook is the primary mode of internet use and communication in Nepal. Embassy Nepal's Facebook account has 4.4 million followers, which is the largest number of followers of any social media account our team surveyed. In comparison to other embassy missions, Embassy Nepal does not just repost from the main Washington State Dept content, but posts locally produced content specifically for the people of Nepal. The Facebook account has a mix of English and Nepalese language content throughout the account. The average photos and posts of the Embassy Facebook account are 700 likes per post, with about 50 comments per post, and 22 shares per post. The content posted daily is a mix of local engagements, announcements, and cultural integration and tailored content. Many photos are outdoors featuring mountains and local culture, children, Nepalese people in a natural environment 'doing things' out in society.

Facebook posts from the Embassy Nepal indicate that the mission is carrying out the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) showcasing transition to democracy, and good governance. Some posts show US military training⁴⁹ with local security forces, which is part of the ICS. Interspersed are posts about the Embassy hiring opportunities, information about U.S. State Dept visa process, and student educational opportunities. The Facebook page has a balanced mix of content and information, and what one would expect when seeing an Embassy page, and all with a local customs and flavor to the posts. The Photos Albums are several years old, but there are constant new photos posted daily or weekly of local engagements or events. Other Facebook users are able to tag US Embassy Nepal, this enables other users to show up on Embassy Nepal's feed.

Pro Flickr: Embassy Nepal was the only Mission with a Pro Flickr account that we observed.⁵⁰ The Flickr account contains over 27,000 photos uploaded since 2010, and has amassed over 2.3 million views. The Embassy regularly uploads photos on a consistent basis into July 2023, including of the Marine Corps ball, and hundreds of other events over the previous 13 years. The account has only 246 followers, and follows 12 other accounts. Embassy Nepal has created hundreds of albums that contain concise information in the album name with date. The photos are professional and high

⁴⁷ "2022 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting - United States Department of State." 2022. State Department. <https://www.state.gov/2022-comprehensive-annual-report-on-public-diplomacy-and-international-broadcasting-2/>

⁴⁸ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nepal.usembassy/>

⁴⁹ Karki, Tapendra. n.d. "myRepublica - The New York Times Partner, Latest news of Nepal in English, Latest News Articles." myRepublica. Accessed August 3, 2023. <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/author/2850>.

⁵⁰ Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usembassykathmandu/>

quality; colorful and vibrant. With all the photo albums, it is helpful for anyone to go back and search and look for information, or what happened as documented in time like a personal timeline, or journal. The embassy is using photos to document diplomacy in action and leave a historical account of what happens in Nepal. With the number of photos and information posted to Flickr, the account can be used as a good resource tool that other platforms cannot provide.

Twitter: With only 533k Twitter users in Nepal, and an Embassy Nepal Twitter account⁵¹ that has 448k followers, each post garners about 2,000-3,000 views, which is impressive. Though there are many views, it is not observable if the Twitter views are local views, this information is not known. Embassy Nepal also has an official ambassador Twitter account that Ambassador Dean Thompson uses which currently has 260k followers. Ambassador Thompson's account averages 4,000 views per post, which is double the views of the embassy account, suggesting that on Twitter, the ambassador is 'popular' as he tends to post more unscripted photos of him traveling around the country in mountainous or cultural settings.

The embassy Nepal account itself does not appear to be curated for local audiences, in comparison to the other social media platforms for Embassy Nepal. The embassy Twitter account contains mostly retweets of other State Department Washington based accounts and Ambassador Thompson's account. Though the ICS is being utilized, Twitter in Nepal is not being used at the same level of curating specific content or news as the other social media platforms. As Twitter is a worldwide platform, the information the embassy tweets from Nepal could be showing up because of algorithms in feeds worldwide. It's hard to tell. But it may also be that the US embassy in Nepal has such local credibility that its tweets are seen as a valuable channel for trustworthy sharing of information.

Instagram: The Instagram account in Nepal⁵² has 46,000 followers with 1,500 posts since its inception. Embassy Nepal Instagram does post local curated content and not just reposts, or Washington directed content. The Embassy is following the objectives in Integrated Country Strategy, and provides a mix of informational posts, visa process information. The photos highlight local Nepalese people and businesses, and a significant number of the photos highlight Ambassador

⁵¹Twitter: <https://twitter.com/usembassynepal?lang=en>

⁵²Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/usembassynepal/?hl=en>

Thompson's interactions with the local population. All the posts showcase US goals and values, and US Support and outreach with the local population, and support for Ukraine.

The Instagram account has an even mix of photo posts and short video reels. Reels have a larger number of views, which started averaging 2500-3000 views per reel to slowly grow to approximately 10,000-15,000 views per video reel into the summer of 2023. The highest viewed [Instagram reel video ever was 93,000 views](#)⁵³. This video was a professional local video done in conjunction with @Nepal.Food and Ambassador Thompson to highlight a local cultural cuisine and culture of ethnic people in the country. The video's production quality and story line was created in such a way that hooked the viewer instantly into feeling what the ambassador was experiencing as the food was being prepared. This story mode content of creating connection with the local people, but also the pride that local Nepalese people were sharing their culture with the world made the video contain huge engagement numbers.



Conclusion

Our observation of Embassy Nepal is that across all platforms, the embassy is doing a great job of conducting public diplomacy through the use of social media platforms. Engagement numbers are higher on average than the other missions we observed. Also, consistent with the embassy was the observation that photos and content shared across all platforms are 'ambassador centric.' Ambassador Thompson is consistently the centerpiece of content regardless of the message being shared (except for visa information and local hiring openings). The main Embassy Nepal Twitter, retweets nearly all of Ambassador Thompson's tweets. The Embassy does consistently reflect the ICS' priorities, but keeping photos and videos of the ambassador center of the majority of the posts.

High engagement and positive sentiment posts from Embassy Nepal includes information that incorporates local Nepali people on the embassy's pages. Posts with visa information also contain high engagement rates. Embassy photos that highlight US/Nepali collaboration on projects, posts set in the outdoors - a main component of Nepali culture (mountains), and posts written in Nepali language script also contain high engagement rates.

The negative reaction posts include pride content across all social media platforms and specific, consistent, comments that the US Embassy should be ashamed of such content. The U.S. has to expect negative reactions when social media posts touch on local cultural preferences, e.g. on sexuality that is contrary to local beliefs and customs. The observation of an ambassador centric

⁵³ Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/reel/CgKs8spj4R/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igshid=MzRIODBiNWFiZA==

mission may cause the local Nepali people to not see the other components or people of the Embassy. A balance from ambassador centric messages to including more areas of the US Embassy mission could help in delivering the public diplomacy mission for Nepal.

Mission Brazil

Country Context:

→ Audience demographics and social media indicators:

- 35.2% of the population is under 24.
- 168 million internet users, 80% digital penetration rate
- Internet users increased +3.3% from 2021-2022
- 21.5 million total social media users
- 165 million Facebook users ->
 - Embassy Brasilia - 825k followers
 - Consulate Rio de Janeiro - 283k followers
 - Consulate Sao Paulo - 103k followers
- 11.9 million Instagram users ->
 - Embassy Brasilia - 161k followers
 - Consulate Recife - 25.6k followers
 - Consulate Rio de Janeiro - 57.4k followers
- 16.6 million Twitter country users ->
 - Embassy Brasilia - 110.6k followers
 - U.S. Ambassador Brazil - 76.7k followers
 - American Citizen Services Brasilia - 3,916 followers
- 15.7 million YouTube country users -> Embassy Brasilia, 3,800 subscribers

→ Geopolitical context

According to Brazil's Integrated Country Strategy, "the United States and Brazil enjoy a broad partnership rooted in cooperation on regional security, democracy, human rights, trade and investment, and the environment."⁵⁴ Additionally, the literature emphasizes this mission's status as one of the "Big Four" consular operations in the World, alongside Mexico, India, and China. Further, the strategy outlines the challenges the Mission faced with a post-COVID-19 environment, creating transition working groups to respond to the community's needs, among other responses. The strategy for the Mission emphasizes on the aforementioned issues (security, human rights, etc.), but mainly on environmental issues in Brazil and how the U.S. can help the local community meet COP26 requirements.⁵⁵ In the geopolitical context, Brazil continues to be a considerable economically and

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of State. 2022. "Integrated Country Studies." Brazil. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ICS_WHA_Brazil_Public.pdf

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State. 2022. "Integrated Country Studies." Brazil. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ICS_WHA_Brazil_Public.pdf

politically-influential force in Latin America and a defender of multilateralism, maintaining ties with China, the United States, and the European Union.⁵⁶

According to the 2022 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting, “countries in the Western Hemisphere are subject to the democratic undermining of state-sponsored disinformation campaigns, but the region lacks a mechanism for connecting host governments, media organizations, and civil society actors for the purpose of sharing information and best practices.”⁵⁷ In other words, the emphasis on addressing disinformation and ways to fight against are highlighted across regions, and integrated country strategies.

In terms of Public Diplomacy for this mission, in Fiscal Year 2021, Mission Brazil spent \$5,040,000 on Public Diplomacy, number 1 among WHA countries.⁵⁸ U.S. Mission to Brazil uses five social media platforms for Public Diplomacy: Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter accounts.

Analysis

Facebook: With over 160 million out of 215 million Brazilians on Facebook, it is the one of the primary mediums used to communicate with the population. U.S. Embassy Brasilia’s Facebook⁵⁹ account has 826,000 followers. The Facebook account posts majorly Brazilian Portuguese language content throughout the account. The average photos and posts of the Embassy Facebook account are 39 likes per post, with about 6 comments per post, and 6 shares per post. One of the most liked posts, 171 likes, focuses on the YLAI exchange program participant’s highlights.

U.S. Consulate General Sao Paulo’s Facebook account has 103,000 followers. In comparison to other mission consulates, the account posts regularly but seems to not have as much engagement as other Facebook accounts for the Mission.

The Facebook account posts majorly Brazilian Portuguese language content throughout the account. The average photos and posts of the Embassy Facebook account are 21 likes per post, with about 2 comments per post, and 2 shares per post. Posts are mainly about job opportunities in the consulate, U.S. related posts, U.S. exchange programs such as Fullbright, and panel and other events.

U.S. Consulate General Rio de Janeiro’s Facebook account has 283,000 followers. Posts are mainly written in the local Brazilian portuguese. The average photos and posts of the Embassy Facebook account are 59 likes per post, with about 7 comments per post, and 5 shares per post. Compared to other facebook accounts for this Mission, U.S. Consulate General Rio de Janeiro appears to include

⁵⁶ Roy, Diana. “Brazil’s Global Ambitions.” Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/brazils-global-ambitions>

⁵⁷ “2022 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting - United States Department of State.” 2022. State Department. <https://www.state.gov/2022-comprehensive-annual-report-on-public-diplomacy-and-international-broadcasting-2/>

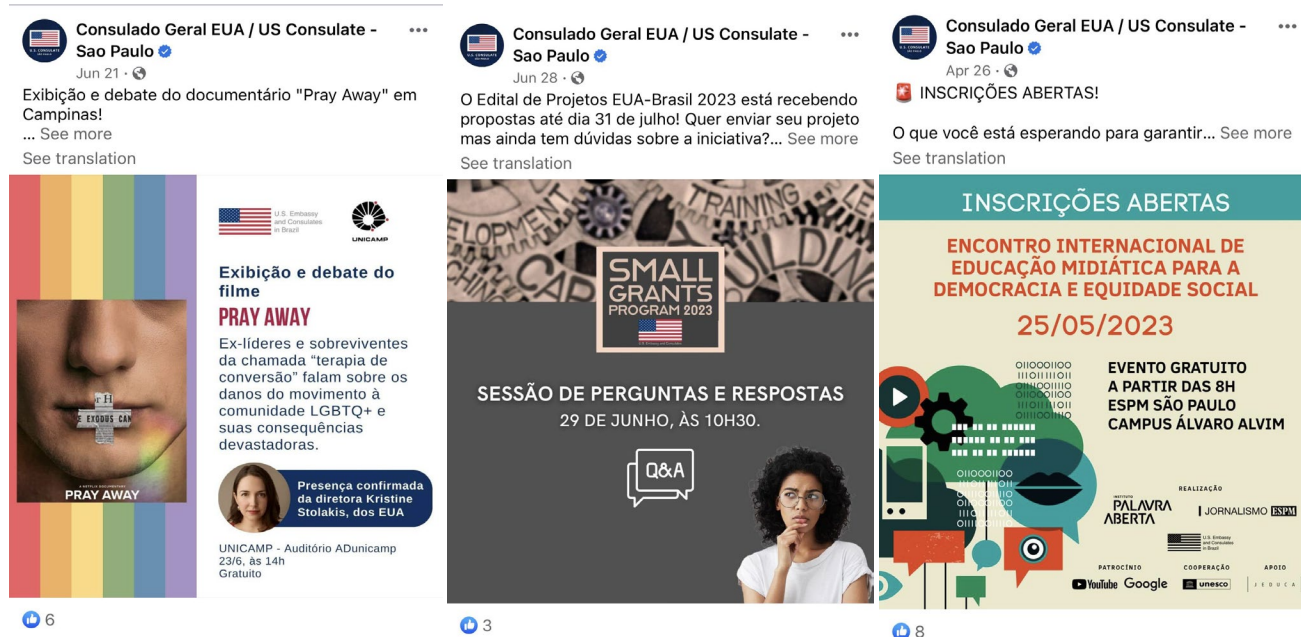
⁵⁸ “2022 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting - United States Department of State.” 2022. State Department. <https://www.state.gov/2022-comprehensive-annual-report-on-public-diplomacy-and-international-broadcasting-2/>

⁵⁹ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EmbaixadadosEUA.BR/>

more ‘local flavor’ in posts which has been received with more engagement than reshares from the Ambassador’s account or an emphasis on exchange programs with the State Department.

Instagram:

The Instagram account for the U.S. Embassy Brasilia⁶⁰ has 161,000 followers with over 4,000 posts since its inception. Embassy Brasilia Instagram posts similarly across accounts and displays similar



Facebook posts. In the same way, there is not as much reposting of what the Ambassador posts as Facebook or Twitter. They are carrying out Integrated Country Strategy, and provide a mix of informational posts, visa process information, and Brazilian students abroad highlights. All the posts showcase US goals and values, and US Support and outreach with the local population.

The Instagram account for the U.S. Consulate General Rio de Janeiro has 57,400 followers with over 1,800 posts since its inception. U.S. Consulate Rio de Janeiro Instagram posts similarly across accounts and displays similar Facebook posts. This is the instagram account with the one of the most engagement with an average of 20 comments per post. The U.S. Embassy Brasilia’s account surpasses this number with an average of 25 comments.

The Instagram account for the U.S. Consulate General Recife has 25,600 followers with over 1,300 posts since its inception. This account shows an initiative for ‘local flavor’ in its content. Some posts

⁶⁰ Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/explore/locations/1032219966/embaixada-eua-brasil-us-embassy-brazil/?hl=en>

American Citizen Services Brasilia is no longer active as of February 16, 2023⁶².

Conclusion

Mission Brazil is doing a good job engaging with the audiences for the different social media accounts. There is local flavor found in some posts as well as posts and tweets following Brazil's integrated country strategy (ICS)⁶³. One point to highlight is how the content is uniform across Embassy Brasilia, Consulate Rio de Janeiro, and Consulate Sao Paulo. However, there is more distinct content in the Consulate Recife's Instagram account. This distinct content includes more local resources, places, and individuals being showcased in the content. The Mission has content about the environment which aligns with the ICS as well as support to the current conflict in Ukraine. Negative engagement can be seen primarily on Facebook accounts. Further, across platforms, posts alluding to Pride seem to yield conflicting opinions; from people celebrating Pride to others calling the people on the post pedophiles. Some accounts, such as the facebook of Embassy Brasilia, seem to filter comments, making some content have fewer engagement than it initially had. This initial engagement could've been very negative comments or bots, such as a false article defaming the U.S. It is worth mentioning the issue of the US sharing its cultural priorities when other countries may have varied views, and additionally, the need for sophisticated PD management. In conclusion, the U.S. Mission Brazil is doing a great job spreading information with content being shared on platforms on a daily basis. Their content is tailored to each platform, Instagram and Twitter seem to have more positive engagement than Facebook. In terms of engagement in the comments or likes/reactions to the content, their numbers could be better. However, when we look at the views, their content is reaching a bigger audience than what the comments/likes show. In terms of engagement, Ambassador Frawley's twitter account has the most engagement out of all accounts for the mission. Ambassador Frawley uses an informal yet kind tone to her tweets which range from professional meetings to personal updates and her experiences with the local culture.

U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna

International Mission Context:

- Audience demographics and social media indicators:
- 42% of people in the world are under the age of 25⁶⁴
 - 63% internet penetration around the world⁶⁵
 - Over 25% of the world has gained internet in the last 10 years⁶⁶
 - 4.9 billion people across the world use social media⁶⁷

⁶² Twitter: <https://twitter.com/USCitsBrazil/status/1626192840479936512>

⁶³ "Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) - Brazil." 2022. State Department. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ICS_WHA_Brazil_Public.pdf.

⁶⁴ "Coming of age: adolescent health - Coming of age: adolescent health." n.d. World Health Organization (WHO). Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/coming-of-age-adolescent-health>.

⁶⁵ "Individuals using the Internet (% of population) | Data." n.d. World Bank Data. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>.

⁶⁶ 36% internet penetration in 2013 compared to 63% media penetration in 2023, "Individuals using the Internet (% of population) | Data." n.d. World Bank Data. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>.

⁶⁷ Wong, Belle. 2023. "Top Social Media Statistics And Trends Of 2023." Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/social-media-statistics/>.

- 2.9 billion active monthly users on Facebook⁶⁸ - 38k mission page followers
- 1.35 billion actively use Instagram⁶⁹- 9,353 mission page followers
- 237.8 million use Twitter⁷⁰ - 15,700 mission page followers
- 868 million user on YouTube⁷¹ - 176 mission page followers

→ Geopolitical context

The U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna focuses on multilateral diplomacy to promote U.S. interests to other international organizations in Vienna. What was once two organizations, the U.S. Mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations International Development Organization, merged to form the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna in 1983. Due to the continuing interest of both Atomic Energy and UN relations in the region, both of these topics remain top priorities to the mission, which is laid out in their ICS⁷². This mission focuses on nuclear energy, drugs and crime, and outer space.

USUNVIE works with all international organizations in Vienna, which include “the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs, the UN Commission on International Trade Law, the International Narcotics Control Board, and the UN Industrial Development Organization, of which the U.S. is not a member.”⁷³

Due to the various topics and global reach, the audience for USUNVIE is very expensive, but also very specific in terms of what specialized audiences are likely to engage. The posts on all platforms are tied into the missions’ ICS, posting about Nuclear, Drugs and crime, and outer space, with occasional posts about embassy staff and US holidays. The lack of a host country to target may make USUNVIE’s PD work much more difficult, but they have an opportunity to engage expert and committed audiences based on USUNVIE’s topics of involvement and a stronger audience for engagement for that.

⁶⁸ Wong, Belle. 2023. “Top Social Media Statistics And Trends Of 2023.” Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/social-media-statistics/>.

⁶⁹ Dixon, Stacy J. 2023. “Instagram users worldwide 2025.” Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/183585/instagram-number-of-global-users/>.

⁷⁰ Dixon, Stacy J. 2022. “Twitter global mDAU 2022.” Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/970920/monetizable-daily-active-twitter-users-worldwide/>.

⁷¹ Degenhard, J. 2023. “Global: YouTube users 2019-2028.” Statista. <https://www.statista.com/forecasts/1144088/youtube-users-in-the-world>.

⁷² “Integrated Country Strategies - United States Department of State.” n.d. State Department. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://www.state.gov/integrated-country-strategies/#/io>.

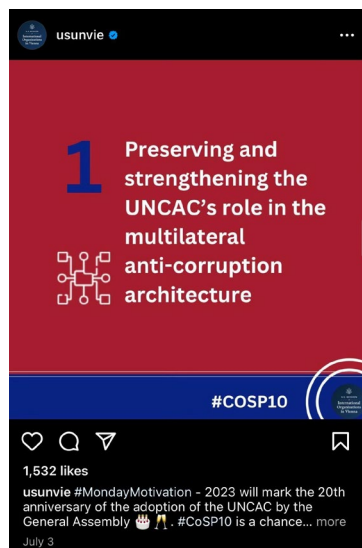
⁷³ “U.S. Mission to International Organizations In Vienna.” n.d. U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://vienna.usmission.gov/u-s-mission-to-international-organizations-in-vienna/>.

In Fiscal Year 2021, USUNVIE spent \$372,400 on Public Diplomacy, comparable to the mission in Luxembourg’s FY21 budget.⁷⁴

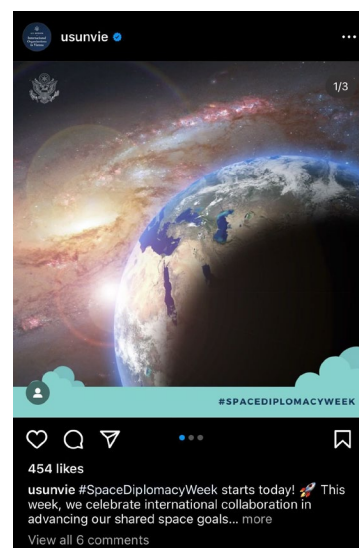
Analysis

Instagram:

The UNUSVIE account on Instagram⁷⁵ has a large range of engagement. about 1/3 of posts do not make it above 20 likes, with no comments. 1/2 of the posts will gain between 20-50 likes, with an occasional comment or two. The remaining 20% of posts will have anywhere from 50 to 1,700 likes, with comments ranging from 2-20 comments. The posts that are gaining the most engagement are either highlighting people/ ambassadors, commenting on the US support for UN initiatives, American contribution International Organizations in Vienna, or posts about space. There is much higher engagement on posts that highlight ambassadors, with one of the highest engagements being a post on preserving UNCAC’s role in the multilateral, anti-corruption architecture. Most comments in the posts are either people recognizing an individual who the post is about, showing support, or individuals tagging others to see the post. This should be seen as generally positive engagement and reactions to UNUSVIE Instagram presence. The audience is international, those who are interested, experts or care about nuclear, drugs and crime and outer space will all have an intersection as an audience on this platform. Generally, the engagement is strictly 1 way, due to lack of comments or interactions with the post other than “likes” on a post that have a large range.



76



⁷⁴ Walker, Vivian S. 2020. "Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy & International Broadcasting." State Department. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2021_ACPD_Annual_Report.pdf. <https://vienna.usmission.gov/u-s-mission-to-international-organizations-in-vienna/>.

⁷⁵ Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/usunvie/reels/>

⁷⁶ Post made on July 3rd regarding the 20th anniversary of the UN General Assembly’s adoption of the UNCAC (United Nations Convention Against Corruption). This post has over 1,500 likes, but no comments.

Facebook:

Engagement on the USUNVIE’s Facebook⁷⁹ account is lower than other social media sites for USUNVIE, despite there being a large number of followers. Most engagement comes in the form of “likes”, with a few posts gaining traction, similar to Instagram content regarding content. Most posts will average less than 5 likes, no matter the content. The only difference that is obvious is that there is a stronger “fake account” presence on Facebook that dominates the comments on almost every post over the last 6 months. One of the least liked posts (being 10 likes) was the Vienna Pride Parade that celebrated the human rights of the LGBTQIA+ community. There is no observable audience as there is no consistent engagement, whether that be due to the social media usage or the platform it is not clear.

Twitter:

USUNVIE’s Twitter⁸⁰ is a very busy page, and the most active out of any other social media that USUNVIE has. They are constantly reposting for many accounts, as well as posting organic material from the mission itself. The compilation of likes, comments, and shares brings Twitter to be the most consistently engaging platform for USUNVIE, with most posts having a few likes, a few comments, and generally 2-6 shares. The audience appears similar to the other platforms, not definable based upon location rather than field of interest, that being nuclear, drugs and crime, and outerspace. The most engaging posts are posts about partnerships with international organizations or fellowship programs, posts about days recognized around the world, like world cancer day, or posts with NASA information/NASA workers being highlighted. Space tends to draw a lot of attention on this account. These posts are more successful as they continue to gain likes but also retweets, sharing with other audiences.

⁷⁷ Post made on April 30th during space diplomacy week had 454 likes with 6 comments. These comments all seem to be positive. With simple, but engaging pictures for this post, and the last slide being a motivational blurb from the mission, this should be considered an example of good engagement.

⁷⁸ A Facebook post made on April 19th talks about the launching of the “American Voices at International Organizations”. This being one of the more engaged posts on Facebook, a women leading post with a diversity in picture types posted as well (as local as one can get in international organizations)

⁷⁹ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/usunvie/>

⁸⁰ Twitter: https://twitter.com/usunvie?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor



81



82

Youtube: The Youtube USUNVIE account⁸³ has had no posts in the last 8 months, which makes all observable data outside our field of observation for our project. The posts go back over a decade ago with generally good observable engagement the farther back you go. If there is time to create youtube shorts, similar to Instagram reels or short videos for Twitter, they should be uploaded to the youtube for storage usage and viewing.

Conclusion

The accounts run by USUNVIE appear to be generally successful, with an emphasis on Instagram and Twitter. The Youtube account is not active and cannot be considered within this analysis due to its lack of posts in the last 6 months. The Facebook page is not as engaging as Instagram, while it does have the most followers out of any social media it gets less likes and comments per post than any of the other social medias, combined. Twitter seems to be the most local/organic posts from the USUNVIE account due to the amount of retweeting, posts with specific information that is only shared on Twitter, and the engagement it gets from the global community. It is clear that there are individuals working hard on the social media platforms and their messages they send out. It also appears that this mission could be much more engaging with the thousands of followers with more social media engagement.

The social media accounts, that being Instagram and facebook, with Twitter relating to this as well, all have the same uniform posts, posted around the same time. The engagement is not consistent

⁸¹ : Post on April 26th commemorates the disaster at Chernobyl and emphasizes nuclear safety, being a major key point in US-UN Vienna's ICS. With the post having more than 19.5k views as well as 55 likes, 22 retweets, and 7 comments, this is an example of how an international page can be used and engage audiences on topics of interest around the world.

⁸² Post made on February 4th for world cancer day. The post emphasized a positive scientific organization that aids in cancer research. This post also highlights US support, monetarily and otherwise, for strengthening cancer care. With over 2k views, 20 likes, 12 retweets and a comment, a great example of how this post transcended the borders of its twitter following to be shared with other like-minded populations.

⁸³ Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/usunvie>

across all platforms so if at all possible given staffing constraints, the team recommends that the posts should not be consistent. Tailoring posts to one's audience, whether that be taking into account the platform or the audience(s) on each platform, is essential. Due to the specificity, and the possibility of engaging a range of audiences who are interested/ passionate about the US's involvement in international organizations regarding Nuclear, Drugs and Crime, and outerspace, it's specific, but transcends many borders that other missions may struggle with. The use of Twitter for this mission is very important, as they post every day, multiple times a day, often with information that matches what is being posted on other platforms or new information, with or without graphics. For this mission, Twitter is the social media that will receive the most viability due to consistent reposting by others, comments and liking engagement. Instagram and facebook are much more formalized and do not compare in their comments and shares.

Case Studies by Social Media Account

Telegram Use:

We looked at Telegram use of five accounts targeted at Russian language audiences in Russia and several Central Asian countries. Telegram is differentiated from other social media sites in that it uses a chat model and individuals join specific channels to view content, not to interact or engage back with the group/page. It is a one-way broadcast tool for disseminating information to the group, and the messaging app of choice for Russian users. Telegram is more appropriately classified as a messaging platform, not a social media platform.

In Russian and Central Asia, Telegram is the messaging platform of choice, especially in repressive countries. Up to 40% of Russians have Telegram on their device with about 48.8 million Russians using Telegram daily.⁸⁴ In countries without free media and restrictive governments, the Telegram app is used to communicate news, politics, and organizational information,⁸⁵ delivered to the user.

Similar to the WhatsApp Messaging platform, Telegram users are affiliated with the app by their individual phone number associated with their device; they can or message individuals or join groups. Organizations can set up groups, where information can be shared (forwarded)— especially in oppressive regimes where information or news is not easily reached to an individual user. Russian language users prefer Telegram over other messaging platforms for its security and ease of use. Telegram is used primarily on a mobile device, and the functionality differs from that on a computer desktop viewing the same telegram channel.

Each Telegram group can alter settings to allow for reactions, or no-reactions on posts (messages) pasted in the channel. Some of the Embassy accounts do now allow for 'reactions' to the messages; only the views of the message can be observed, not reactions or perceived sentiment. The longer a

⁸⁴"Telegram Surpasses WhatsApp Traffic Volume in Russia." 2023. The Moscow Times. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/01/23/telegram-surpasses-whatsapp-traffic-volume-in-russia-a80012>.

⁸⁵"Key facts about Telegram." 2022. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/12/16/key-facts-about-telegram/>.

message is on the platform the more views it receives – this is a linear pattern. Compared to other platforms, Telegram group channels post a lot of written text (in Cyrillic), meaning a lot of information is shared.

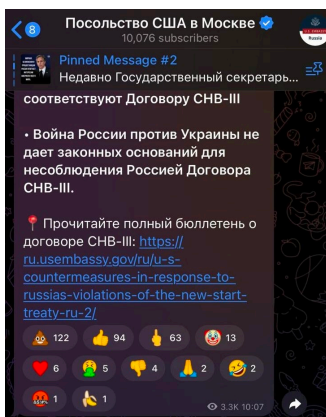
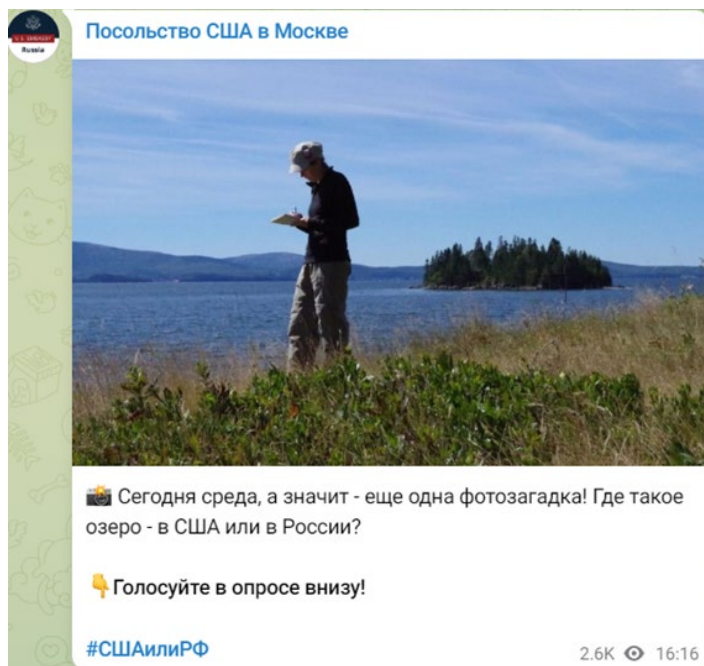
Below are the observations our team made of the Telegram accounts:

Embassy Moscow⁸⁶ (Russia 10,000 subscribers)

Embassy Moscow gets around 2,000-3,000 views per message posted on the platform, and information is consistent with U.S. foreign policy, State Department goals and values.

(Embassy Moscow posting a photos of USA landscape scenery)

About 1/3 of the posts are reposts or forward from the State Department/Washington HQ. There is lots of written text to accompany the photo(s) or video. All messages are in Russian without any English. Uniquely, there are lots of photos of beautiful locations around the USA – assessing that this information is of use/value to the Russians who may only receive Russian media



information that the USA is a bad place. The Telegram channel consistently posts photos of places around the USA. For example the caption above asks: “Сегодня среда, а значит - еще одна фотозагадка! Где такое озеро - в США или в России?” [Today is Wednesday, which means another photo-mystery! Where is such a lake - in the USA or in Russia?] These landscape photos receive positive reactions with 150 or more ‘love’ emojis. However, multiple message posts that are not photos/landscape all have negative reaction emojis ranging from the middle finger emoji, to sick/throw up emoji, to the literal ‘poop’ emoji as the primary reaction to the post. The team could not tell if the negative reactions are to the post/messages, or if the negative

reactions are in agreement with what the US is communicating (anti Russian government, pro US posts).

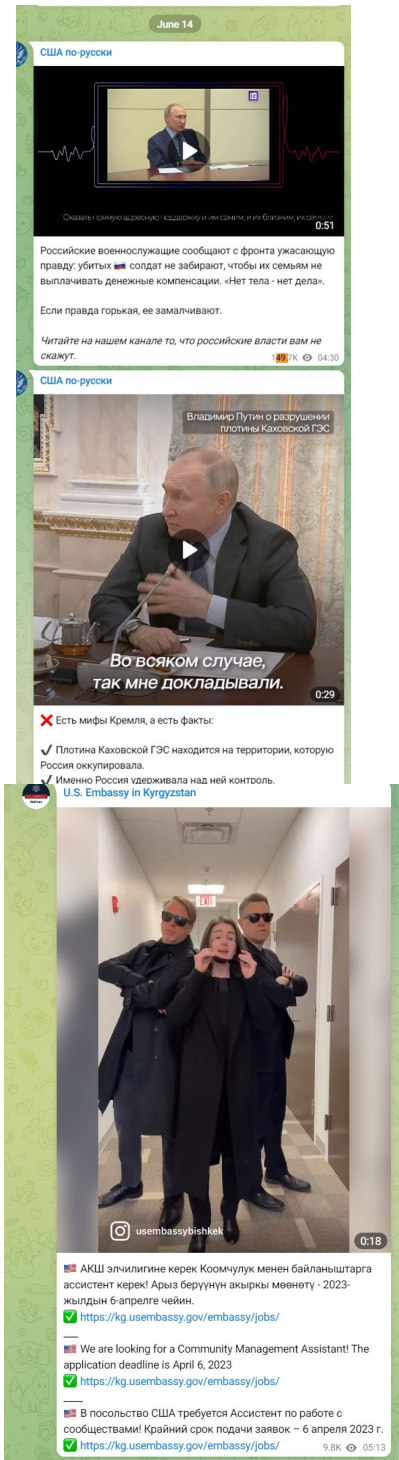
USApoRusski⁸⁷ (US State Department main Russian-language Telegram Channel - 5,140 subscribers)

⁸⁶ Telegram: <https://t.me/USEmbRussia>

⁸⁷ Telegram: <https://t.me/s/usaporuski>

With 5,000 subscribers, this Telegram channel receives about 1,500-2,500 views per message posted. Since this is the main Russian language channel Telegram page, it contains information like it is from Washington HQ, without specific curation for Russian local viewers. Though in Russian (Cyrillic) the information to a local Russian user on the phone may not be of value come from the perspective of a Russian looking at a U.S. Government webpage, it can be information nonetheless and the only U.S. State Department communication effort to Russian phone users. There were two video posts featuring President Putin that received very high views in June, 47k and 149k views per message. (These screenshot photos show tens of thousands of views, in comparison to an average of 1,000-2,000 per message)

Embassy Tashkent⁸⁸ (Uzbekistan - 22,000 subscribers) Human rights watchers have pointed to Telegram use in Uzbekistan as an example of information getting into one of the most oppressive regimes where foreign information is not allowed to freely flow in the country.⁸⁹ Embassy Tashkent's posts average 10,000 views per message and posts information from that the local Embassy team disseminates.⁹⁰ The posts include information on visa application processes, scholarship and grant opportunities, hiring opportunities, and the work that USAID is doing in Uzbekistan. The Embassy posts messages in a mix of English, Russian and Uzbek. Most messages in this channel receive 40-60 'thumbs up' emoji reactions and few negative reactions. This channel contains more English than the other Telegram channels observed. Curiously absent on the feed is any information referencing the Russia Ukraine War. This is likely due to Uzbekistan's precarious relationship with Russia over energy resources; the US Embassy is not inflaming local people who are already in a difficult position in needing Russian originating energy.⁹¹



⁸⁸ Telegram: <https://t.me/USAUzbekistan>

⁸⁹ Tuhtasinov, Murodjon. 2019. "How Uzbeks learned to love (and live on) the Telegram messenger app." Global Voices. <https://globalvoices.org/2019/04/12/how-uzbeks-learned-to-love-and-live-on-the-telegram-messenger-app/>.

⁹⁰ "Uzbekistan ranks second in the world in terms of number of Telegram channels." 2023. Kun.uz. <https://kun.uz/en/news/2023/03/23/uzbekistan-ranks-second-in-the-world-in-terms-of-number-of-telegram-channels>.

⁹¹ Burna, Sophia N. 2023. "Uzbekistan-Russia Energy Relations: A Tale of 2 Problems." The Diplomat. <https://thediplomat.com/2023/05/uzbekistan-russia-energy-relations-a-tale-of-2-problems/>.

Embassy Dushanbe⁹² (Tajikistan 1,058 subscribers) Embassy Dushanbe does not allow reactions, so it is difficult to report sentiment analysis findings. Most messages received 500-600 views per post. Similar to Embassy Tashkent, the Dushanbe channel information is mostly informative posts on consular access, grants and educational scholarships, USAID hirings and local hiring opportunities. The language is a mix of Russian and English. The Embassy posts photos of Embassy events and occasional videos. These photos and videos receive approximately 1,200-1,500 views per post.

Embassy Bishkek⁹³ (Kyrgyzstan - 6,100 subscribers) Embassy Bishkek's channel has the fewest messages, and appears the team may not have the resources to consistently post information regularly. Only 11 messages/posts exist between Feb 1, 2023 and July 1, 2023 that average 8,000 views per post. These posts are informative, written in Russian, English and Kyrgyz and mostly share information about educational grants and scholarships. Two posts contained videos created by the embassy locally that are professionally produced, and included the embassy employees, both produced in March. One was an advertisement for a video editor position, and the other highlighted local Kyrgyz cuisine and culture. The video for a video editor is one of the only cases of humor observed in Telegram or in our social media project. It is difficult to evaluate if this video received positive attention locally in Bishkek. To make a parody video of 'secret agents' in a former Soviet Republic that still has lasting remnants of the KGB in their intelligence agencies⁹⁴, could be seen as insensitive, or culturally tone deaf.⁹⁵

Conclusions: The number of views that each message receives when posted in a Telegram channel is very high, compared to views or reactions from other social media platforms. Though each country studied has millions of Telegram users, each embassy's 50% view rate in comparison to the subscriber count is a high view rate, meaning information is being read or forwarded in the channel. Message posts that contain more views than subscribers in the channel are likely posts that have been forwarded outside of the channel. This has broad implications for those accounts posting information in their channel. If embassy messages are receiving more than 100% views per message beyond channel subscribers, then users are taking action to forward out the message beyond the group, reaching a wider audience. This is not to say that messages with less views than subscriber count are not being forwarded to friends outside the group. But when views are more than 100% of subscriber count, the embassy can know for certainty that users are taking action to forward the post far beyond the audience in the group channel.

US Embassy Telegram accounts have the option to allow reactions to messages, or to prohibit reactions (like, dislike through *emojis*). Embassy Bishkek and Dushanbe do not allow reactions in the Telegram app platform. Without reaction views allowed, no sentiment analysis can be observed,

⁹² n.d. U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan – Telegram. Accessed August 14, 2023.

<https://t.me/s/usembassydushanbe?q=%23%D1%82%D0%BE%D2%B7%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BD&before=1202>.

⁹³ Telegram: <https://t.me/s/USEmbassyKG?q=%23AmericanSongContest>

⁹⁴ "Russian Intelligence in Kyrgyzstan, Cold War Redux." 2014. The Diplomat. <https://thediplomat.com/2014/12/russian-intelligence-in-kyrgyzstan-cold-war-redux/>.

⁹⁵ Delmas, Charlotte, and Eilish Hart. 2023. "Kyrgyzstan's uneasy return to memory — Meduza." Meduza. <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/07/07/kyrgyzstan-s-uneasy-return-to-memory>.

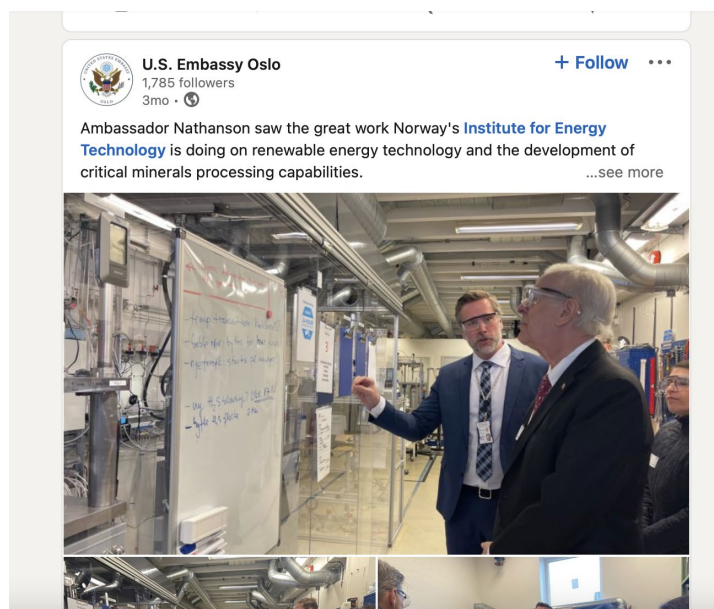
and the only available data is views per message posted. We observed that viewing the Embassy Telegram page on the web versus in the Telegram app on a mobile device (where users are allowed to join the group) is displayed slightly differently. The app is the only place you can view reactions if the Page/Group admin has allowed reactions as in the case for accounts Dushanbe, Moscow, and USApoRusski.

LinkedIn Use:

LinkedIn is a platform that has been used to primarily look for professional opportunities, find people in the same industry and network. The idea of using this platform as a tool in digital diplomacy comes from the fact that not only one can find job postings, individuals and companies are able to share posts from other accounts and post their own as well. This could be an opportunity to expand the digital presence of missions whose local audience use LinkedIn frequently. Having compared and contrasted the LinkedIn accounts from Embassy Oslo, Embassy Luxembourg and Embassy Madrid, there is the innovative idea to use the platform for more than just jobs, as one sees in the current use of this platform in the US. According to research, 39% of the Spanish population uses LinkedIn, 56% of the population in Luxembourg, and 44.5% of the Norwegian population uses LinkedIn⁹⁶. This is a really large percentage of the population. In and of itself this should justify using this platform. For the completion of this report, we met with various experts in communication, social media, and Public Diplomacy, including with two foreign service nationals working at a US embassy (where LinkedIn is still used largely for job notices and handled by their HR department.).

Embassy Oslo⁹⁷

The Embassy Oslo primarily uses the platform as a tool for professional development and for disseminating information about the whereabouts of Ambassador Nathanson. The ‘about’ section of this page says the following: “This is the official LinkedIn page of the U.S. Embassy in Norway. The U.S. Embassy in Norway is the official representation of the United States to the Kingdom of Norway. Our countries enjoy a long tradition of friendly relations with strong ties across sectors, from business to culture to education. This page includes locally engaged recruitment for the U.S. Embassy in Norway. If you are a U.S. citizen interested in a career as a United States Foreign Service



⁹⁶ Jasiiek Pokrop, "LinkedIn Users in European Countries [May 2023 Update]," NapoleonCat., <https://napoleoncat.com/blog/linkedin-users-europe/>.

⁹⁷

Officer or internship with the United States Department of State, please visit www.careers.state.gov. For additional official information, please visit the Embassy's homepage at <https://no.usembassy.gov>.⁹⁸

Embassy Oslo's LinkedIn account is being used to share mainly Ambassador, Chargé d'Affaires, Deputy Chief meetings and visits, holidays and celebrations, conferences and summits, and occasionally job openings in the Mission.

Illustrations of the diverse content:

99

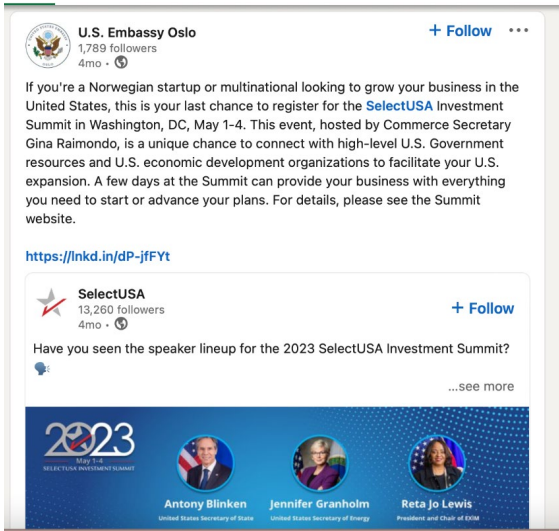


100

⁹⁸ LinkedIn: U.S. Embassy Oslo | LinkedIn, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/us-embassy-oslo>.

⁹⁹ **CAPTION:** Ambassador Nathanson saw the great work *Norway's Institute for Energy Technology*[#] is doing renewable energy technology and the development of critical minerals processing capabilities. Ambassador Nathanson saw the great work *Norway's Institute for Energy Technology*[#] is doing renewable energy technology and the development of critical minerals processing capabilities. The United States will expand partnerships with Norway through enhanced research to propel innovation that supports the green transition.

¹⁰⁰ **CAPTION:** Acting Deputy Chief of Mission *Jamal Al-Mussawi*[#] joins Ukrainian Embassy Chargée Liliia Honcharevych in support of Ukraine on Ukrainian Constitution Day *UAUS*



101



102



Most Engagement

101 **CAPTION:** *If you're a Norwegian startup or multinational looking to grow your business in the United States, this is your last chance to register for the **SelectUSA**[#] Investment Summit in Washington, DC, May 1-4. This event, hosted by Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, is a unique chance to connect with high-level U.S. Government resources and U.S. economic development organizations to facilitate your U.S. expansion. A few days at the Summit can provide your business with everything you need to start or advance your plans. For details, please see the Summit website.*

102 **CAPTION:** *This week, we mark the 21st anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, and mourn the nearly 3,000 lives taken too soon. We will never forget the brave patriots who perished in the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, and the heroic first responders who gave their lives to help others and the avenging angels of our arm forces. **#NeverForget***

In terms of engagement, the posts have mostly likes and a few comments on some posts. This could be explained by the nature of the platform, in which users repost or react to content more often than commenting.

An example of content with the most positive engagement is shown to the left.¹⁰³

This post had six comments in total, a higher number compared to the average of 5 comments per post. The content includes the Ambassador's residence in the heart of Oslo which is described as a remarkable landmark and symbol of the U.S. in its exchanges and relations with Norway.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is a good initiative to use LinkedIn to disseminate information. The Mission seems to be tailoring its content for a targeted audience of young professionals, local companies, and American professionals. With a majority of English speakers in their targeted audience, it would seem pertinent to post in English. Compared to other LinkedIn accounts observed, their tone in the captions is rather formal and a more informal tone and use of emojis has been observed to yield positive results. This account has the least amount of comments/likes engagement among the three accounts observed. Embassy Oslo has more followers to their account than Embassy Luxembourg.

Embassy Luxembourg¹⁰⁴

The Embassy Luxembourg primarily uses the platform as a tool for professional development and for disseminating information about the whereabouts of Ambassador Barrett. The 'about' section of this page says the following:

"Official account of the U.S. Embassy Luxembourg. Connecting students, entrepreneurs, & business leaders. LU 🇺🇸"

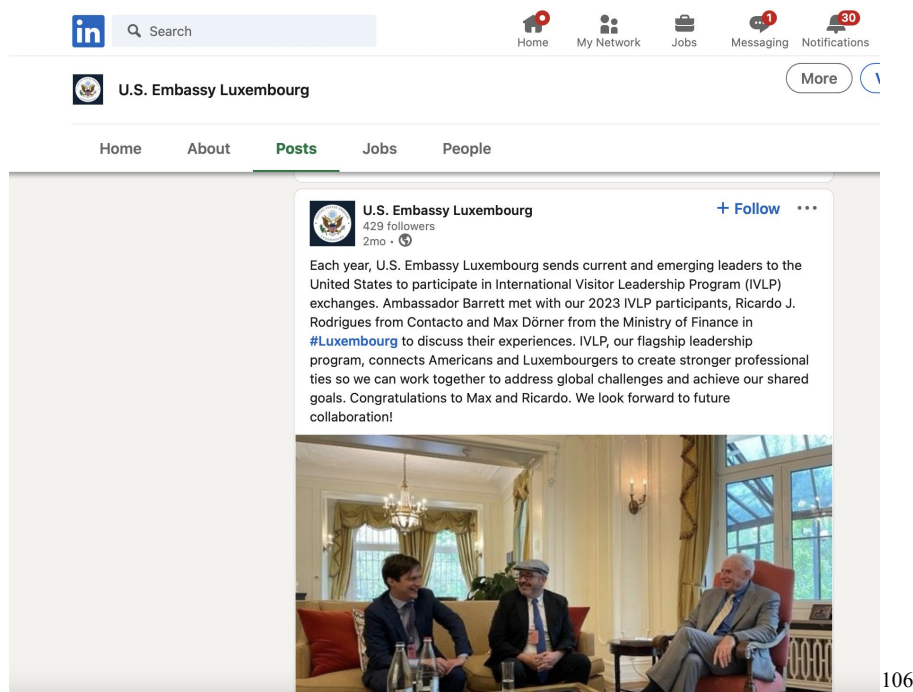
The U.S. Embassy in Luxembourg conducts diplomatic relations with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and coordinates the activities of U.S. Government personnel serving in Luxembourg as well as official visitors. Bilateral cooperation includes cultural, political, economic, commercial, security, and educational activities. The Embassy also provides consular services, including visas for visitors to the United States and passports for United States citizens in Luxembourg.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ **CAPTION:** "This year celebrates the 100-year mark of Villa Otium, the U.S. Ambassador's residence, in the heart of Oslo, Norway. The U.S. government purchased Villa Otium in 1923, as not only a remarkable architectural landmark but also a valuable diplomatic asset, helping to establish and maintain the representation of the United States in a rapidly changing global environment. For the past 100 years, the residence has been the venue for everything from meaningful political exchanges and diplomatic meetings to cultural programs, events, and celebrations. We look forward to continuing to honor Villa Otium as a defining symbol of the U.S. in its exchanges and relations with Norway."

¹⁰⁴ LinkedIn: <https://lu.linkedin.com/company/u-s-embassy-luxembourg>

¹⁰⁵ LinkedIn: U.S. Embassy Luxembourg | LinkedIn, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/u-s-embassy-luxembourg/about/>

Compared to the Embassy Oslo, the U.S. Embassy Luxembourg also uses their account to reach students and showcase in their content international education opportunities and exchange programs on top of meetings and visits with the Ambassador or holidays and celebrations. This account also shares summit and conference information on the platform and is getting more engagement thus than Oslo.



Most Engagement

In terms of engagement, the posts have mostly likes and a few comments on some posts. This could be explained by the nature of the platform as it was previously mentioned in the analysis for Embassy Oslo.

An example of content with the most positive engagement could be the post highlighting Ambassador Barrett’s meeting with IVLP alumni. Most positive comments are from people who know one of the IVLP alumni, congratulating the participants for their participation in the program.

As for negative engagement, there is no visible negative engagement in comments. This could be explained by the nature of the platform to advance professionally and network. For instance,

¹⁰⁶ **CAPTION:** “Each year, U.S. Embassy Luxembourg sends current and emerging leaders to the United States to participate in International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) exchanges. Ambassador Barrett met with our 2023 IVLP participants, Ricardo J. Rodrigues from Contacto and Max Dörner from the Ministry of Finance in #Luxembourg to discuss their experiences.”

commenters for the IVLP post are people the Ambassador met with and mutual connections congratulating the IVLP alumni for the meeting.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, compared to other LinkedIn accounts observed in this report. This account gives professional educational exchange and grant programs an important role in their feed. Same as Embassy Oslo, this account uses English as its primary language in all captions, which can be explained by the amount of English speakers in both countries. Engagement could improve with a higher average of comments than the current 5 comments per post average by tailoring their content to the main audience on LinkedIn. LinkedIn users are mainly young professionals in their 20s. However, it is worth noting that educational and professional content has high engagement in its resharing numbers. These opportunities are being reposted more than the average of 8 reposts.

Embassy Madrid¹⁰⁷

The posts on this account summarize meetings and visits Ambassador Reynoso has, some job notices, professional and educational resources.

The ‘about’ section of this page says the following:

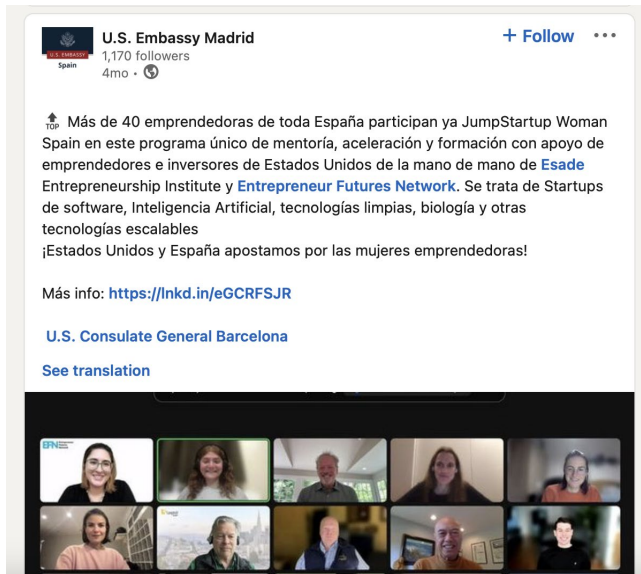
“La Embajada de Estados Unidos en Madrid representa al gobierno de Estados Unidos en España y Andorra. España es un aliado, socio y amigo indispensable, nos unen valores comunes y profundos lazos históricos y culturales. Estados Unidos y España trabajan en estrecha colaboración en una gran cantidad de desafíos globales, incluida la promoción de la paz, la seguridad, los derechos humanos y la prosperidad económica internacionales. La Misión Diplomática de Estados Unidos en España y Andorra está formada por la Embajada en Madrid, el Consulado General en Barcelona y las agencias consulares en Mallorca, Valencia, Sevilla, Málaga y Las Palmas. Síguenos para conocer ofertas de trabajo, nuestras actividades y eventos, convocatorias de ayudas y becas, además de información relevante sobre Estados Unidos.¹⁰⁸”

The Embassy Madrid offers in their LinkedIn posts information about U.S. scholarship and funding opportunities, job opportunities, and community initiatives such as JumpStartup Woman Spain, a program of collaboration and support among investors and entrepreneurs from the U.S. and their counterparts in Esade Entrepreneurship Institute and Entrepreneur Futures Networks. “The U.S. and Spain support female entrepreneurs.¹⁰⁹” The account seems to focus more on tailored content to the young audience that is mainly present in LinkedIn. The use of emojis in all their captions is also worth mentioning. A different approach to present content. There is also a wide range of content advocating for Women in Business in this account.

¹⁰⁷ LinkedIn: <https://es.linkedin.com/company/usembassymadrid>

¹⁰⁸ LinkedIn: U.S. Embassy Madrid | LinkedIn, <https://es.linkedin.com/company/usembassymadrid>

¹⁰⁹ LinkedIn: U.S. Embassy Madrid | LinkedIn, <https://es.linkedin.com/company/usembassymadrid>

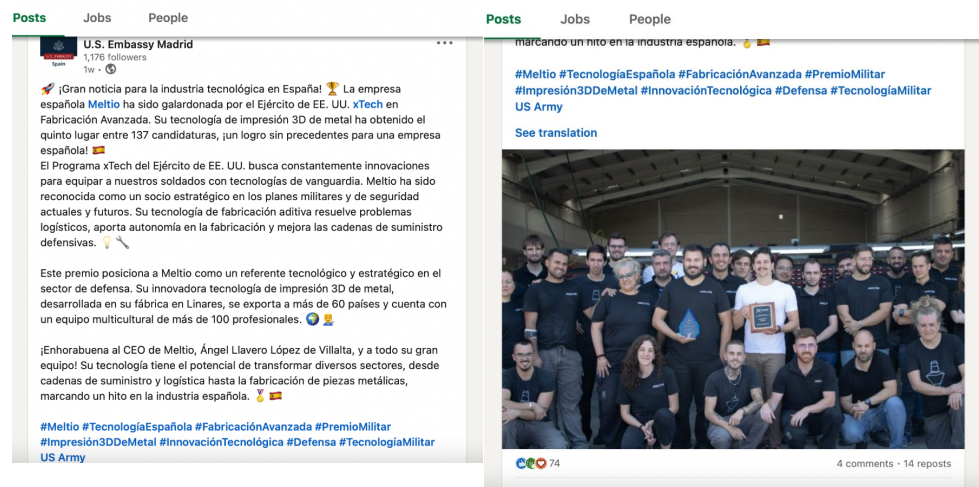


110

Most Engagement

In terms of engagement, the posts have mostly likes and a few comments on some posts. LinkedIn users mainly engage with content by resharing and/reacting to the content.

An example of content with the most positive engagement can be seen to the right.¹¹¹



There is no visible negative engagement in comments. This could be explained by the nature of the platform to advance professionally and network.

Conclusion:

¹¹⁰ CAPTION: Más de 40 emprendedoras de toda España participan ya Jump Startup Women Spain en este programa único de mentoría, aceleración y formación con apoyo de emprendedores e inversores de Estados Unidos de la mano de [Esade Entrepreneurship](#)[#] Institute y [Entrepreneur Futures Network](#)[#]. Se trata de Startups de software, Inteligencia Artificial, tecnologías limpias, biología y otras tecnologías escalables ¡Estados Unidos y España apostamos por las mujeres emprendedoras!

¹¹¹ CAPTION: “ ¡Gran noticia para la industria tecnológica en España! 🇺🇸 La empresa española Meltio ha sido galardonada por el Ejército de EE. UU. xTech en Fabricación Avanzada”

U.S. Embassy Madrid has more engagement than both the U.S. Embassy Oslo, and U.S. Embassy Luxembourg. Their use of emojis in the captions makes the content more informal and easier to connect with the targeted age group. Additionally, all the content is written in Spanish, and there is a robust amount of educational content, as well as more job opening content than the other two accounts observed. LinkedIn is evolving in the U.S. and getting much more engagement on non-job issues while still having a relatively young professional audience. Posts should be alert for this trend evolving in host countries, especially those with similar socio-economic levels as the US. One practice that could be improved is their long captions for each content, perhaps shorter captions will attract more users to the content.

Use of Instagram on Three Domestic Accounts:

DRL: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor ¹¹²

DRL's Instagram shows a lot of potential. DRL's page has a range of likes on posts from 5 - 60, with more being upward of 10-15 on average. This platform's audience seems to be a mix of domestic and international individuals. Being one of the moderate traffic accounts, DRL's Instagram has continuously posted people, relevant people, on their Instagram, and publicized their outreach. These social media posts are what gained the most traction on their page, and it directly correlated to other pages engagement trends as well. Below is an example of this.

Many posts show individuals getting awards, paneling speakers, and well known individuals (like Secretary Blinkin) being posted and those posts are the most engaged with on this platform in the last 6 months. With minimal comments, there is superficial engagement with these posts, but still engagement. There are lots of posts that have evidence of conferences or speakers, but only those who are familiar with the Bureau or the in-depth bureaucracy of state are going to understand the language, acronyms, or the topics being discussed. Posts that are easy to understand, or easy to look at and comprehend, are much more engaging, especially when there are people that are more well known. Media literacy of a social media following is important, and while it seems that the social media following of this account is pretty high, the posts are equally as high level due to the use of acronyms and language that those in similar fields will understand, but an average Instagram user may not. This could discourage audiences from engaging due accessibility of the message.

Conclusion:

DRL is developing what can become a very good Instagram engine. There is clearly effort and organic material being used to create content outside of what Washington asks. However, posts are directed towards a specific audience with expertise in the tiny subfield of watchers who are interested in this topic. This page has potential to engage a larger audience, especially within the target audience of those who care about human rights and democracy. The use of this platform to promote

¹¹² Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/usa_humanrights/?hl=en

events at DRL, or other agencies that DRL works with, would be one way to do this, or postings about new jobs or policies that are passed about human rights.



113

INL: Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement¹¹⁴

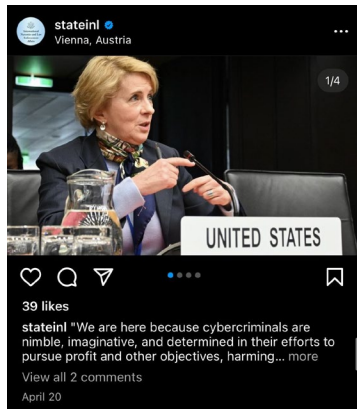
INL's social media account has done something most other social media accounts we have analyzed have done, they operate in their one way engagement mostly using short videos reels on Instagram. This is surprising in two ways. First, doing this takes more time than other types of posts, and second, this account, compared to other state department internal bureaus, has a low follower count. Most posts get less than 50 likes. Nonetheless, the videos are very easy to understand and engaging to watch. They tend to do very well considering the low amount of followers and general engagement on the page. Posts with the most engagements are a mix of photo posts and short videos made of lots of photos put together. They consist of people from INL being highlighted, important people from state visiting different places on behalf of INL or working in INL offices around the world, and posts about new international developments where INL is involved (below you will find a post on the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Committee with the UN). These posts have an international audience as well as a US audience. Posts generally have comments, mostly positive and quick engagements.

Conclusion:

¹¹³ Post made on February 27th shows the Acting assistant Secretary, Erin Barclay in Geneva for an event. This is an example of using high level state department officials as “celebrities” on a page. For a page that is not a mission and does not have a host country to contextualize itself in, appealing to a larger, more international audience is key.

¹¹⁴ Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/statein/>

Using short videos is very engaging on Instagram. The use of video in these shorts are important; a combination of video and clips. As of now, it is simply photo clips in the short videos which makes it less engaging and information based, rather a quick view and less impact. This page, just like DRL and INL, have potential to grow their engagement through diversifying their platforms with opportunities for engagement, like future events and live Q&A's.



115

TIPP: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons¹¹⁶

The Office to monitor and Combat Trafficking In Persons has the potential to engage both domestic and international audiences due to its topic focus. With this in mind, their engagement on Instagram has specific trends that should be noted. In February and March, the account's posts did not receive more than a few likes. In more recent months, the engagement has grown, with an upward trend of more likes, some getting more than 25 likes. The difference in the posts content could be a reason for the change in engagement over time. The posts have become more focused on events that TIPP has been participating in, whether that be conferences, or showing Ambassador Dyer, who is heading the Bureau, at an event. Using a more well known individual is a consistent finding in our research that justified higher engagement levels..

The humanization of TIPP on this page is worth noting. The use of individuals in every post, at events and explaining what they are, creates a community. After scrolling, the same faces will pop up and there is an understanding of what TIPP is doing, where they are, and who they are working with. This is a productive way of keeping individuals information but also engaged on social media.

TIPP does not post as much comparatively to other mission Instagrams or individual Instagrams we observed. That being said, it is clear that a change in social media management has occurred and

¹¹⁵ Post made on April 22nd shows the 5th negotiation session for the Ad Hoc Committee elaborating on a UN cybercrime convention. Ambassador Deborah McCarthy pictured shows the success of engagement when posting a relevant/well known face to a social media to gain traction with audiences. The message below is elaborated and educated, which adds an extra level of interest to viewers. It should be noted that the "United States" sign in the corner, as well as the action shot, is most likely part of why the post is doing well

¹¹⁶ Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/trafficking_in_persons_state/

that there is an upward engagement trend for this account. There is good potential here, given the very committed international audience concerned about trafficking in persons.

Conclusion:

With the obvious attention to growing the engagement on the Instagram platform, it is clear that the Office is working to improve practices for their page. As Ambassador Dryer recently started at TIPP (early 2023), this could be part of a new action plan. This page does not post/ engage with its audience nearly as much as other Instagrams we have observed. Most posts will have individuals in them, especially as of recently Ambassador Dryer. Across most platforms, we have observed that a “balanced” set of posts is important, e.g., posts with people and posts with graphics combined with information pieces. This page is working on expanding its audience and engagement, some opportunities that may not have been used are posting about upcoming events, including international meetings and debates on issues of interest. In general, to date, the account is only achieving low engagement. But the potential is evident if only from the subject matter.



117

¹¹⁷ Post on June 15th notes a press briefing done by Ambassador Dryer. The comment is an emoji of hands clapping

Overarching Findings and Conclusions

After a thorough review of the individual context and policy objectives of each mission and office, interviews with diplomacy experts and collection of engagement metrics, the Public Diplomacy team at American University found that most U.S. Missions are effectively using their social media accounts and platforms for effective Public Diplomacy. The team drew this conclusion after identifying various themes of successful and less successful content common across pages.

Our analysis of followers, comments, likes and shares on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Telegram and LinkedIn found that overall Missions had most of their followings on Facebook. Twitter had the least engagement and appears to be used primarily as a channel for quickly getting information disseminated to key “*elite*” audiences. We see potential by the GPA team to encourage Twitter account personnel to engage the audience of Twitter users with selective curation of a percentage of tweets as well as specific tailoring to Twitter's audience(s) in each country. Youtube was the least utilized platform across missions we viewed, however videos posted on YouTube provide an unique ability for users searching for information or historical videos to see prior media. We conclude that missions had a presence on platforms most used in their respective host countries. Telegram has extremely high engagement for each message posted in a channel on the accounts we observed. The potential reach of additional audiences through using WhatsApp is a topic our team discussed, and we agreed it would create an opportunity for tailored engagement, if utilized.

Based on observed posts, below the reader will find some best practices identified as well as a few areas for improvement.

Best practices

Content Tailoring

According to Public Diplomacy experts interviewed, content is more likely to reach its targeted audiences with good impact when it is tailored to the policy objectives of the Mission/Bureau and to the culture of the host country in the case of bilateral embassies. The team identified components and themes of content that garnered positive engagement due to the Missions’ successful tailoring. Language and cultural awareness, gender and religious inclusivity and Ambassador engagement were some of the content themes that support our conclusion that content is tailored on Mission pages. In the case of multilateral Missions and individual Bureaus,

a key to success would seem to be identifying the audience(s) that care about the issues pursued by the offices and finding ways to get their attention and attract their engagement.

Cultural Inclusion and Awareness

Culturally tailored content consistently had more engagement on the majority of social media platforms observed. Posts that included and were curated for local places, traditions, religions, cultural attire and events consistently received positive reactions from followers on different Embassy pages. Our findings show that across every social media platforms, locally popular and trending topics combined with Mission-specific objectives have a positive correlation with wider audiences and higher engagement.

The Mission to UAE's posts during Islamic holidays are examples of content that appealed to host country followers. A post of a 'sustainability-themed Suhoor' dinner hosted at the Consul General's house garnered three times the average engagement on the page, while promoting UAE culture and U.S foreign policy, for example:

The U.S. Mission Brazil tailors its posts for international holidays such as the Dia International da Música (International Music Day) to feature local musicians. Ambassador Frawley also actively tweets about her local experiences, generating praise from Brazilians on the platform in more recent posts.

The Twitter account for USUNVIE also features content tailoring for its more specialized international audiences by pushing heavily informative posts, which is what its likely more well-informed and expert audiences seem to like.



Local Language Inclusion

The inclusion of local languages in captions and in the graphics of posts drew more engagement in the form of reposts and comments across various embassies, the team observed. Followers often commented in the local language in response to such posts. Despite translation tools being available on select social media sites, almost all embassies frequently translate many posts from English to the local language for better content tailoring.

Some examples include Embassy Nepal who primarily use the local Nepali language (Devangari script) in its postings to Facebook, the most used social media platform in Nepal. Approximately 70% of the Facebook posts started with the Devangari script with the exception of announcement posts about job openings, grant opportunities, and visas.

Missions Brazil, Conakry and Burma were also observed to use the local language as the primary language of communication on posts with apparently positive results.

Gender Representation

Another commonality observed across embassy pages is that posts featuring women seem to intentionally depict them in positive and diverse roles. Women are featured in leadership, STEM and other empowering roles. Additionally, posts with photos of women in local communities generally received positive and above average engagement. Content within this theme shows evidence of tailoring to U.S policy, which is well received in the countries that the team studied.

Posts featuring women Ambassadors, Chargés or other women in the embassy staff received positive interactions across various mission pages. Posts with women Ambassadors occasionally drew higher views and interaction for the mission page, such in the example of Ambassador Dryer's remarks post for TIPP.

Ambassador Engagement

The persona of the Ambassador as a 'celebrity' played a role in engagement across various Missions and social media platforms. The project team observed that the presence of Ambassadors on social media platforms often boosted engagement on posts, regardless of the gender of the Ambassador.

Furthermore, a combination of posts that feature other Embassy leadership, staff and the Ambassador get even more engagement on some Mission pages. Some examples include Instagram posts from Ambassador Holgate of USUNVIE, who engages Followers on U.S policies while attending events or Embassy Brasilia, who gain engagement on Twitter by Retweeting the Ambassador.

In Guinea, posts with Ambassador Fitrell garnered double the average Likes per post and received positive comments and Reshares.

Conversely, Mission Burma had minimal Ambassador engagement, while Mission Nepal was overly Ambassador-centric. While the Nepal accounts tend to garner engagement, the possibility of losing that engagement with the audience after the Ambassador leaves is to-be considered.

As a best practice, a balanced feed with Ambassador and staff focused posts is important in order to maintain engagement across multiple Ambassadors and Administrations, the team concludes. This approach can also maximize audiences in the short-term by having consistent and related posts by the Ambassador and the staff that are tailored for the country and various key audiences as well as touching regularly on key ICS objectives.



Announcements of practical value and audience interest

The use of embassy social media platforms to announce job openings, events and programs, and visa information is a common practice seen across the embassies studied. In the most recent months, Embassies Nepal, UAE and others, use the post pinning feature to ‘pin’ the most popular and pressing announcements. The team thinks this practice may well serve both to attract good candidates for jobs, but also to encourage people to more regularly check the other posts the embassy is putting out on the social media platforms used. It can help draw in potentially wider audiences.

Short Videos

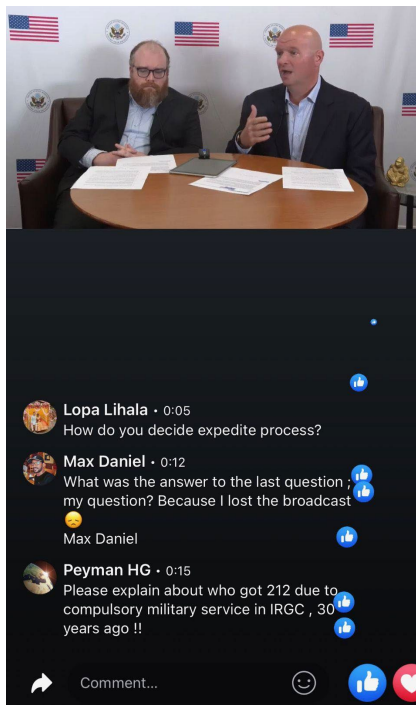
Short videos reached higher levels of engagement on several embassy pages. Content in short-form style videos are widely used due to their rise in popularity across platforms. Embassies frequently posted short-form videos or ‘shorts’ on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter usually up to 3 minutes in length. Country missions (i.e UAE, Nepal) are modernizing their content with the appearance of high definition short-form videos. These videos vastly had a personable and playful tone while still delivering messages that occasionally feature the Ambassador. Marketing experts have found that short videos are an excellent way to reach wider and younger audiences in part due to the effective machine-learning algorithms that expose short videos to tailored audiences based on the nature of the content¹¹⁸. Mission pages on Facebook and Instagram reached a higher number of viewers with short videos than with longer videos.

¹¹⁸Potrel, Victor. 2022. "Five Insights Into The Popularity Of Short-Form Video Content." Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2022/09/06/five-insights-into-the-popularity-of-short-form-video-content/?sh=7e01aa4b79e5>.

Short videos are a Best Practice, in the team’s view, due to their reach of young audiences, their page-growing algorithm and their relative ease of production for PD Officers. The team learned that the One Minute Academy¹¹⁹, a State Department supported initiative, provides skills for short video production on Youtube and can be used to help PD Officers keep up with the trend of short-form videos as a regular content format.

Live Q&A

The team found that Live Q&As sessions garnered high engagement and allowed for the most two-way interactions between Embassy or Consulate staff and Followers. Multiple Missions hosted live Q&As that resulted in very good engagement in the form of questions or emoji



reactions and shares. Interestingly, comments often came from people showing interest in the American immigration process and embassy job postings.

The Mission in Guinea, for example, held a Q and A session on their Facebook account as seen in the example, which generated many questions during the session and large engagement metrics after the event.

Despite resource and time challenges that make two-way engagement difficult for PD Officers, ‘Lives’ are recommended as Best Practice due to the opportunities they offer to invite participation and thus grow the audience and for the select opportunities for two-way engagement. With careful planning, the team believes that most PD sections and Embassies should be able to make space for some live social media events.

Exchange Programs, English Programs, and educational opportunities

From the team’s observations, there is generally high engagement on mission posts that promote their exchange programs, internal english programs, and educational opportunities that are accessible to the general public. Both Mission Guinea and Mission Brazil post about their english clubs, or english programs, for example, and those posts on their platforms consistently had high engagement compared to their other content.

119 n.d. One minute video lessons, workshops, live-streaming and teacher certification. Accessed August 14, 2023. <https://www.oneminuteacademy.com/>.

Russia Ukraine War

While posting about the Russia-Ukraine war is not the main objective for the missions we observed, the message of the US policy supporting Ukraine over Russia is consistently applied across all platforms. Digital diplomacy experts interviewed by the team constantly brought up the issue of rampant disinformation and misinformation being posted on social media. The one domain where public diplomacy officers could easily combat disinformation was posting the truth about the Russia Ukraine War. This fills the social media space with U.S. policy views, and is able to help combat misinformation online. Each mission had unique ways to show support to Ukraine, and publically post about Russia's aggression in Ukraine. For instance, one of the Embassy Brasilia's tweets with the most engagement was about the Christ the Redeemer statue being illuminated with the colors of the Ukrainian flag.

Using the Telegram platform was also an easy way to disseminate U.S. policy views to individual Russian language speakers via the channels we observed. Posted messages in Telegram channels ensures a way for Russian language users in countries that do not get independent media to receive information that does not come from their own state media 'news' outlets. U.S. Telegram use is one of the few ways to get authentic information on the Russia Ukraine War into Russia itself or the former Soviet Republics that doesn't originate from corrupt authoritarian state media outlets.

Areas for Improvement

Visual Appeal - avoid too many words, use good photos and graphics

Posts with images with small (font) or lengthy text seem to generally get low engagement across platforms. A large number of posts observed across missions in the style of policy announcements, closure announcements, along with posts with a paragraph or more of text received less likes, comments and shares than posts of pictures. However, our observations lead us to believe that photos and short videos are more engaging than a lot of words embedded in a graphic on a post. For example, on Mission UAE's #thevalueofherIP campaign, there is a large amount of engagement on the posts with photos and short videos but not on posts with lots of words embedded into the graphics.

The team considered that some posts with lengthy text are announcements and serve the primary purpose of information sharing from the Mission to audiences rather than the purpose of engendering engagement.

What was observed to work, using U.S. Mission Brazil's accounts as an example, are posts without lengthy captions and using minimal or text-less graphics. These types of information sharing tactics worked well as they were able to maintain engagement by incorporating appealing visuals accompanied by information captions.

Cross-Platform Posting

Missions generally posted content in a cross-platform format where the mission's pages displayed the same content, at the same time, across platforms.

The USUNVIE, however, Instagram and Facebook pages, however, showed well produced and consistent messages but often with mission specific content.

Our team concludes that the lack of platform differentiation between what is put on Facebook and Instagram is curbing engagement from audiences that differ in age and engagement opportunities. Finding ways to invest more time in selective differentiation of posts among platforms (and thus audiences) would seem to be a very valuable practice. The team recognizes that staff and time limitations create barriers to doing this, it would still be worth exploring some priority areas and platforms for some degrees of differentiation. Of course, the team realizes that this practice would need to be decided by the originating embassy or office to reflect their priority audiences and limits on their capacities.

Posts Surrounding American Values (Juneteenth/Pride)

The team also found that the US mission may well generate negative engagement when discussing cultural issues in those situations where US views differ from the norms and views widely held in the host country. In post commemorations of certain American celebrations/Western cultural holidays, we have observed there to be a range of reactions to posts from very positive, neutral, and very negative.

Our team has concluded that these posts, while important to the mission, are not engaging to the audience. The need to culturally tailor posts in order to engage an audience is important, and without doing so there is a missed opportunity to engage another audience. US views can be differing, but it needs to be tied into the host country or topics in the ICS.

Ambassade des Etats-Unis Conakry, Guinée Jun 15 · 🌐

Célébration de l'excellence LGBTQ+ : Rencontrez Karine Jean-Pierre, la Secrétaire de presse à la Maison Blanche. Elle est une fonctionnair... See more

Découvrez la diversité de l'administration de Président Joe Biden

Karine Jean-Pierre

Fille d'un chauffeur de taxi de New York et d'une propriétaire de salon de coiffure, tous deux immigrants, Karine Jean-Pierre est la première femme noire et secrétaire de presse de l'histoire de la Maison Blanche.

*Karine Jean-Pierre espère qu'elle pourra inspirer les jeunes à "lever grand et plus grand"

LE MOIS DE LA FIERTÉ
Juin

8 likes
usembassyconakry Joyeux Mois de la Fierté! 🌈

En reconnaissance du Mois de la fierté... more

View 1 comment
June 1 · See translation

Concluding Thoughts

Missions and Bureaus displayed various ways in which they successfully tailor content through cultural awareness, language inclusion, gender inclusion and Ambassador engagement. Experts interviewed suggest the start or continued *use of account analytics* available to account managers to determine the geographic and demographic breakdown of followers. These tools are free and/or worth a small fee as they can help improve audience tailoring, especially for smaller missions.

Public Diplomacy professionals the team interviewed also suggested that the *goal should be for a large majority of posts to be original or at least curated content from the mission*, rather than simple reposts from larger State Department pages. They assess that curation gives the mission more chances to include relevant historical and cultural context for the mission's audiences. Posts about Juneteenth or Pride should be accompanied with more context, for example, the team believes.

The team also finds that *short videos are an excellent format* for educating uninformed audiences about sensitive and unfamiliar ideas and would seem to work better than other formats.

The mission that put into practice what our team would consider all the best practices of Public Diplomacy on social media was Embassy Nepal. All the social media accounts posted regularly with tailored content focused on the Nepali people, in cultural context, in the local language and with seemingly genuine interest from the Ambassador in the people of Nepal. The practices of Embassy Nepal highlight what can be done by missions to successfully conduct Public Diplomacy via social media.

The team also encourages the social media team *to try to find some manageable ways to connect with host country nationals through micro-engagement in the form of comment responses on Facebook and Instagram or tweets on Twitter.* Public Diplomacy expert Ilan Manor stated in our interview that it is difficult for embassy professionals to hold conversations online due to lack of time and resources, and that it would not be a good use of embassy resources to try to engage too much in two way exchanges, but some engagement could be valuable.

In an interview with a subject matter expert, *WhatsApp was mentioned as a platform trending for its potential as a tool to distribute messages widely through networks of those willing to help spread key messages on to others.*

The team observed that live Q&As or 'Lives' can be good ways in which mission staff can create small meaningful connections with audiences while executing mission objectives.

For the purpose of information dissemination, we found that *Missions and Bureaus were effectively using their social media accounts for policy communications, mission-specific announcements and talent acquisition.*

Experts recommend mixing fun and playful posts with more serious announcements to maintain the interest of younger audiences. Posts featuring the Ambassador, mission leadership and staff are opportunities in which American popular culture and host country culture can be used in 'fun' ways and draw new engagement for accounts. The use of emojis in less serious posts is also another way the team found to give a playful appeal to accounts. The use of emojis by Embassy Madrid on their LinkedIn page, for instance, is gathering more engagement than other Embassies on LinkedIn, the team observed. They are presenting their content in an engaging and fun way for an audience of young professionals.

A review of Telegram accounts confirmed the hypothesis and the statements of experts interviewed that social media presence can help bypass the challenge of access to populations within authoritarian states. Additionally, positive engagement around posts about the Russia/Ukraine war indicate that the U.S efforts towards combating misinformation are pursued on mission accounts.

As social media norms and algorithms are ever-changing, missions and offices around the world should avoid repetitive posts. *The team encourages missions and offices to experiment with new forms and methods of posting, types of content and then, importantly, evaluating the results.* The experimentation of LinkedIn as a tool for digital diplomacy appears to be slowly yielding results in Madrid, for example. The high numbers of users in host countries on LinkedIn is in itself a good reason to consider this platform. Additionally, the team *highly recommends a process to periodically evaluate engagement results to see if experiments are working and to determine which existing strategies are successful.* The team recommends a method that combines likes and follower metrics with the nature of reactions into account to gain a more holistic view of engagement.

During the process of this audit, the team learned about the resources and limitations faced by Public Diplomacy Officers, US foreign policy goals of assigned Missions and Bureaus, trends and audiences on the largest social media platforms and signs of positive and negative engagement. We hope that our findings will be of value to the Bureau of Global Public Affairs and to the assigned Missions and Bureaus.