

Digital Diplomacy: The Impact of Technology on Modern Diplomacy and Foreign Policy. Current Realities and Future Prospects

Carola Frey¹

Abstract: *The paper examines how digital technologies are changing the field of diplomacy. It looks at how diplomacy has evolved from traditional practices to a modern form where technology is essential. The paper covers various digital tools, such as social media, artificial intelligence (AI), and other emerging technologies, and discusses their impact on foreign policy and diplomatic practices. It considers both the challenges and the benefits of this shift. Furthermore, the article emphasises the role of technological advancements as core elements of modern international relations and statecraft. As tech diplomacy and cyber diplomacy ascend to priority status for states and key international bodies like the European Union, their importance is increasingly recognised as being fundamental and prominent on political agendas.*

Keywords: *foreign policy, technology, digital diplomacy, AI, emerging and disruptive technologies.*

Introduction. Methodological approach and research focus

It has become evident that not only diplomacy (or foreign policy), but also international relations have been fundamentally transformed by the overwhelming influence of digital technologies. This paper examines the shift from traditional diplomatic practices that relied on direct, face-to-face interactions, and lengthy communications, to a modern landscape in which digital tools are indispensable. It considers how digital tools have revolutionised the fabric of diplomacy – shifting from traditional, stately methods, to dynamic, fast-paced, digital interactions. This transformation is characterised by the rapid exchange of information, whereby decisions and diplomatic communications that once took weeks can occur in real time across multiple platforms nowadays. These platforms not only facilitate faster responses, but also allow for broader engagement with global audiences, as they transcend geographic and temporal barriers.

This transformation, the paper argues, underscores the shift toward what is termed as “digital diplomacy”. Emerging technologies are poised to further reshape the landscape of international relations in ways that are currently difficult to fully predict. These technologies have the potential to automate complex diplomatic negotiations, enhance the security of diplomatic communications, and even redefine the interactions between states and non-state actors. The implications of such advances suggest a future in which diplomacy may be strengthened, but also more vulnerable to cyber threats, requiring a re-evaluation of traditional diplomatic protocols and strategies. As we move

¹ Carola Frey is an analyst with the Strategic Analysis and Cooperation Department of the Euro-Atlantic Resilience Centre, and coordinates the International Relations and Protocol Compartment.
E-mail: carola.frey@e-arc.ro.

forward, it will be important to continue to explore the intersection of technology and diplomacy and prepare for a future that, while uncertain, is inevitably digital.

As the aim of the present paper is to investigate digital diplomacy, it is crucial to define the methodological approach that will guide this research. Given the complex and multifaceted nature of digital diplomacy, a qualitative research methodology is deemed most appropriate. This approach will enable an in-depth examination of the phenomena, focusing on understanding the subjective experiences, perspectives, and contexts that define digital diplomacy in the modern world.

The central research question driving this study is “Which are the effects of digital diplomacy, how is it characterised, and how has it changed the practice of diplomacy?”. This question seeks to uncover not only the impact of digital diplomacy, but also its defining attributes and implementations. The objectives of this research are to:

1. Analyse the changing dynamics of diplomacy in the digital age.
2. Explore the roles and effects of various digital technologies and platforms (ranging from established tools, such as email, social media, and video conferencing, to emerging technologies, like artificial intelligence and virtual reality) in diplomatic practices.
3. Investigate how digital diplomacy is reshaping traditional foreign policy and international relations, by focusing on its strategic implications, operational changes, and the ensuing challenges and opportunities for states in the international system.

A literature review will provide the foundation for this study. It will encompass a wide range of scholarly sources, including academic journals, books, case studies, and existing research on digital diplomacy and related fields. The overall aim is to summarise the existing knowledge, identify trends, and highlight gaps in the current understanding of digital diplomacy. The theoretical framework will draw upon concepts from international relations, communication studies, and digital media studies, providing a multidisciplinary lens through which to examine the subject matter.

1. The evolution and adaptation required in diplomacy and foreign policy

Diplomacy and foreign policy have always been, continue to be, and will likely remain essential aspects of statecraft. The former takes various forms, such as bilateral, multilateral, and institutional diplomacy, to name just a few. Traditional teachings tell us that the essence of diplomacy lies in direct, in-person interactions involving representatives, emissaries, envoys, and the like. The fundamental duties of these delegates include, among other things: representing their respective states, negotiating alliances, forging trade agreements, and brokering peace treaties, all with the aim of preventing conflicts (without resorting to the menace of warfare), or resolving them as soon as possible, and while the stakes are manageable enough to prevent a spillover effect and ultimately a global conflict².

Nonetheless, the swift progression of technology, coupled with the profound effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, has dramatically reshaped human interactions

² See Potemkin, V.P., Bahrusin, S.V., Efimov, A.V., Kosminski, E.A., and Narocinitki, A.L., (1962), *Istoria Diplomației*, Vol. 1, Editura Științifică.

within the expanding digital landscape, leading to significant changes in the practice of diplomacy and the methods of conducting (and formulating) foreign policy³.

The traditional model, where diplomacy was synonymous with difficult journeys undertaken by diplomats to distant lands, and with the protracted waiting for messengers to traverse great distances, has evolved nearly to the point of no return. The medieval era's introduction of resident ambassadors, stationed permanently at foreign courts so as to continuously advocate for their sovereign's interests, marked indeed a shift. Yet, even within this arrangement, maintaining contact with the home state was challenging. Communication methods were specific and somewhat limited, often leaving the representative with complete autonomy in terms of decision-making and accountability for the issues at hand, guided only by a broad mandate.

One might argue that the dawn of the printing press triggered a significant transformation, facilitating the widespread distribution of diplomatic documents and treaties, thereby enhancing the mutual understanding and establishing a historical record. Thus far, it is considered that the introduction of the telegraph in the 19th century has hurled diplomacy and foreign policy into a new era. The telegraph made it possible to communicate almost instantly across vast distances: it significantly shortened the time required for the exchange of diplomatic messages. This breakthrough led to swifter, more agile diplomatic negotiations, adaptable to the quick shifting dynamics of international affairs. The era of the telegraph inaugurated an age of more immediate diplomatic dialogue, in stark contrast to the previous one⁴.

However, a significant span of 400 years separated the invention of the printing press from that of the telegraph. Subsequently, in the 20th century, the telephone brought further advancements to diplomatic communication. It enabled more direct interactions between leaders and diplomats, and catalysed faster decision-making, facilitating real-time negotiations in times of crisis. Then, it was the influence of radio and television, which introduced a societal dimension, directly involving the public in these processes. Furthermore, these technologies not only revolutionised the framework of diplomacy, but served as a diplomatic tool, as illustrated in the paper "Cold War Techno-Diplomacy: Selling French Colour Television to the Eastern Bloc". The aforementioned paper illustrates how France strategically utilised technology, particularly television, in its Cold War diplomacy. It shows France's integration of technology into its diplomatic manoeuvres, merging technical expertise, economic strategizing, and political tactics⁵.

In a comparable manner, the onset of widespread and accessible air travel marked the beginning of a new era in diplomatic relations, characterised by enhanced mobility and immediacy. The possibility for diplomats and leaders to travel quickly across continents transformed the very nature of the international engagement⁶.

Leaping ahead two centuries from the era of the telegraph, we encounter an even more astounding and impressive transformation – the digital age, defined by the advent

³ Akilli, E., Guneş, B., and Gokbel, A., (2023), *Diplomacy, Society and the COVID-19 Challenge*, Routledge.

⁴ Black, J., (2010), *A History of Diplomacy*, Reaktion Books, p. 169.

⁵ Fickers, A., (2013), "Cold War techno-diplomacy: Selling French Colour Television to the Eastern Bloc" in Badenoch, A., Fickers, A., and Henrich-Franke, C., (eds.), *Airy Curtains in the European Ether: Broadcasting and the Cold War*, Nomos Verlag, pp. 77-100.

⁶ Black, *op.cit.*, pp. 198-200.

of the internet (and not only). This era has brought about some of the most profound changes yet. The internet has revolutionised the accessibility of information, opening the doors not only to state actors, but also to a wide array of non-state entities, including NGOs, multinational corporations, and even individuals, to make their mark on the international diplomatic sphere⁷. Platforms like social media have emerged as powerful instruments for public diplomacy, enabling governments to directly connect with and influence a worldwide audience, as well as to disseminate messages and shape public opinion.

Digital communication tools have transformed real-time global interactions into a standard practice, embedding a level of dependence on this technology that often goes unnoticed, and diplomatic practice is no exception. These tools enable (and request) swift and dynamic reactions to international events. The prominence of virtual meetings and video conferences, particularly amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores their essential role. Today's foreign policy operates in a technological framework where speed is crucial, and technology itself is employed as a medium of exchange and interaction.

Of course, this era brings its own set of challenges. Whereas the "traditional" diplomacy focused on the messengers' safety and on the ambassadors' integrity, today's fears revolve around cyber threats/attacks, the spread of misinformation, and the realities of digital surveillance.

Now, the scenario we find ourselves in is more complex than it has ever been. The digital landscape is in a state of relentless change. The impact of emerging technologies goes beyond predictable outcomes, marking a pivotal revolution in the annals of technological history. The profound influence of this revolution stems not merely from its novelty, but mostly from its role as a cohesive force. It seamlessly blurs the distinctions between disparate technologies, intertwining those once perceived as entirely unrelated. This convergence gives rise to an excess of innovative technologies that transcend traditional classifications, introducing novel perspectives. Moreover, it creates an entirely new paradigm for comprehending the interplay between humans and technology⁸.

How will this unremitting march of technological progress continue to transform the spheres of diplomacy and foreign policy formulation? While it is evident that digital diplomacy is the current reality, what implications does this hold for the future?

Finding an answer is challenging, but not impossible. In our current reality, traditional diplomatic conferences have given way to tweets (or any other use of social media platforms for communicative purposes) – they are more efficient, convenient, and immediate. Remarkably, a tweet can address urgent issues instantaneously. State secrets might be disclosed over a casual coffee, and espionage among allies has become simpler than ever before.

The internet has turned into a dynamic arena of information and influence, where embassies are no longer confined to a cloak-and-dagger affair. Instead, they actively post and interact with millions of people on the web. It has become necessary for them to

⁷ Balbi, G., and Fickers, A., (eds.), (2020), *History of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU): Transnational Techno-Diplomacy from the Telegraph to the Internet*, Walter De Gruyter Oldenburg.

⁸ Liang, Q., and Xiangsui, W., (2017), *Unrestricted Warfare: China's Master Plan to Destroy America*, Independently Published, p. 10.

maintain a presence: to be visible, engaging, appealing, and pertinent online. In “Internet Diplomacy: Shaping the Global Politics of Cyberspace”, edited by Meryem Marzouki and Andrea Calderaro, one can find an in-depth exploration of the internet’s role in global politics, and the emerging concept of “Internet Diplomacy”. This book presents the internet diplomacy as a new, encompassing framework for various global digital practices, and seeks to deepen our understanding of the internet’s impact on traditional diplomacy and worldwide governance. Its first section, titled “Internet Governance as a Diplomacy Issue”, focuses on how the internet intersects with and influences established diplomatic practices. It underscores the critical role of digital sovereignty, and the variety of stakeholders involved in shaping the worldwide digital environment⁹.

Against this backdrop, foreign policy – traditionally the art and science of managing relations between nations – has broadened to include emerging technological domains, such as artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and the metaverse. These are not mere buzzwords; they have become integral components of the contemporary strategic thinking in international relations. This evolution signifies a shift from conventional diplomatic strategies to a more complex paradigm where technology plays a central role in shaping international policies and interactions. The integration of these advanced technologies into foreign policy frameworks reflects the changing nature of global challenges and opportunities, necessitating a nuanced understanding and approach to international diplomacy in the digital age.

Just as an example of the above, AI is not just a game changer in foreign policy; it is rewriting the rules. It offers tools for data analysis and decision-making that are akin to having a supercomputer for a diplomatic advisor. For example, imagine AI algorithms that sift through the vast global data to foresee a political coup in a volatile region, predict an economic downturn in a key ally country or a major change in the population’s perspective on a hot topic. These insights are gold for diplomats and policy-makers, offering them a strategic edge in pre-emptive actions and policy adjustments.

Nevertheless, AI’s prowess does not stop at prediction. It is breaking down the Tower of Babel in international diplomacy. Picture a high-stakes UN summit where diplomats from around the world converse seamlessly, their words instantly and accurately translated by AI. This technology transcends linguistic barriers, ensuring that every nuanced phrase in diplomatic dialogue is understood as intended. Moreover, AI is like a master chess player in the realm of diplomatic strategy. It can analyse multifaceted scenarios, considering numerous variables that a human mind might overlook. Imagine AI simulating a peace negotiation scenario, providing diplomats and decision-makers with insights into the probable outcomes of different negotiation strategies. Such predictive modelling can be invaluable during sensitive negotiations, offering clarity on the red lines, potential reactions, and positions of the opposing party. A real-world example of this is the use of AI by the United Nations in peacekeeping missions, where AI algorithms help in predicting conflict zones, thereby contributing to timely and effective decision-making. Another instance is the European Union’s use of AI for analysing economic trends to aid its Member States in policy formulation, and ensure more cohesive and informed economic strategies.

⁹ Marzouki, M., and Calderaro, A., (eds.), (2022), *Internet Diplomacy: Shaping the Global Politics of Cyberspace*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Part I.

Fundamentally, AI is evolving into an indispensable toolkit for diplomacy, encompassing prediction, translation, and strategic planning. Beyond these capabilities, it is emerging as a transformative and multifaceted force in the broader sphere of foreign policy, playing a crucial role in policy drafting/ analysis, and in monitoring international commitments.

2. What is digital diplomacy?

The existence of several distinct concepts, like “digital diplomacy”, “e-diplomacy”, and “internet diplomacy”, reflects the various ways in which technology intersects with international relations and statecraft. While some are rooted in the use of technologies, they differ in focus, scope, and sometimes application.

To achieve conceptual clarity, we have to mention that – for the purpose of the present paper – “diplomacy” is understood as *a tool of foreign policy*, and *“the established method by which states articulate their foreign policy objectives and co-ordinate their efforts to influence the decisions and behaviour of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiations and other such measures, short of war and violence”*¹⁰.

Most commonly, *digital diplomacy* is defined as the strategic use of digital tools, and social media platforms, by diplomatic actors (e.g. governments, diplomats, and international organisations) to conduct a wide array of diplomatic activities. This form of diplomacy involves utilising platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to communicate policies, engage with foreign publics, and manage a country’s image and influence globally. Its primary focus is on communication and public engagement, leveraging these digital platforms to influence public opinion, engage in public diplomacy, and facilitate interactive communication between states and audiences worldwide. The scope of digital diplomacy is extensive, covering various aspects of diplomacy, including public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and crisis communication, thereby harnessing digital platforms for a diverse range of diplomatic objectives.

The official document “Digital Strategy” from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has outlined the UK’s approach to incorporating digital technologies in diplomatic activities since 2012. This strategy emphasises the transformative impact of digital tools on diplomatic communication, and policy formulation. It acknowledges the evolution of the digital technology from being “a communication tool” to becoming an active player in foreign policy. A player that enhances policy decisions and contributes to achieving the desired outcomes. The strategy aims at a comprehensive integration of the digital tools into diplomacy, facilitating a more open, effective and transparent foreign policy work¹¹.

In his 2014 work, Lewis specified that digital diplomacy entails the diplomats’ use of digital communication tools (notably, social media) for engaging with each other and with the broader public. However, this is merely a foundational aspect of a much larger phenomenon. Government leaders are increasingly leveraging digital platforms to promote official campaigns via hashtags, and to circulate information and insights during emergencies. The applications of digital diplomacy are diverse and evolving, with

¹⁰ Adesina, O.S., (2017), “Foreign policy in an era of digital diplomacy”, *Cogent Social Sciences*, Vol., 3 Issue 1, p. 2.

¹¹ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (2012), Digital Strategy. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a74ee6040f0b65c0e845a62/AB_12-11-14_Digital_strategy.pdf.

diplomats constantly exploring innovative strategies to fulfil their diplomatic objectives through these digital avenues¹².

The book “Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice”, edited by Corneliu Bjola and Marcus Holmes, is among the first to explore in depth the intersection of diplomacy and digital technologies. It examines how digital platforms transform diplomatic practices, affecting public diplomacy, international negotiations, and crisis management. Digital diplomacy is broadly defined therein as “the use of social media for diplomatic purposes”, encompassing changes in information management, public diplomacy, strategy planning, and international negotiations. The text discusses how digital technologies influence and transform diplomatic practices, highlighting both the positive and negative aspects. The work stresses the importance of understanding the impact of digital technologies on modern diplomacy, including the social media’s role in reshaping fundamental diplomatic functions of representation, communication, and relationship management¹³.

Manor and Segev¹⁴ emphasise that digital diplomacy operates on two distinct levels: the foreign ministry level, and the network of embassies worldwide. This dual action at different levels enables nations to tailor their foreign policy messages and nation-branding efforts to cater to the unique characteristics of local audiences, including historical, cultural, value-driven, and traditional aspects. This approach facilitates the acceptance of a nation’s foreign policy and of the image it seeks to promote¹⁵.

In “Digital Diplomacy and International Organizations: Autonomy, Legitimacy, and Contestation”, edited still by Corneliu Bjola and Ruben Zaiotti in 2021, the adaptation of international organisations to the digital era is explored, with a special focus on social media. This work delves into the digital dimensions of these organisations, scrutinising both their autonomous operations and their legitimacy in the modern diplomatic arena. It sheds light on the social media’s significant influence on the autonomy of these organisations. It also examines its impact on their legitimacy, either reinforcing or challenging it¹⁶.

Another author that probed the subject is Nicholas Westcott. In “Digital Diplomacy: The Impact of the Internet on International Relations”, he explores how the internet has transformed international relations. The work highlights the influence of digital diplomacy on foreign policy formulation, emphasising the strategic use of the internet and of digital technologies for specific foreign policy objectives. It underlines that the evolution of diplomacy in the digital era requires the adaptation of the traditional diplomatic methods to the opportunities and challenges of the digital landscape¹⁷.

Although certain authors appear confident in their understanding of the notion of digital diplomacy, the latter remains subject to various interpretations and definitions, reflecting its novelty. Beyond those illustrated above, there are additional definitions and

¹² Lewis, D., (2014), “Digital diplomacy”. Available at: <http://www.gatewayhouse.in/digital-diplomacy-2/>.

¹³ Bjola, C., and Holmes, M., (eds.), (2015), *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, New York, NY: Routledge.

¹⁴ Manor, I., and Segev, C., (2015), “America’s selfie: How the US portrays itself on its social media accounts” in Bjola, C., and Holmes, M., (eds.), *Digital diplomacy: Theory and practice*, pp. 89-108.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

¹⁶ Bjola, C., and Zaiotti, R. (eds.), (2021), *Digital Diplomacy and International Organizations: Autonomy, Legitimacy, and Contestation*, Routledge.

¹⁷ Westcott, N., (2017), *Digital Diplomacy: The Impact of the Internet on International Relations*, Oxford Internet Institute.

frameworks. The concept being in its incipient stage, no universally accepted definition grasping its essence and operational mechanics can apply to it yet. This absence of consensus in the scholarly discourse partly stems from the ongoing progress of digital technology, which continues to shape the field.

The 2018 working paper by Ilan Manor, “The Digitalization of Diplomacy: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Terminology”, emphasises the inadequacy of existing terms, like “digital diplomacy” and “e-diplomacy”, that cannot really capture the full-scale impact of digitalization on diplomatic practices. He proposes the term “the digitalization of diplomacy”, which encompasses the normative, behavioural, procedural, and conceptual changes engendered by digital technologies in the realms of diplomatic audiences, institutions, practitioners, and practices. This concept aims to offer a more systematic and comprehensive framework for understanding and researching the digitalization’s multifaceted effects on diplomacy¹⁸: “[the author uses] the digitalization of diplomacy in reference to the impact digital technologies have had on four dimensions of diplomacy: the audiences of diplomacy, the institutions of diplomacy, the practitioners of diplomacy and the practice of diplomacy”¹⁹.

For some, digital diplomacy is a branch of *public diplomacy*, and “involves the use of digital technologies and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Weibo by states to enter into communication with foreign publics usually in a non-costly manner”²⁰. In “Digital diplomacy during the first 100 days: How GCC ministries of foreign affairs and ministers tweeted the blockade”, the author documented how the ministries of foreign affairs (MOFAs) and the ministers of foreign affairs (MFAs) of the countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) used Twitter in 2017, during the first 100 days of the GCC crisis, to demonstrate how digital diplomacy is employed. The perspective is characteristic of public diplomacy, and reveals how the aforementioned entities have utilised digital diplomacy through Twitter to shape public discourse and the domestic and international viewpoints concerning the crisis. The study analyses the content, frequency, and language (Arabic and English) of tweets to understand how different countries advocated their stance on the blockade, with particular attention to differences in their approaches.

Jovan Kurbalija provided a thorough analysis of digital diplomacy and its various aspects on the Diplomacy.edu website²¹. In the mentioned analysis, one can discover a video featuring an inventive Tetris-inspired visual metaphor that encapsulates the complexities of digital diplomacy²². It highlights various terms, like “virtual”, “data”, “meta”, “quantum”, “cyber” and “e-”, as building blocks representing different aspects of digitalization in diplomatic contexts. The prefixes imply specialised areas: “e-” often relates to commerce, whereas “cyber” to security. Nevertheless, such terminology can

¹⁸ Manor, I., (2018), *The Digitalization of Diplomacy: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Terminology*, Oxford Digital Diplomacy Research Group, University of Oxford.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

²⁰ Al-Mansouri, T., Al-Mohannadi, H., and Feroun, M., (2021), “Digital diplomacy during the first 100 days: How GCC ministries of foreign affairs and ministers tweeted the blockade”, *QScience Connect*, 2021(2), Special Issue-Thesis, 1.

²¹ Kurbalija, J., (2023), “Digital diplomacy”, September 29. Available at: <https://www.diplomacy.edu/topics/digital-diplomacy/>.

²² “The digital transformation of diplomacy”. Available at: <https://diplo-media.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/2023/04/Tetris-Twitter-1080p-Full-HD-1.mp4>.

cause confusion in policy-making, leading to a “paradox of inclusion”.

The author further argues that the transformation of diplomacy by digital means takes place across three primary domains:

1. *Diplomatic engagement*. This transformation reshapes the background of the diplomatic engagement, with digital technologies prone to redistribute power in global affairs, introduce novel types of conflict, and influence concepts of interdependence and sovereignty.
2. *Diplomacy issues*, which now include an expanded array of topics, over 50 digital governance issues, such as cybersecurity, privacy, and artificial intelligence.
3. *Diplomatic practice* that incorporates digital instruments, like social media, virtual meetings, and analytical tools powered by big data and artificial intelligence²³.

3. Digital tools in the diplomatic arsenal

The use and application of now-familiar technologies, such as email, social media, and video conferencing, for diplomatic communications signifies a notable change in diplomatic practice. Although these tools have become standard, and thus are no longer seen as groundbreaking or transformative, their application in diplomacy has resulted in a more direct, public, and accessible approach to international interactions. This shift has also introduced fresh challenges, particularly in terms of security, privacy, and the subtleties inherent in the diplomatic communication.

The diplomatic archives and extensive book collections are filled with formal letters, official correspondences, and numerous *notes verbales* (diplomatic notes) sent and received through traditional methods. In the past, diplomatic communications have been primarily conducted through letters and, later, through cables or telegrams. These methods required specific skills: proficient handwriting was essential for letter writing, often reflecting the high social status of diplomats. Sending telegrams demanded specialised knowledge (sometimes scarce), and required access to telegraph posts. Gradually, these practices became standard, with letters and telegraph messages being the norm for diplomatic communication. However, a persistent concern in diplomacy was the secrecy and security of these messages.

Over time, the emergence of the internet introduced emails into the sphere of diplomatic communication. Their adoption was not immediate. Today, however, emails are incredibly accepted to the extent that, if not for security concerns, every diplomat would likely have their work email accessible on their personal phone at all times. The advent of email has significantly shrunk distances, and enhanced the speed and efficiency of diplomatic exchanges. The expectations around email communication have likewise evolved. For instance, there is often an unspoken rule that if an email is received before noon, it should be responded to within the same working day before office hours end. This real-time exchange of information and improved response times are substantial advantages, especially in situations where timing is crucial.

²³ See “Digital diplomacy”. Available at: <https://www.diplomacy.edu/topics/digital-diplomacy/>.

The entire process of negotiations, representation, and other daily diplomatic activities are now largely conducted through electronic mediums. While this shift brings numerous advantages, such as prompt replies, real connections, and the ability to convey subtle messages (e.g., if one deliberately chooses not to respond within a week), it also facilitates several key developments for diplomats. Firstly, it makes it easier for them to connect with their home government, thereby promoting their interests, and advancing issues on their agenda. Secondly, it contributes to the digitalization of bureaucracy, streamlining processes and communication. This digital shift opens up new vulnerabilities, such as the risks of hacking and information leaks. Despite diplomatic correspondence being protected under international law²⁴, the cyber realm often remains a lawless space, presenting unique challenges to diplomatic operations.

In addition to cyber threats and attacks, the reliance on technology in diplomatic communications introduces a series of other direct challenges. The need for reliable and secure IT infrastructure is crucial. This includes not just software and hardware, but also robust cabling, and secure network connections. The role of IT professionals has become increasingly critical. They are responsible for maintaining these systems, and ensuring their security. Implementing advanced authentication steps, encryption systems, VPNs, and other secure communication methods is now a necessity. These elements collectively form the backbone of a secure digital diplomatic environment, safeguarding sensitive information against potential breaches. The integration of these technological safeguards reflects the evolving nature of diplomatic security in the digital age, where physical and cyber protections must be equally prioritised.

The inherent sensitivity of diplomatic communication, as outlined in the Vienna Convention, presents unique challenges, especially in an era where digital and traditional methods coexist. Apart from the issues of cyber threats, technology infrastructure, and secure communication systems, there are several other challenges not so often addressed in diplomatic communications.

One significant challenge lies in the area of training and skill development. Diplomats now need a standard skill set that indispensably encompasses digital literacy, cybersecurity awareness, and proficiency in utilising communication systems. These skills are essential and must be continuously developed, and rigorously enhanced.

The digital transformation in diplomatic communications has brought about an expectation of constant availability, which significantly impacts the work-life balance of diplomats. This expectation arises from the nature of communication platforms, where accessibility is virtually instantaneous and continuous. For instance, the pressure to be always reachable and responsive can lead to chronic stress and burnout. Diplomats may feel compelled to constantly check and respond to emails, messages, and calls, blurring the lines between work and personal life. This constant state of alertness can have detrimental effects on mental health and overall well-being. In addition, the intrusion of work into personal time, facilitated by digital devices, can lead to an imbalance where work demands consistently encroach upon personal time. This can affect family life, personal relationships, and leisure activities, which are essential for the overall well-being of the professional. Moreover, constant engagement can take its toll on the quality of

²⁴ The Vienna Convention stipulates that „The official correspondence of the mission shall be inviolable. Official correspondence means all correspondence relating to the mission and its functions”.

decision-making. Without adequate downtime, mental fatigue can set in, potentially affecting critical thinking and judgment, which are vital in diplomatic affairs.

The transition to email in diplomatic communications has indeed led to the establishment of certain protocols, reflecting the unique requirements of this medium. Although some of these protocols are already in place and actively used, their application varies, particularly as to how they are employed within the body of emails versus attached documents. Protocols developed for email communications in the diplomatic area often imitate those of the traditional diplomatic correspondence. They include guidelines on language, tone, formal greetings, and sign-offs, as well as rules on confidentiality and data protection. These protocols are essential in maintaining the formalities and decorum typical of diplomatic exchanges. Yet, there is a noticeable difference in how these protocols are applied in the main body of the email compared to the attached documents. In many cases, the formalities of diplomatic protocol, such as the use of specific templates, formal language, and structured layouts, are more strictly adhered to in attached documents. These attachments often contain the official diplomatic correspondence, following traditional formats. In contrast, the body of the email itself may not always follow rigorously these formal protocols. The nature of the email as a quick and direct form of communication often leads to more concise and less formal interactions. The latter can include a more straightforward language, and a departure from the traditional, more ceremonial format of diplomatic letters.

This discrepancy between the formal character of the attachments and the potentially more informal nature of email bodies is rather tricky. On the one hand, it allows for a more efficient communication, suited to the fast-paced digital environment. On the other hand, it raises questions about maintaining the appropriate level of formality and decorum expected in diplomatic communications.

Social media represents another development in the field of diplomacy, shifting the paradigm from predominantly behind-the-scenes efforts to more public and accessible interactions. Prior to the rise of platforms like Twitter and Facebook, diplomatic activities have been largely conducted away from the public eye, with limited access and engagement. The general public usually received information about these efforts through joint press conferences, if at all. Social media has opened new channels for public diplomacy. These platforms allow the ministry, embassies and diplomats to engage directly with the public, offering a level of transparency and interaction that was previously difficult to obtain. They break an old taboo on the secretive nature of diplomatic dealings. This new openness demystifies the diplomatic process, inviting public scrutiny and participation in a way that was previously unthinkable. Thereby, it bridges the gap between diplomatic entities and the citizens they represent and interact with.

Additionally, the interactions among diplomats attract an audience nowadays. Major international events are “broadcast live” and, even more so, are influenced by social media coverage, and the dynamics of the internet-driven society. This last phenomenon is exemplified in many studies by the case of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia. Bouazizi, a former university student turned street vendor, became an emblematic figure when his self-immolation act, driven by the local authorities’ corruption and injustice, was broadcast and amplified through social media. This incident captured not only the attention of the Tunisian public, but also that of the international community, including

diplomats and foreign governments. The widespread dissemination of Bouazizi's story through platforms like Facebook and Twitter, where a significant portion of Tunisia's population was active, demonstrated the powerful role of media in shaping diplomatic agendas and international response. The global awareness and reaction to Bouazizi's plight, and the subsequent Tunisian protests, underscored how diplomatic engagement and international policy decisions are increasingly influenced by real-time, widely accessible media coverage²⁵. It highlighted the necessity for diplomats to be attuned to social media trends and public opinion, both domestically and internationally. The rapid mobilisation of public support and international sympathy, fuelled by the extensive and often emotional media coverage, led to heightened diplomatic scrutiny and pressure on the Tunisian government.

A major part of the specialised literature focuses "either on the 'two-way street' dynamic of communication in relation to greater agency for the individual in international affairs, or on the impact of social media on the processes of public diplomacy wherein policy-makers seek to influence foreign publics"²⁶. On the one hand, this approach underscores the empowerment of individuals, who, through platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, can now participate in global conversations, challenge state narratives, and mobilise around transnational issues, from climate change to human rights. This democratisation of international relations means that individual voices can, in some instances, be as influential as traditional diplomatic channels in shaping government policies and the perceptions of foreign publics and governments.

On the other hand, the role of social media in public diplomacy represents a strategic tool for policy-makers. Through these platforms, governments can bypass traditional media, directly engage with foreign populations, and attempt to influence their perceptions and attitudes towards a country's foreign policy objectives. This direct engagement allows for a more nuanced and targeted approach to diplomacy, where messaging can be tailored to specific audiences to achieve diplomatic goals.

While social media has facilitated greater public engagement, it is a tool that must be wielded carefully, as it can just as easily enhance or harm an embassy's or minister's reputation. Diplomatic entities must be strategic in their use of these platforms, by crafting messages that effectively communicate their policies and values.

On these platforms, the image projected by an embassy or diplomat becomes a powerful tool of representation. It serves as a virtual ambassador to the public, translating diplomatic intentions and narratives into a form that is accessible and relatable. The authenticity of this representation can be questionable sometimes, as the nature of social media allows for curated and controlled presentations.

In some books, social media is showcased as an essential element of soft diplomacy. It is not just a channel for communication, but also a source of information, and a means of shaping public perception. Diplomatic missions use these platforms to highlight cultural, economic, and political aspects of their countries, thus fostering a better understanding and relationship with the public. One example in this case is China's use of "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy on social media. Named after a film series, "Wolf Warrior"

²⁵ Seib, P., (2012), *Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era*, Palgrave Macmillan US, pp. 17-20.

²⁶ Duncombe, C., (2017), "Twitter and transformative diplomacy: social media and Iran-US relations", *International Affairs*, 93(3), pp. 545-562.

diplomacy refers to the aggressive style of diplomacy adopted by Chinese diplomats, especially on Twitter, despite the fact that this platform is banned in China. This strategy, while domestically rallying nationalistic sentiments, has attracted international criticism and scrutiny²⁷, illustrating that social media's use in diplomatic engagements is a double-edged sword. The repercussions of such an approach underscore the complexities and risks inherent in digital diplomacy, highlighting the need for a balanced and strategic use of social media to advance diplomatic objectives without compromising international relations.

Among these challenges, social media must maintain authenticity in order to be credible and (re)gain legitimacy. The content shared is frequently designed to create a specific impression, which may not always correspond to reality. Therefore, diplomats must strike a delicate balance between effective public engagement and accurate representation of their missions and policies. Another facet of social media is that the set of expectations it creates among the public shape the latter's perceptions, and the ways of promoting an embassy/government. As a posting outlet, an embassy is subject to the whims of social media algorithms, constantly generating data. Data is like gold in the digital age, especially with the advent of AI, which thrives on vast amounts of information. However, it has its ups and downs. In other words, while this data can enhance engagement and reach, it can just as easily become a liability. In times of crisis, the same data could be leveraged against the embassy, thus revealing the precarious balance of power.

When discussing about social media, we cannot leave out other technologies, such as big data and artificial intelligence. These tools are becoming increasingly vital for diplomats, offering new insights and potential strategies. Big data allows diplomats and foreign affairs analysts to decipher global patterns and trends. By analysing vast amounts of data from various sources (such as social media, news outlets, governmental reports, and more), they can get a comprehensive picture of international developments. This understanding aids in forecasting political shifts, economic changes, and social movements, and it enables more informed and strategic diplomatic decisions.

Public opinion is a critical factor in shaping diplomatic strategies and policies. Through analytics, diplomats can monitor and understand the sentiments and perceptions of people across a specific region. This insight is particularly valuable in tailoring diplomatic messages, predicting responses to policy changes, and engaging effectively with different cultures and societies. Furthermore, diplomats may benefit from the use of data analytics to refine their communication strategies. By understanding what the public resonates with, they can craft messages that are more likely to be well-received, thereby enhancing their country's image and influence. This approach is most relevant in public diplomacy and cultural outreach programmes.

AI algorithms can process and analyse large datasets much faster and more accurately than humans. This capability is invaluable in diplomatic contexts where timely and accurate information is crucial. AI can assist in monitoring global news, social media trends, and political developments, providing real-time insights to diplomats, and, of course, it is useful in the more mundane work of the embassy.

The utilisation of big data and generative AI (just as an example) sparks concerns

²⁷ Brandt, J., and Schafer, B., (2020), "How China's 'wolf warrior' diplomats use and abuse Twitter", Brookings, October 28. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-chinas-wolf-warrior-diplomats-use-and-abuse-twitter/>.

regarding privacy, secrecy, and ethical dilemmas. In addition, the effectiveness of AI systems depends on the quality of the data they are trained with. Biased or incomplete datasets can result in erroneous and misleading analyses, posing significant risks in diplomatic scenarios. Moreover, those responsible for developing the AI-based digital tools have control over their training and, subsequently, over the data feeding them. This fact underscores the necessity of prioritising the protection of sensitive diplomatic information against threats or improper use.

4. The innovative use of digital tools, the future has already begun

As examined, digital tools have become an intrinsic part of diplomacy. And this is not the end of the story, as there is a vast array of emerging technologies just waiting to be leveraged. Currently, some of these technologies are subject to debate, while others have already been adopted by various nations. The technological race is becoming the focal point of the global competition, with the advantage going to those who can integrate these innovations more swiftly. This trend is exemplified by the appointment of tech diplomats, a strategic move acknowledging the critical role of technology in contemporary diplomatic efforts²⁸.

AI stands out as the most debated technology that will impact diplomatic practices. AI can be used for data analysis, prediction of geopolitical shifts, and crisis management, offering diplomats and policy-makers the necessary tools to make more informed decisions.

Several nations have already adopted this approach. For instance, since 2015, the State Department has incorporated AI into its Foreign Service selection process, utilising it to evaluate candidates' essays, and scrutinise their academic and professional backgrounds. This innovation has been deemed by the State Department the "most substantial modification" to its selection procedure since 1930²⁹.

Consular services are the first in line for the integration of AI, as they function under well-defined and consistent protocols, which simplify the decision-making process outside of emergency scenarios. The use of chatbots and virtual assistants has become standard practice in facilitating visa applications, consular registrations, and in providing legal assistance to refugees³⁰.

Backed by AI, virtual consulates – as a solution destined to provide accessible, efficient, and safe means for consular services – are just one step away. By digitising services, virtual consulates can process requests faster, with automated systems handling routine inquiries and applications (e.g. Econsulat.ro made the process easier for both the consular staff and the applicants). There are a number of challenges to consider – such as the digital divide (not all users have access to the Internet and are technologically literate), security concerns, or complex cases (requiring human presence, like emergencies or complex legal issues).

²⁸ Clarke, L., (2021), "Tech ambassadors are redefining diplomacy for the digital era", *Tech Monitor*, February 16. Available at: <https://techmonitor.ai/leadership/innovation/tech-ambassadors>.

²⁹ Blaser, V., (2023), "How to Use Artificial Intelligence in Diplomacy", *Diplomatic Diary*. Available at: <https://diplomaticacademy.us/2023/10/01/artificial-intelligence-diplomacy/>.

³⁰ Duberry, J., (2023), "AI Diplomacy: what vision for the future of multilateralism?", *Geneva Solutions*. Available at: <https://genevasolutions.news/science-tech/ai-diplomacy-what-vision-for-the-future-of-multilateralism-1>.

The development of AI-driven simulations enhances scenario planning, enabling diplomats to anticipate and prepare for potential international conflicts, and cooperation opportunities (thus for training purposes).

However, according to the study “Reflections on Practical Assistance for Diplomatic Negotiations”, AI can also enhance diplomatic negotiations, as illustrated by the German-Austrian customs union, and UN “cybercrime” resolution negotiations. The author showcases AI’s prowess in data analysis, scenario development, and prediction of state behaviours, particularly within the context of the UN General Assembly. AI’s application ranges from analysing negotiation dynamics to automated media monitoring related to diplomatic discussions. The primary takeaway is that AI significantly aids diplomatic activities, but it serves to support rather than replace the critical role of human judgment in diplomacy³¹.

The metaverse – a collective virtual shared space created by the convergence of virtually augmented physical reality, augmented reality (AR), and the Internet – may influence the field and practice of diplomacy. The world that exists in the metaverse offers the possibility of a range of activities, from diplomatic meetings and negotiations to cultural exchanges and global forums, conducted entirely in virtual environments.

One of the earliest examples is the establishment of virtual embassies. For instance, in 2007, the Maldives³² and Sweden³³ experimented with virtual embassies within Second Life, at that time a popular online virtual world. These virtual spaces served as platforms for exchanging information, providing services, and promoting tourism and cultural understanding. Although the concept has evolved, the idea of virtual embassies in today’s metaverse could expand to include more interactive services, such as real-time consular assistance and immersive cultural exhibitions. Moreover, in 2011, the United States launched the “Virtual Embassy” website aiming to engage directly with the Iranian public, despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations. This initiative provided Iranians with information about U.S. policies and visa applications, bypassing government censors and fostering direct dialogue. The downside was that the Iranian government quickly blocked access to the site, limiting its reach within Iran³⁴.

The metaverse represents a perfect outlet for international conferences and summits, participants being able to engage in discussions, negotiations, and networking without the need for physical travel. For example, the United Nations has explored virtual reality and other digital platforms for various initiatives, including virtual conferences on climate change and sustainability³⁵. In the novel “The Supernova Era”, the metaverse becomes a key platform for decision-making and governance among the children. They

³¹ Stanzel, V., and Voelsen, D., (2022), *Diplomacy and Artificial Intelligence: Reflections on Practical Assistance for Diplomatic Negotiations*, SWP Research Paper 1, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik [German Institute for International and Security Affairs]. Available at: https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/research_papers/2022RP01-Diplomacy_and_AI.pdf.

³² “Maldives opens first virtual embassy on Second Life”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 23, 2007. Available at: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/maldives-opens-first-virtual-embassy-on-second-life-20070523-gdq7im.html>.

³³ “Sweden first to open embassy in Second Life”, *Reuters*, August 10, 2007. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/idU5L30348893/>.

³⁴ United States Institute of Peace/The Iran Primer, (2011), “U.S. Launches Virtual Embassy Tehran”, December 6. Available at: <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2011/dec/06/us-launches-virtual-embassy-tehran>.

³⁵ Kunitake, Y., (2022), *The Potential of Virtual Reality for the SDGs: Infrastructure Development through Content and Cultural Policies*, Keio University and Virtual Rights Policy Institute Japan.

utilise virtual reality environments not only for entertainment and education, but also for serious matters, like democratic voting and governance. This reflects Liu Cixin's broader views regarding technology's role in shaping societal structures, and the potential of digital spaces to democratise processes and engagement³⁶. These virtual engagements can facilitate inclusive participation, reduce carbon footprints associated with travel, and leverage interactive tools to enhance understanding and collaboration.

This application is even more interesting in the field of diplomacy, where the metaverse has the possibility to revolutionise the conduct of diplomatic engagements. Traditional diplomacy is made up of face-to-face meetings, international travel, and physical presence at summits and conferences. These norms and practices, while effective in building relationships and facilitating negotiations, come with significant logistical challenges and environmental impacts due to travels. The metaverse, by contrast, provides a sustainable and accessible alternative that could transform diplomatic interactions (e.g. hybrid conferences and summits).

Expanding this parallel, the metaverse could enable diplomats to engage in real-time discussions, negotiations, and bilateral or multilateral meetings in a virtual space that replicates the dynamics of physical interactions. This transition to a virtual reality could democratise the diplomatic process by making it more accessible to smaller nations or non-state actors who may lack the resources for extensive international travel. It could similarly enhance inclusiveness by allowing broader participation of diverse stakeholders who can contribute to discussions. Moreover, virtual reality simulations could be used for conflict resolution exercises, cultural exchanges, or to provide immersive experiences that might help diplomats understand complex issues from multiple perspectives.

However, the transition to "metaverse-based diplomacy" presents challenges, including in terms of ensuring cybersecurity, managing digital divides, and maintaining the nuanced human interactions that are crucial in any diplomatic relations.

Conclusions

Throughout this paper, the research question has been addressed by analysing the digital diplomacy's impact and implications on traditional foreign policy and international relations. As regards its strategic implications, it is noteworthy that digital tools, such as social media and AI, provide states with the ability to influence international affairs in a more direct and dynamic manner. For example, the role of these tools in real-time crisis management and public engagement has enhanced strategic diplomatic operations by enabling faster and broader communication with global audiences.

In terms of operational changes, integrating digital technologies into diplomatic practices changes the way diplomatic activities are conducted. This entails a shift from in-person meetings to virtual interactions, the use of AI for data analysis and decision-making, and the deployment of social media for public diplomacy.

The integration of digital technologies into diplomacy implies both challenges and opportunities. Challenges include cybersecurity threats, misinformation, and the loss of nuanced interpersonal interactions. Opportunities involve enhanced reach among diverse audiences and immediacy of the engagements. Effective adaptation requires

³⁶ Liu, C., (2019), *Supernova Era*, Head of Zeus.

training diplomats in digital literacy, developing robust cybersecurity measures, and devising suitable communication strategies for the digital age.

Digital platforms and the “digital” element have become essential to international relations and diplomacy, bringing with them a wide range of opportunities and many ethical challenges that must be addressed in order to maintain trust, respect, and integrity in global affairs. Digital platforms have become the norm, facilitating immediate and direct communication between governments, diplomats, and international organisations, and thus making diplomatic engagement more efficient. The vast amount of information available online supports better decision-making and policy formulation, as stakeholders can quickly access and analyse data from multiple sources.

Social media and other digital platforms enable governments to engage directly with foreign publics, shape international perceptions and build soft power. Moreover, digital tools allow for better cooperation among nations on global issues, like climate change, health crises (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic), and counter-terrorism, through shared platforms and databases.

Beyond this optimism, however, there are numerous challenges and ethical considerations that must be addressed, including but not limited to cyber threats, privacy concerns, information overload, misinformation, and the significant issue of the digital divide. The rise of digital diplomacy comes with increased risks of cyber espionage, hacking, and misinformation campaigns that can undermine trust between nations. While access to information is beneficial, the digital age also brings with it the spread of misinformation and propaganda, challenging the integrity of diplomatic engagements.

In conclusion, the integration of digital tools and emerging technologies into the realm of diplomacy represents a significant shift in how nations negotiate, foster and engage in international relations. As we have seen, technologies such as artificial intelligence and the metaverse not only enhance the efficiency and scope of diplomatic efforts, but also introduce new platforms for interaction that could democratise and transform this field. AI’s application in data analysis, crisis management, and consular services has already begun to reshape the landscape of diplomacy, rendering processes more efficient and accessible. Similarly, the metaverse offers an avenue for conducting diplomatic meetings, cultural exchanges, and international conferences in virtual environments, reducing the carbon footprint associated with traditional diplomacy and making the latter more inclusive. It essentially advances what we currently achieve through VTCs and hybrid events. Harnessing the full potential of the existing technologies (and in the future the possibilities of quantum computing) could significantly accelerate progress in a direction that is almost unpredictable.

The strategic appointment of tech diplomats underscores the importance of technology in modern diplomatic strategies, acknowledging that the race in technological adoption and integration is a critical aspect of the global competition. However, this transition brings to the surface challenges such as the preservation of nuanced human interactions that are fundamental to diplomacy.

As we move forward, it is clear that technology can significantly aid diplomatic activities, by offering new ways to engage on the global stage. Nevertheless, it serves to complement rather than replace the indispensable role of human judgment and interpersonal relations in diplomacy. The future of diplomacy lies in striking a balance

between leveraging technological advancements and maintaining the core values and practices, which have historically underpinned diplomatic relations. Maintaining this balance is key to providing reassurance. However, it is a temporary measure. The reluctance to adopt and implement new technologies and advancements, while others readily do so, will inevitably place the resistant party at a disadvantage compared to its more progressive counterparts. In essence, trying to meet the present and future challenges with outdated tools or methodologies is akin to entering a modern naval battle with a rowboat. It sets the stage for predictable defeat and underscores the importance of the adaptability and openness to innovation.

Future research can concentrate on the specific domains highlighted in this study, and thus examine the leverage wielded by artificial intelligence in diplomatic decision-making and negotiations. This entails evaluating AI's potential to improve the decision-making process and its capability to forecast outcomes. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that decisions influenced by AI are not only transparent and comprehensible, but also comply with appropriate standards of accountability.

Additionally, an interesting future research could be elaborated on the question “How should training programmes be designed to enhance diplomats’ digital literacy and understanding of emerging technologies?”. It would be an opportunity to first undertake a quantitative analysis aimed at pinpointing specific needs and deficiencies among diplomats. Based on these findings, the study would then develop targeted training programmes aimed at addressing these gaps. The research could explore how these programmes should be structured not only to fill knowledge gaps, but also to enhance the diplomats’ efficiency in their daily tasks through the proper utilisation of technology.

References:

- Akilli, E., Guneş, B., and Gokbel, A., (2023), *Diplomacy, Society and the COVID-19 Challenge*, Routledge.
- Adesina, O.S., (2017), “Foreign policy in an era of digital diplomacy”, *Cogent Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, Issue 1.
- Al-Mansouri, T., Al-Mohannadi, H., and Feroun, M., (2021), *Digital diplomacy during the first 100 days: How GCC ministries of foreign affairs and ministers tweeted the blockade*, QScience Connect, 2021(2), Special Issue-Thesis, 1.
- Balbi, G., and Fickers, A., (eds.), (2020), *History of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU): Transnational Techno-Diplomacy from the Telegraph to the Internet*, Walter De Gruyter Oldenburg.
- Bjola, C., and Holmes, M., (eds.), (2015), *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bjola, C., and Zaiotti, R. (eds.), (2021), *Digital Diplomacy and International Organizations: Autonomy, Legitimacy, and Contestation*, Routledge.
- Black, J., (2010), *A History of Diplomacy*, Reaktion Books.
- Blaser, V., (2023), *How to Use Artificial Intelligence in Diplomacy*, Diplomatic Diary. Available at: <https://diplomaticacademy.us/2023/10/01/artificial-intelligence-diplomacy/>.

- Brandt, J., and Schafer, B., (2020), “How China’s ‘wolf warrior’ diplomats use and abuse Twitter”, Brookings, October 28. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-chinas-wolf-warrior-diplomats-use-and-abuse-twitter/>.
- Clarke, L., (2021), “Tech ambassadors are redefining diplomacy for the digital era”, *Tech Monitor*, February 16. Available at: <https://techmonitor.ai/leadership/innovation/tech-ambassadors>.
- Duberry, J., (2023), “AI Diplomacy: what vision for the future of multilateralism?”, *Geneva Solutions*. Available at: <https://genevasolutions.news/science-tech/ai-diplomacy-what-vision-for-the-future-of-multilateralism-1>.
- Duncombe, C., (2017), “Twitter and transformative diplomacy: social media and Iran–US relations”, *International Affairs*, 93(3), pp. 545–562.
- Fickers, A., (2013), “Cold War techno-diplomacy: Selling French Colour Television to the Eastern Bloc” in Badenoch, A., Fickers, A., and Henrich-Franke, C., (eds.), *Airy Curtains in the European Ether: Broadcasting and the Cold War*, Nomos Verlag.
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (2012), *Digital Strategy*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a74ee6040f0b65c0e845a62/AB_12-11-14_Digital_strategy.pdf.
- Kurbalija, J., (2023), “Digital Diplomacy: Issues, Actors, and Processes”, *Digital diplomacy*, September 29. Available at: <https://www.diplomacy.edu/topics/digital-diplomacy/>.
- Kunitake, Y., (2022), *The Potential of Virtual Reality for the SDGs: Infrastructure Development through Content and Cultural Policies*, Keio University and Virtual Rights Policy Institute, Japan.
- Lewis, D., (2014), “Digital diplomacy”. Available at: <http://www.gatewayhouse.in/digital-diplomacy-2/>.
- Liang, Q., and Xiangsui, W., (2017), *Unrestricted Warfare: China’s Master Plan to Destroy America*, Independently Published.
- Liu, C., (2019), *Supernova Era*, Head of Zeus.
- Manor, I., (2018), *The Digitalization of Diplomacy: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Terminology*, Oxford Digital Diplomacy Research Group, University of Oxford.
- Manor, I., and Segev, E., (2015), “America’s selfie: How the US portrays itself on its social media accounts” in Bjola, C., and Holmes, M., (eds.), *Digital diplomacy: Theory and practice*, New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 89–108.
- Marzouki, M., and Calderaro, A., (eds.), (2022), *Internet Diplomacy: Shaping the Global Politics of Cyberspace*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Part I.
- Potemkin, V.P., Bahrusin, S.V., Efimov, A.V., Kosminski, E.A., and Narocinitki, A.L., (1962), *Istoria Diplomației*, Vol. 1, Editura Științifică.

- Reuters, (2007), “Sweden first to open embassy in Second Life”, August 10. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL30348893/>.
- Seib, P., (2012), *Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era*, Palgrave Macmillan US, pp. 17-20.
- Stanzel, V., and Voelsen, D., (2022), *Diplomacy and Artificial Intelligence: Reflections on Practical Assistance for Diplomatic Negotiations*, SWP Research Paper 1, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik [German Institute for International and Security Affairs]. Available at: https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/research_papers/2022RP01_Diplomacy_and_AI.pdf.
- The digital transformation of diplomacy. Available at: <https://diplo-media.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/2023/04/Tetris-Twitter-1080p-Full-HD-1.mp4>.
- The Sydney Morning Herald, (2007), “Maldives opens first virtual embassy on Second Life”, May 23. Available at: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/maldives-opens-first-virtual-embassy-on-second-life-20070523-gdq7im.html>.
- United States Institute of Peace/The Iran Primer, (2011), “U.S. Launches Virtual Embassy Tehran”, December 6. Available at: <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2011/dec/06/us-launches-virtual-embassy-tehran>.
- Westcott, N., (2017), *Digital Diplomacy: The Impact of the Internet on International Relations*, Oxford Internet Institute.