



School of Journalism, and a colleague from the University of Texas examined foreign public diplomacy specialists' adoption of social media such as Twitter for public diplomacy purposes. Using a survey of foreign embassies and consulates, their study explored whether effort and performance expectancy, [social influence](#) and attitudes, facilitating conditions and perceived credibility might have influenced the adoption of social media in public diplomacy practice.

"The U.S. government and foreign policy analysts have shown great interest and enthusiasm in exploring how to increase the efficiency of using social media for more effective public diplomacy. However, studies on the issue have been rare. By the time my colleague and I initiated this research in 2009, a search in the scholarly database ProQuest with key words 'diplomacy' and 'social media' or any type of the social media such as 'blog,' '[YouTube](#),' 'Twitter,' or '[Wikipedia](#)' generated no results," Fahmy said.

The study that was presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and [Mass Communication](#) annual convention revealed social influence and attitudes and perceived credibility ranked top in predicting the use of social media, suggesting that public diplomacy specialists attach great importance to the [credibility](#) of social media when they decide to use those tools.

Also, pressure and expectation from society greatly affected their decisions to use social media. Effort expectancy, however, weighed least in predicting use of social media, suggesting that social media as a technology is not an intimidating factor to public diplomacy specialists.

In terms of types of social media used, Twitter ranked quite low. Public diplomacy practitioners indicated they mostly used social networks (i.e. Facebook), intranet, followed by video sharing sites, blogs, video conferencing, text messaging, Wiki, instant messaging and then Twitter.

The least used were Second Life (or another virtual world) and social bookmarking.

"The low-ranking of use of Twitter (ninth) is interesting given that we live in an era in which micro-blogs such as Twitter could be faster and more influential than any intelligence entity," Fahmy said. "Just consider that [Twitter](#) in recent years has reportedly played significant roles in the recent citizen upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa including Iran, Tunisia and Egypt. One explanation could be that [public diplomacy](#) specialists might prefer the use of other social media tools that can disseminate longer messages that exceed 140 characters."

Provided by University of Arizona

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