USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE OPEN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE AND

MANAGE OPR FOR MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS

A CREATIVE PROJECT

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MASTER OF ARTS

BY

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Introduction

The benefits of social media in relationship building has long been a topic of discussion among public relations scholars and many organizations (Distaso & Mccorkindale, 2012). Most recently, government agencies have begun to understand the importance of social media due to President Obama's Open Government Initiative and the social pressure for transparency. The purpose of the Open Government Initiative was to "strengthen democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace," (The White House 2011, p. 4). According to The Obama Administration's Commitment to Open Government: A Status Report (2011), the Open Government initiative emphasized three themes which were transparency, participation and collaboration. This initiative and the increasing pressure for federal organizations to be more transparent has further made the use of social media for relationship building more appealing. Military organizations, in particular, stand to benefit a great deal by using social media effectively in building relationships. According to Zalewski (2009) the military's relationship with civilians is progressing, from one-way communication to more interactive methods. The ability to use social media to engage an audience and promote two-way dialogue makes it an ideal outlet to test dimensions of organization-public relationship scales and how they can be used along with social media in fulfilling the emphases of the Open Government Initiative.

This study seeks to assess how social media, particularly Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, can be used to build relationships between government organizations, such as the military, and their target publics including future and current military personnel and their families. Currently there is little to no research on the use of social media for relationship building and reputation management particularly for military organizations. The results of this study will help fill that gap while providing public affairs officers with scientific knowledge to

formulate theoretically and practically sound social media plans that will improve the quality of relationships with their publics. Based on the findings from the current research, I created a social media plan for the 2016 Cadet Summer Training for a military base located in the southern region of the United States.

The research methods used to conduct the current study included in-depth interviews and textual analyses. In order to create a social media relationship management plan for 2016 Cadet Summer Training (CST), first, I conducted in-depth interviews with three high ranking public affairs officers whose identification was kept strictly confidential. A textual analysis of the 2015 Communication Plan for Cadet Summer Training and the 2016 Communication Strategy was conducted to identify if any of the themes emerged to support conceptual dimensions of organizational-public relationship scales and the Open Government Initiative. Lastly, a textual analysis of current social media content between the dates of May 1, 2015 and August 13, 2015 for the United States Army ROTC Cadet Summer Training Facebook, Twitter and YouTube page was conducted.

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Literature Review

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The Theory of Relationship Management

Although early public relations practitioners viewed communication through disseminating messages as the main focus of public relations, today's practitioners consider relationship management as the core of the profession; using communication through messages as merely a tool used to manage and facilitate those relationships (Heath 2009). According to Heath (2009) relationship management refers to "the process of managing the relationships between an organization and its internal and external publics" (p. 271). It also defines the organization-public relationship as "the state which exists between an organization and its key

public in which the actions of either can impact the economic, social, cultural or political wellbeing of the other" (p. 271). According to Botan and Hazleton (2006), "an organization with effective public relations will attain positive public relationships" (p. 466). There are three types of organization-public relations, personal, professional and community (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999). Most of the research surrounding relationship management theory explored how the management of relationships with the organization's publics can build relationships with primary publics, enhance reputation, increase behavioral intentions and influence actual behaviors (Lee & Park, 2013). For the purpose of this current research study, the term "organization-public relationship" refers to an exchange of needs, expectations and fulfillment that is beneficial for both the organization and its publics.

Managing Organization-Public Relationships

Much research has been presented over the years by scholars, including Heath (2009), discussing the types of organization-public relationships, dimensions, as well as strategies to develop and maintain those relationships. In addition to the definition of organization-public relationships provided by Heath; researchers Broom, Casey, and Ritchie (2000) also provided another definition that focuses more on transactional component of relationship management. According to their definition, "Relationships consist of the transactions that involve the exchange of resources between organizations… and lead to mutual benefit, as well as mutual achievement" (p. 91).

Because organization-public relationships can and will change overtime and could possibly take some time to build, it is important that organizations work to maintain current relationships along with building new ones. This includes tracking these relationships throughout the "life cycle" and insuring that all expectations are being met. "A relationship is defined not so

much by what is said as by the partner's expectations for behavior," according to Littlejohn

(1992, p. 262). Therefore, when organizations do not meet the expectations of their publics,

those people look elsewhere to fulfill those expectations. Damage to a relationship can be a result

of an incongruence between public and private definition of the relationship or different

expectations between the two parties within the relationship. It is important that public relations

practitioners continue to meet those expectations in order to maintain organization-public

relationships and the benefits that come with it.

Measuring Organization-Public Relationships

"As important as it can be for an organization to measure PR outputs and outcomes, it is

even more important for an organization to measure relationships" (Hon & Grunig, 1999). While

measuring outcomes can provide information on the success or failure of a specific public

relations activity, measuring the OPR relationships can provide insight to an organizations'

public relations strategies as a whole. Hon and Grunig (1999) found that relationships can best be

measured through focusing on six key elements of relationships; control mutuality, trust,

satisfaction, commitment, exchange relationship and communal relationship. According to Hon

and Grunig (1999), each element was defined as followed:

Control Mutuality – The degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to

influence one another. Although some imbalance is natural, stable relationships require

that organizations and publics each have some control over the other.

Trust – One party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other

party. There are three dimensions to trust: integrity: the belief that an organization is fair

and just … dependability: the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do …

and, competence: the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do.

Satisfaction – The extent to which each party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced. A satisfying relationship is one in which the benefits outweigh the costs.

Commitment – The extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote. Two dimensions of commitment are continuance commitment, which refers to a certain line of action, and affective commitment, which is an emotional orientation.

Exchange Relationship – In an exchange relationship, one party gives benefits to the other only because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future.

Communal Relationship – In a communal relationship, both parties provide benefits to the other because they are concerned for the welfare of the other – even when they get nothing in return. For most public relations activities, developing communal relationships with key constituencies is much more important to achieve than would be developing exchange relationships. (p. 3)

According to Bruning, Dials, and Shirka (2007), evaluation of public relations should be centered around measuring mutual benefit because quantifying those outcomes can help illustrate advantages that are associated with effective public relations tactics. This study sought to prove this statement by investigating the ways that relationship attitudes influence specific behaviors. The results of this study suggested that relationships are best facilitated through the organization engaging with the public in two-way communication and designing their public relations

initiatives around those conversations. It also suggested that organizations explore techniques that can personalize organization-public interaction.

Another organization-public relationship management scale proposed by Bruning and Ledingham (1999) examined eight dimensions of organization-public relationships that were proposed by scholars. These dimensions included the following, "trust, openness, involvement, investment, commitment, reciprocity, mutual legitimacy, and mutual understanding," (p. 162). Bruning and Ledingham (1999) identified three different types of relationship scales: professional, community and personal. According to this study, when an organization is managing professional relationships it is important that the organization conducts itself in a professional manner and meets the needs and expectations of a customer. In order to manage personal relationships, the organization must build a sense of trust between the organizations and its publics by investing time, energy and feelings through their interactions with publics. When an organization is managing community relationships it is important that the organization is transparent with community members and engage in activities that are beneficial to the community such as sponsoring or hosting events and promoting community involvement (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999, p. 165).

This current research focuses on only one of the relationship quality dimensions, satisfaction, as defined by Hon and Ki (2007). Satisfaction was chosen because according to the results of Hon and Ki's study, satisfaction among members of the target audience has a direct effect on the degree of trust the members feel towards the organization and that degree of trust in turn will positively influence the public's commitment to the organization, leaving satisfaction to be the determining factor in the other two dimensions (p.430). Satisfaction also has a direct

relationship to the key themes of the Open Government Initiative as it is a direct outcome of

transparency, participation and collaboration.

Relationships in Cyberspace

With the adoption of online communication vastly increasing, it is important for public

relations practitioners to consider the benefits and challenges of building organization-public

relationships using the web (Hanson-Horn & Neff, 2008). Public relations is one of many

different disciplines concerned with using technology to establish and maintain relationships.

Organizations typically use technology three ways, to promote interaction, administer back-room

support and as a research tool (Springston, 2001). Research conducted in other fields has

contradicted earlier reports that technology reduces the quality of interpersonal relationships and

social involvement (Lea & Spears, 1995). Therefore, it has been shown possible to manage

quality relationships through online communication. It is suggested that the reason for lack of

quality is due to the fact that organizations fail to provide content that users deem useful, fall

short in engaging and involving their audience, and fail to take advantage of user feedback

(Hanson-Horn & Neff, 2008). According to Hanson-Horn and Neff (2008) "the use of

technology is important in organization-public relationships because organizations must rely on a

variety of different communications media to maintain relationships effectively and efficiently"

(p.52).

Social Media and Organization-Public Relationships

Studies have shown that the emergence of social media has changed the way public relations

practitioners operate and engage with their desired audience (Alsulaiman, 2013). Social media

allow the organization/client to connect with their audience in a matter of seconds without the

interference of a third party. "The majority of public relations professionals state that the use of

communication technology has made their job easier by expediting the circulation of information

to reach broader audiences" (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008). Dennis (2013) recommends

that public relations practitioners do the following in order preserve online reputation:

- Engage in proactive reputation management by developing positive online content. It

  states that building a strong online presence could lead to a reduction in negative

  information.

- Monitor and respond to online criticism appropriately. Responses should not only

  appease the customer but also alleviate the damage of the reputation.

- Maintain a company social media policy that requires employees to be respectful, honest,

  and appropriate when posting on social media.

- Consult with legal counsel in egregious circumstances in which negative false statements

  can cause economic loss. (p.18-19)

Social media has also been seen as a valuable tool for organizations and executives because

the person-to-person nature of the social media platform helps to avoid being misquoted by

traditional media (Alexander, 2013). Public relations is considered an integral department in

handling a crisis in the organization because practitioners can strategically control the flow of

information and disseminate appropriate messages to the organization's key publics

(Alsulaimaan, 2013). Unfortunately, many organizations lack the ability to use social media as

an effective form of two-way communication (Distaso & McCorkindale, 2012). It is documented

that the key elements in building relationships between an organization and its public is trust,

credibility, openness, reciprocity, mutual satisfaction and understanding (Bruning, Dials &

Shirka, 2008). These are some of the aspects this paper will explain as it is related to process of

managing relationships using social media in public relations.

Social Media and Transparency

It is stated that, "In public relations, communication that conveys constructs such as trust, openness to dialogue and credibility help lay the groundwork for relationships" (Sweetser, 2010, p. 292). One of the benefits previously mentioned of using social media to manage relationships is that it allows the organization to practice transparency and build trust within its publics. According to Reitz (2012) organizations are more successful in building and managing relationships when they function as an open system. Open systems respond to environmental changes and adjust and adapt through two-way communication and mutual understanding. Practicing transparency while using social media can allow you to manage the identity of the organization, leading to a positive reputation, which in turn, will eventually lead to better relationships between the organization and its publics (Reitz, 2012).

A study conducted by Chinthakayala, Kong, Zhao and Zhang (2013) found Facebook to be the most transparent social networking source when compared to Twitter and MySpace in regard to conversation tracking. Facebook allows an organization to display all of their posts, including posts from their audience on one page and conversations can be tracked on one post without any character limitations. Facebook also offers the client a broader reach due to the site hosting 71 of the 73 percent of online adults who use some form of social media, the highest percentage of any other social networking site according to a Pew Center research survey entitled "The demographics of social media users-2012" (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). Research documenting the credibility of Instagram is limited due to the recent popularity of the social networking site.

An article by Park & Cameron (2014) described "conversational human voice" as the most effective way to positively increase the publics' responses to organizations, stating that it "generates perceptions of transparency and openness in the organizational dialogue with its

publics" (p. 489). The reasoning behind this idea is that messages written in plain language and in first person narrative style increases the public's understanding of the messages and reduces uncertainty. This sense of personalization can also instill a sense of personal contact between the organization and its publics. Because the goal of effectively building relationships through social media is through engaging our audiences and facilitating two-way communication this "voice" would be more effective than posting the same official responses you would issue to traditional media. This tone also helps to build and maintain trust with your audience (Park & Cameron, 2014).

According to Park and Cameron (2014) public relations practitioners have been perceived by the public as less credible, dishonest and less dishonest in comparison to other members of the organization and external sources (p. 491). Therefore, upholding ethical values through disclosure while engaging on social media is also essential in instilling a sense of transparency while building and maintaining relationships between organizations and their publics. According to Sweetser (2010) ethical actions by public relations practitioners will lead to building positive relationships and in contrast, unethical behavior such as lack of disclosure was proven to damage an organization's relationship with their public.

Source Credibility

As the use of social media by the public and organizations during crises and for informational purposes becomes more prominent, issues concerning source credibility and reputation become more of an importance (Diaz, Hiltz & Mark, 2011). Credibility is an important part of using social networking for relationship management and engagement. Studies have shown that social media users will only continue to access the messages and engage in

conversation if they view the source providing the message as credible (Chinthakayala

Chinthakayala, Kong, Zhao & Zhang, 2013).

It is important to know that despite the popularity and open format of social media,

research has proven that harmful and inaccurate posts are not enhanced by the use of social

media. The mass participation of social media users allow false information to easily be

corrected by a more credible and knowledgeable source (Alexander, 2013). The source

mentioned could be a representative of the client/organization or a group of individuals who are

considered to be the social media influencers (Freberg et al., 2010). Social media influencers are

considered a third-party endorser who can add credibility to an organization through their use of

social media (p. 90). These third-party endorsers can be essential enforcing credibility due to the

negative perception of public relations practitioners described in the previous section.

The channel of social media used can also have an influence on an organization's

perceived credibility and have an effect on relationship management. According to a previous

study that was conducted by Sweetser and Metzgar (2007), it was proven that there is an inverse

relationship between the perception of an organization being in a crisis and credibility of the

social media medium; participants who rated the credibility of the medium low rated the

perception that an organization was in crisis higher (p. 341). Sweetser explained in the follow-up

research (2010) that this emphasizes the importance of maintaining credibility, especially in

relationship management, because it is essential in rebounding from a crisis" (p. 294).

Engagement's Role in Relationship Management

Engagement is described as a critical role in online communication because it helps build

relationships, promote the brand, and improve the product. Existing research in public relations

considers "engagement" as a dialogue or interaction with an organization to help build

relationships with the organization's publics (DisTaso & McCorkindale, 2012). It is stated that

relationships are best facilitated through a dialogic process that requires the organization to

actively engage the public during communication (Bruning, Dials & Shirka, 2008). Results of a

study conducted by Lee and Park (2013) proved that engaging with publics through social media

by actively responding to comments and posts has a positive influence on the perceptions of

relationship management and the reputation of the organization (p. 201). Yang (2007) found that

active communication of publics are positively associated with OPR outcomes and in turn

produce a more favorable organizational reputation.

Open Government Initiative

The Open Government Initiative is an effort created by the Obama administration to

increase opportunities for public engagement with the government (The White House, 2011).

Under this initiative, government agencies have made more information available to the public

under the Freedom of Information Act through various channels such including their websites.

According to "A Manager's Guide to Designing a Social Media Strategy", in response to this

initiative, government agencies have decided to adopt social media as a communication and

engagement tool (Mergel, 2012). According to President Obama, greater openness "will

strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in government," (The White

House, 2011 p. 4). The reasoning behind this statement was because as the public becomes more

knowledgeable of government operations, they become invested in it. This also empowers

citizens by giving them the ability to express their views about government issues that may effect

them.

Three themes were emphasized within this initiative and provided the framework for achieving a more effective government, those are: transparency, participation and collaboration according to The White House (2011).

Transparency. Transparency means providing the public with information about their government's activities. It contemplates disclosure about, for example, what federal agencies have done or will do. Transparency's premise is that citizens are entitled to know what, how, and why government does what it does.

Participation. Citizens are entitled to more, however, than a transparent view of their government from the outside looking in. Participation emphasizes citizens' voice in public affairs, recognizing that public officials stand to benefit from the perspective of expert and non- expert knowledge that resides outside of government. Participation is fostered by expanding citizens' opportunities to express their views about policy alternatives, and in ways beyond voting in elections.

Collaboration. Collaboration further erodes the us-versus-them divide between citizens and government by taking participation to another level. Citizens are capable, after all, of more than simply registering their views about policy alternatives defined in advance. They can usefully help shape the government's agenda. They can also help determine even the tools and methods by which public policy goals are pursued. Where government is collaborative, citizens become true partners with government, in both the identification and pursuit of public goals. (p. 5)

According to Macnamara & Zerfass (2007), the openness of the social media environment democratizes the voice and offers participation, dialogue and community-building. Making it the

perfect outlet to demonstrate the efforts of the Open Government Initiative. This leads me to my first research question:

RQ1: *Has the Open Government Initiative increased the pressure for military organizations to be more involved on social media in order to facilitate a sense of transparency, participation and collaboration?*

Social Media Plan Books

With the use of social media now a priority for government organizations, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report to urge federal agencies to create clear policies and procedures for managing social media platforms (Mergel, 2012). In this report, the GAO identified several ways 23 of 24 major government agencies were using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and also discovered three main challenges that should be addressed in the organizations social media policies and procedures manual. These challenges include records management, privacy and security. Records management refers to outlining the process and policies for identifying and managing records generated by social media usage. If the usage constitutes federal records, there must be a method of preserving the information in order to adhere to the Federal Records Act under the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) (Government Accountability Office, 2011). Privacy refers to ensuring that the collection of personal identifiable information through social media is limited and there should be clear guidelines on how that information is used. Security refers to the social media sites being safeguarded from security threats and cyber attacks. The results of this report indicated that only 12 of the 23 agencies had policies on records management and privacy in their social media policies and only 7 had documented security risks.

According to Mergel (2012), in order to create a social media plan, you must first craft a social media strategy to ensure that the use of social media platforms is aligned with the organization's overall mission. This strategy will help provide guidance to employees and social media managers within the organization. This section will include the mission of the organization, appropriate content, roles and responsibilities, the target audience, access, online etiquette, a list of platforms, posting schedule and metrics. The second step according to Mergel is to set up daily social media tactics for pushing and pulling content, networking and relationship management. It is also suggested that an organization create a social media comment policy to show when it is necessary to respond on the organizations behalf. Finally, the organization should formulate terms of service agreements and make use government-wide resources (2011).

According to an article published by the Australian Government entitled "How to Write a Social Media Plan" (n.d.), there are six steps that are necessary when developing a social media plan. These steps are listed as followed:

1. Conduct your analysis of the channels, business, customers (audience), and potential competitors.

2. Develop your social media strategy.

3. Establish the rules such as policies and procedures.

4. Set up a social media team.

5. Get started using social media (implementation).

6. Review your social media plan.

A combination of these suggestions will be used in the creation of the social media plan for the 2016 Cadet Summer Training that is consisted with the requirements suggested by the

Government Accountability Office (2011) report. These will also be used to answer my second research question:

RQ2: *Do current communications plan books reflect themes of satisfaction, transparency, participation and collaboration?*

Government Usage for Social Media

The Government Accountability Office (2011) document also included some identified ways that 23 out of 24 major government organizations were using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. This information will provide insight as to how organizations are currently utilizing social media. The first use was to repost information available on agency websites. In addition to reposting information found on websites, these social networking site were also used to post information not published on the organizations website. For example, Facebook was used to post pictures and descriptions of tours or inspections, Twitter was used to post brief, time-sensitive information, and YouTube was used to publish videos of official discussing policies that might be of interest to the public. Another way that social media was used was to solicit comments and opinions from the public either through social media or the agency website. Social media was also used to respond to comments and engage with the public on content posted by the agencies on each individual social networking site. The report also discovered that Twitter was useful when providing links and reposting relevant articles on non-government websites.

Methodology

In order to create a social media plan that focuses on relationship management for the 2016 Cadet Summer Training (CST), a case study of the Army base's social media presence was developed using in-depth interviews with three high ranking public affairs officers, and a textual analysis of the 2015 Communication Plan for Cadet Summer Training and the 2016

Communication Strategy. A textual analysis of current social media analytics for the United States Army ROTC Cadet Summer Training Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages was also conducted to identify types of content that produced the highest levels of engagement.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted via telephone, recorded and later transcribed. Conducting interviews over the phone allowed me to have access to individuals located in different geographical locations. Three high ranking pubic affairs officers were interviewed for this study. These individuals were chosen due to their current and past experience and knowledge managing public affairs and social media accounts for military organizations. Each of the participants had a minimum of 14 years in the public affairs industry and had been using social media in a professional setting for at least 4 years by the time of this interview. Interviewees were fully aware of the nature of this study and will remain confidential. To protect the identity of these individuals, they will be referred to as *respondents a, b and c.* Prior to the phone interviews, participants were asked to sign a consent form acknowledging that they were voluntary participants and that the interview will be recorded, transcribed and used for research purposes. The interviews consisted of eight open-ended questions (appendix, a), any elements of the questions that were not understood where thoroughly explained during the interview process. These questions were created to gain a better understanding of current and desired social media operations in the military. Each interview took an average of 30 minutes and data from the interview was transcribed by the current researcher. Data collected from the interviews provided more in-depth information that wouldn't be available by using other research methods. Interview transcriptions can be found in appendix, b.

A textual analysis of two documents was completed to identify the overall theme of the documents and emerging trends that focus on dimensions of satisfaction, transparency, participation and collaboration. Document "a" will be the 2015 Communication Plan for Cadet Summer Training and document "b" is the 2016 Communication Strategy. This research method was chosen because unlike quantitative methods such as a content analysis, this qualitative method helped to understand and assess the interpretations of the communication strategies of the organization. This method also allowed the text to be analyzed as a whole instead of limiting the data analysis to code words that might not be mentioned specifically in the text, but are conveyed in the overall them of the message. Each of these documents were provided directly by the office of public affairs at a military base located in the southern region.

Along with the textual analysis of the communications documents provided by the military base, another textual analysis of current social media analytics for the United States Army Cadet Summer Training Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages was also conducted to understand what social media posts produce the most positive results and if those post align with the communications strategies mentioned in the current communications plan. The analysis on Facebook consisted of reviewing page likes, post reach and engagement analytics provided by Facebook Insights. While the Twitter page was analyzed based on post retweets and favorites. The YouTube page was analyzed by views, likes and comments. For this current study, only data found between the dates of May 1, 2015 to August 15, 2015 will be analyzed. This time period was chosen because this is the duration of Cadet Summer Training and it also is a reflection of when the pages were most active.

Data Analysis

Interview transcriptions and the communications documents provided for the textual analysis were analyzed by the researcher to identify common themes and responses to get a better idea of the general consensus regarding each question. Excerpts from the will be quoted and used in the results section to support the themes found in each item. Data collected assisted in understanding what elements of organization-public relationships and the open government initiative are emphasized in the current communications plans. Elements that were examined included satisfaction, transparency, participation and collaboration.

To analyze the social media pages, the top ten posts on each site were further assessed to identify any relationships among the types of posts and to further analyze the posts' reflection of current social media plans. Key themes were noted as the research read and analyzed each post. Posts were selected for the results section that strongly identified themes and reflected transparency, participation and collaboration. This data will assist in creating a concrete social media plan for the organization that focuses on engagement and relationship management.

Results

Each of the interview participants in this study had a general idea of what the Open Government Initiative was, but two out of the three felt that the initiative did not increase the pressure for the military organizations to be more involved in social media. One of the participants stated that the military was actually one of the early adopters of social media compared to other government organizations. The remainder of this section will focus on how the dimensions of satisfaction, transparency, participation and collaboration were reflected in the data collected through interviews and textual analyses.

Satisfaction

All interview participants indicated that current social media goals, strategies and activities were catered to the needs of the organization's target audiences which demonstrated elements of satisfaction. The textual analysis of the 2015 Communication Plan revealed a strong emphasis on the element of satisfaction, particularly in the "desired effects" section of the document. Below are a few excerpts from the document supporting these findings:

"Will work with various groups within the USACC team on content production and ensure that the content is compelling to key audiences."

"Public trusts that USACC is providing the best hands-on training to develop leaders of character for the nation across the nation."

"Cadets are confident in their decision to join ROTC and reinforce that decision to family and friends."

An analysis of the 2016 Communication Strategy document did not find any emphasized elements of satisfaction.

Transparency

Despite the implications of the Open Government Initiative, two out of the three interview participants felt that it did not increase the pressure for military organizations to become more transparent by being more involved on social media because they were already operating under the notion of "maximum disclosure, minimum delay" according to *respondent a*. Two out of three respondents also believed that one of the biggest challenges of managing social media for a military organization was security and the lack of regulations, which could have an effect on the level of transparency. The textual analysis of the 2015 Communication Plan document also revealed an emphasis on transparency in their communication efforts and is evident in the following excerpts:

"Generate publicity and provide coverage of the Cadet 2015 Summer Training at Fort

Knox, KY by effectively informing and educating target audiences about the purpose and

impact of Summer Training on developing future Army leaders."

"…keep people informed about what is taking place at Fort Knox; follow-on training

opportunities; and to create a dialogue that leads to a positive impression of SROTC and

the Army."

"Promote Cadet Summer Training with the news media to show how the training is

relevant to the Army now and in the future."

The textual analysis of the 2016 Communication Strategy also document identified elements of

transparency throughout the document. Some examples of themes of transparency found in the

text are below.

"To communicate the story of Army ROTC to key audiences generating broad

understanding, advocacy, and support for Army ROTC."

"Provide timely response to emerging events that could affect ROTC's public image."

"Communicators must also be aware of unexpected triggers to optimize opportunities.

Unexpected triggers demand our solid and speedy response."

Participation

When asked about the benefits of using social media, the respondents agreed that the

opportunity for two-way communication made the platform mutually beneficial because it

allowed the organization to disseminate information to the public while also getting feedback

from the public concerning that information. The 2015 Communication Plan document did

contain a section on social media that placed a small focus on participation in their tools and

tactics, but this was not reflected in the overall plan. Below are some excerpts reflecting

elements of participation.

"Facebook: Social media's most popular site will serve as a main source for outreach. On

it, the PAO will drive traffic to news and information on the main site, keep viewers

updated and try to generate interaction."

"Commander sessions/online chats (potentially): The USACC key leaders talk for 30

minutes each week, answering questions previously fielded by PAO. The leader can also

take time to address general issues, talk about the success of Cadets in training or discuss

upcoming events that will be of interest to the audience."

An analysis of the 2016 Communication Strategy document did not find any emphasized

elements of participation.

Collaboration

Collaboration was one of the more difficult elements to define during this research.

Although the term was defined in the Open Government Initiative, the lines between

collaboration and participation continued to blur during the interviews and textual analysis. To

better separate the two, for the purpose of this study collaboration was defined as "working with

the public to determine the tools and strategies used to achieve social media goals." Under this

definition, there were no signs of collaboration during interviews or the textual analyses.

Textual Analysis of Social Media

A textual analysis of the organization's Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages showed

no significant correlation between the types of posts and their popularity among social media

users. However, Facebook "impressions" showed a significant increase when outside

organizations were tagged in the post. YouTube videos linked to Facebook also showed a

significant increase in the number of views. Social media content did reflect most of the

objectives listed for social media in the 2015 Communication Plan. However, although

Instagram was listed as a tool in the plan document, it was not utilized during this time period.

Summer 2016

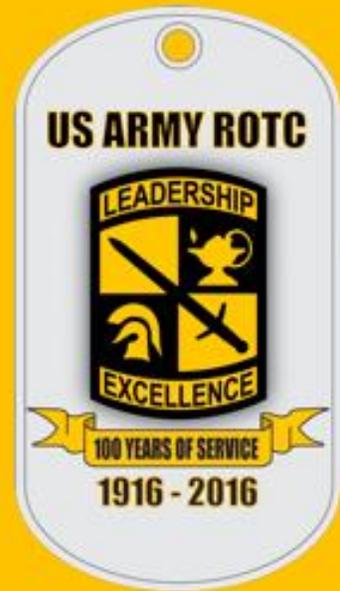## U.S. Army ROTC Cadet Summer Training Social Media Plan

US ARMY ROTC

LEADERSHIP

EXCELLENCE

100 YEARS OF SERVICE

1916 - 2016

Table of Content

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

U.S. Army Cadet Command Communication Strategy Goal
To communicate the story of Army ROTC to key audiences generating broad understanding, advocacy, and support for Army ROTC. Reinforce key themes and messages aligned with the U.S. Army Cadet Command Strategic Plan. Provide timely response to emerging events that could affect ROTC's public image.

Social Media Goal
To provide social media coverage of 2016 Cadet Summer Training to advance the reputation and generate understanding, advocacy, and support for Army ROTC. Provide insight into the operations of the U.S. Army Cadet Command through social media outreach that is aligned with the commander's vision and strategies and the organization's overall mission.

Objectives
- Connect with parents and loved ones of Cadets and prospects through social media by increasing engagement by 20% during CST.
- Post content that not only informs the public about events at Fort Knox but also welcomes feedback and participation from the public.
- Create dialogue that leads to a positive impression of ROTC and the Army.
- Meet the needs of the public, by responding to requests for information and other inquiries related to Army ROTC.

Social Media Channels
- Facebook- most popular social media site, hosting 71 of 73 percent of adults who use social media. Offers the most opportunities for transparency and participation. Current page consists of 40 percent women and 50 percent men. Audience on current page consists of mostly adults ages 18-24 with ages 45-54 being the second largest.
- Twitter- character limitations limit content to links, photos, or brief, time-sensitive information.
- YouTube- can be used to publish longer videos demonstrating training or public messages from command.
- Instagram (proposed)- limited to pictures only

Target Publics (top two publics analyzed)
a. Internal
- Cadets- average ages 18-23, 83 percent of individuals in this age range use social networking sites with Facebook having the most users in this age range.
- Cadre
- Faculty
b. External
- The American People
- Academia
- Prospective ROTC Cadets

- Cadet family members – average ages 40-54 for parents. Also, mostly active on Facebook.
- University Leaders
- Media
- Military affiliates

Key Themes and Messages
- About Cadet Summer Training (CST)
  - CST is one of the premier training events in the Army, and will have lasting effects as these young leaders go on to be commissioned and lead Soldiers for the next three to 30 years. These Cadets will be commissioned in the active Army, the Army National Guard, and the U.S. Army Reserve. #leadersforlife
  - The leadership development that cadets undergo during CST helps ensure that new lieutenants understand and embrace the concept of being officers; demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise; adapt, understand and act in ambiguity; and can anticipate change and act independently.
  - CST gives Cadets an opportunity to display and hone leadership skills in military/tactical environment, while emphasizing teamwork and teambuilding.
  - As many as 9,000 cadets from all over the United States and its territories will come to Fort Knox to attend and train at either Cadet Initial Entry Training (CIET) or the Cadet Leadership Course (CLC).
  - Cadre from throughout the United States bring their specialized skills and expertise to train cadets and manage the CST operation, as well as teach, coach and mentor young men and women working toward entering military service.

- Incentives for Joining
  - ROTC offers potential financial benefits such as full-tuition scholarship, annual book allowances, tax-free stipends of up to $500/month for up to 10 months a year.
  - ROTC teaches decision-making processes, management skills, leadership and discipline that can be used in either military or civilian careers.

- 100th Anniversary for Army ROTC
  - Army ROTC has commissioned over 600,000 Officers since 1916.
  - Army ROTC started with about 35 initial programs in 1916, today it hosts 275 programs with a presence in every state as well as Guam and Puerto Rico.
  - The training and experience gained in ROTC became the foundation for six Chiefs of Staff for the Army, two Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a Supreme Court Justice and other leaders in government, business, entertainment, science and sports.

TACTICS

Content

Content for social media posts will be provided by public affairs interns covering Cadet Summer Training. Content will include the following:

- Photos
  - Preferably action photos that depict aspects of training. Photo's must have caption and if the affiliated university of the cadet is provided it must be tagged.
  - Photo galleries can be created to accompany stories or to provide more insight to the training. (Typically no more than 12 photos per gallery).
  - Occasionally post links to galleries on the smugmug page.
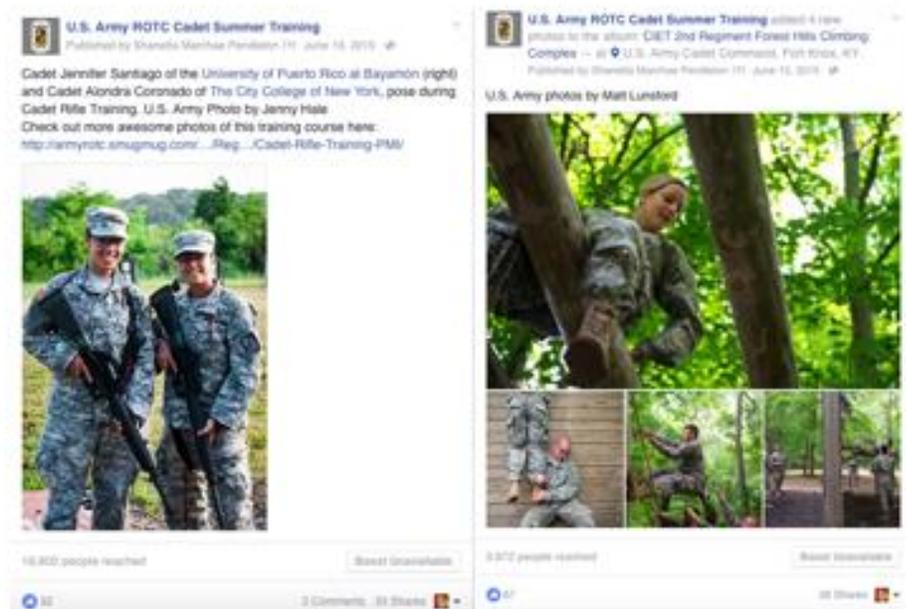
- News Stories
  - Cadet/Cadre Spotlight. Provide a brief overview of the story, typically the lead will suffice, and the link to the article. Always tag the university associated with the cadet
  - CST Events. Including in-processing, cadet training, ceremonies and on-base activities.

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- Videos
  - o Training overview of courses. Links can be posted from YouTube channel.
  - o "What did I learn today?" Cadet interviews. Must include Cadet's name and university.
  - o Live Stream. For official ceremonies such as Family Day, Graduation and End of Camp Commissioning. Recording of the live stream should be uploaded to YouTube.

- Information
  - o Acknowledge all holidays.
  - o Notify the public of dates for all social events hosted by Cadet Command and official ceremonies for CST.
  - o Respond to all inquiries in a timely manner.
  - o Notify public of any changes or updates related to CST.

- Participation
  - Welcome audience to share their best experiences at CST (monitor responses closely).
  - Allow parents to "shout out" their Cadets.

Schedule
Posting schedule is subject to change.
- Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
  - Weekday: one posts per day-part during the first week of CST, increase to two posts per day-part after the first week until the end of training as more content becomes available.
  - Weekend: one post per day-part during the first week of CST, increase to two per day-part after the first week until the end of training.
  - Posts can be scheduled using Facebook and Hootsuite (for Twitter).
  - Post should include content from each section throughout the day (i.e. 0900- photo, 1145- cadet spotlight, 1400- video, 1700- Information) this is contingent on the availability of newsworthy information.
- YouTube
  - At least one video per week will be uploaded by **each** videographers as they become available. Social media team will pull videos from YouTube to highlight on Facebook and Twitter.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Roles and Responsibilities
Public Affairs Interns who are members of the social media team will be responsible for selecting and posting content as well as responding to inquires through the social media platforms. Work of the interns will be managed by the Chief of Public Affairs and the Deputy Public Affairs Officer of Cadet Command.

Rules for Choosing Content
All approved content ready for social media publishing should be emailed to paosocialmedia@gmail.com by the publisher. For example, if a writer has uploaded a story to

futurearmyofficers.com they should notify the social media team through email that the story has been published (a link is acceptable). This also applies to videographers and photographers. We always want to showcase our interns' best work, so photographers are allowed to choose their top 5 photos and include them in the email. **All content MUST be approved by the Deputy Public Affairs Officer PRIOR to sending it to the social media team.**

Online Etiquette

As an employee of the United States Army Cadet Command it is your responsibility to ensure that the content posted online is a positive reflection of the organization and is consistent with the organizations values. This policy applies to all social media use on behalf of the U.S. Army Cadet Command and U.S. Army ROTC Cadet Summer Training. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will be reviewed by management and handled accordingly.

Social media Do's:
- Use common sense and good judgment.
- Proofread posts for any grammatical errors.
- Verify that all information is accurate.
- Be respectful.
- Be sensible.
- Respond to questions in a timely manner (preferably within 24 hours). If you don't know the answers to the question, ASK.

Social media content posted on behalf of the organization must NOT:
- Be abusive, discriminatory, threatening, defamatory, obscene harassing or create a hostile online environment.
- Negatively impact the image of the Army or Army ROTC.
- Disclose any regulated, restricted or classified information, not meant for public consumption.
- Post any pictures, videos or stories that may be viewed as offensive.

Comment Policy and Moderation
- Comments may be removed from the U.S. Army Cadet Command's social media accounts if they:
  - Contain obscene, indecent or profane language.
  - Include threats or defamatory statements.
  - Reflect hate speech directed at race, color, sex, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, age, religion or disability.
  - Contain sensitive or personally identifiable information.
  - Promote or endorse commercial services or products.

Emergency Use
In the event of an emergency, national or local, social media tools should ONLY be utilized by the Chief Public Affairs officer and the Deputy Public Affairs Officer unless otherwise notified.

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Security Requirements and Risk Management
In order to reduce the risks of security threats, access to social media accounts should only be given to personnel responsible for managing the accounts. All technology used to access accounts must have up-to-date anti-virus software. Passwords should be updated after each internship cycle is completed.

Implications & Future Research

The purpose of this research was to explore the use of social media in building and managing relationships and to assess if the Open Government Initiative increased the pressure for military organizations to be more involved on social media in order to facilitate a sense of transparency, participation and collaboration. I also wanted to evaluate if current communications plan books reflect themes of satisfaction, transparency, participation and collaboration. Based off of the research done for this study, although scholars such as Mergel (2012) suggested that government agencies' use of social media was in response to the Open Government Initiative, military officials who have lucrative experience in public affairs and social media management for military organizations disagreed due to the belief that their use of social media as a tool for two-way communication dates back to before the Open Government Initiative was presented. I found that although the Open Government Initiative did not increase the pressure to be more involved on social media, current plan books failed to reflect some of the themes that are imperative to relationship building and are emphasized in the initiative. It is important to note, however, that certain themes, such as participation and collaboration, seemed to overlap by definition, so an alternative definition was suggested for collaboration to clearly separate the two which might have affected the results of this study.

For future research I would suggest that organizations who have a social media plan in place be analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of those current plans and if social media activity reflects the content found in the plan. I think it would also be helpful to complete a comparative analysis of two different social media plans from similar organizations. I do think there needs to be more research on relationship management in military organizations and the use of social

media in military organizations. Hopefully this research can be used as a stepping stone to

facilitate more scholarly research in these areas.

Outside Evaluations

Richard Patterson

I.   Brief discussion of evaluator's credentials (e.g. knowledge and experience of the subject area).
       17 years as a public affairs professional for the US Army. Currently employed as the US Army Cadet Command deputy public affairs officer, command information chief, social media chief, media relations chief and this summer will be the Cadet Summer Training Chief of Public Affairs. Served as the Deputy Chief of Army Public Affairs. Managed social media platforms personally for numerous Army General Officers. Additionally managed teams of both military and civilian PA professionals in running Department level social media programs.

II.   Relationship to the student and subject matter.
       Interviewee and recipient of the Social Media CST 2016 plan.

III.   Evaluation of the topic as appropriate for the creative endeavor.
       The creation of the social media plan for CST 2016 will assist the command in getting its word out in a more timely and accurate manner. Additionally the ground rules established in the plan will assist this year's interns to understand the process for creating, approval and posting of our online social media content.

IV.   Evaluation of the student's approach.
       The student's approach laid out a logical approach to the subject matter. Student conducted good research in the literature review.

V.   Evaluation of the body of the project (social media plan).

       a) Quality. Product is laid out in a logical manner is easy to follow.
       b) Depth of treatment. The social media plan as built for CST 2016 lays out each of the elements required for someone coming into the public affairs office to intern during the summer. It is easy to follow and provides the user a roadmap to be successful in managing the command's social media program for CST 2016.
       c) Coverage. Although three individuals with vast experience in military public affairs were interviewed, I believe the student could use more of their interviews to support or not support her research question. Additionally, use of a survey of public affairs professionals from all the branches of the military and interviewing the social media policy makers at the Army level of public affairs could also enhance this research. It is their guidance/policies that inform what public affairs professionals throughout the Army can/cannot do with social media platforms.

VI.   Evaluation of the student's work as contributing to the field.
The social media plan is a good base of information, detailed enough for our incoming interns to read and understand how the command intends to use our social media platforms to inform our publics. This product will allow the senior public affairs representative to put his personal touches on the plan without creating a solid plan from scratch.

LTC Christopher Belcher

VII.   Brief discussion of evaluator's credentials (e.g. knowledge and experience of the subject area).

I am an Army Public Affairs Officer with 14 years of experience. I have managed multiple social media accounts as part of my job and was responsible for day to day social media operations for two high level military organizations over the last two years. I supervised the planners who developed the social media strategy and campaign for the end of the NATO International Security Assistance Force mission and the beginning of the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan.

VIII.   Relationship to the student and subject matter.

I am currently the Chief of Public Affairs for US Army Cadet Command. My office provides the public affairs support to Cadet Summer Training to include all social media postings. I was the Cadet Summer Training Public Affairs Officer last year and Shanetta was one of my interns responsible for our social media efforts.

IX.   Evaluation of the topic as appropriate for the creative endeavor.

The topic was appropriate for the creative endeavor. Government use of social media to enable a two way conversation is growing. The military in particular is using this as a method especially in situations where the location makes it more feasible as a method to provide information and answer questions from the American public. It also allows the military a global reach rather than a localized reach.

X.   Evaluation of the student's approach.
The students approach to the topic is a valid one. She laid out her assertion and validated it well. Using the interviews and plans provided she developed a project designed to fit the needs of the client (Cadet Summer Training).

XI.   Evaluation of the body of the project (social media plan).

d) Quality

I would rate the quality of the project as high. She was able to provide an excellent guideline for implementing social media for Cadet Summer Training.

e) Depth of treatment
The depth of treatment in the social media plan was excellent. She provided a guideline, talking points, and do's and don'ts for interns who will be posting to social media.

f) Coverage
She covered the requirements for Cadet Summer Training Social media well.

XII. Evaluation of the student's work as contributing to the field.
I think her work is a good initial look at government use of social media. This initial work can provide a good framework to develop further research and aid government agencies as they're developing social media plans in the future. Unfortunately many organizations don't have a well-developed plan for social media engagement and many fail to tie it into their overall communication strategy. This social media plan can be used as an example of how to develop a plan for a specific event, ie Cadet Summer Training, and tie that in to an overall communication strategy that develops the two way communication critical to success as a communicator.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. What is your professional background in social media?
2. Are you aware of what the Open Government Initiative is? Do you feel that the Open Government Initiative has increased the pressure for military organizations to be more involved on social media?
3. What do you feel is the military's overall social media goal? Is the goal of CST the same? If not, explain.
4. Explain the most difficult aspect of managing social media for a military organization.
5. What kind of training do social media managers have before managing social media pages for the military?
6. What posting frequency do you feel is sufficient for social media pages?
7. What benefits have you noticed from using social media in the military?
8. What type of content would you like to see more of on military based social media pages?

Appendix B

Interview Transcriptions

Respondent a

1. What is your professional background in social media?

I've got, I'm just retired after 31 years in the military, 16 of those years I've been a public affairs officer for the U.S. Army. In that capacity, I've been the Chief of Public Affairs for numerous journal officers at the two-star level, both in the deployed setting in Afghanistan and back in Garrison, mainly at fort Bragg NC (15 years). Both in special operations and in conventional forces. I was the proponent director, for the different specialties in the military, we are the ones who develop all of the doctrine, training, education, force packages development like when we develop in our public affairs units, what type of individuals we need in there at what rank structure. So I was the director of proponents for two years for public affairs. And in my last job (active duty) I was deputy chief of public affairs for the U.S. Army. So I've been doing that for 16 years. In my current job, which I've only been in for about two months I am the deputy PAO for the U.S. Army Cadet Command and I'm dual headed as the command information chief which includes social media, newsletters, anything dealing with command and internal information. Social media was not that big when I first came in in the 1990s, but as it came along I did manage mainly Facebook pages and in using YouTube to get our videos out, again for both the deployed setting and back in Garrison. For the deployed setting, it was very very useful in getting information back to family members of things that were going on, obviously with operational security.. always keeping that in the back of your mind. You know we're not going to put a post on Facebook that we are about to go do an operation. But just keeping them up on how things are going with deployment. And then

as the Deputy Chief of public Affairs for the Army, one of the divisions that I supervised was the online social media division for the U.S. Army.

2. Are you aware of what the Open Government Initiative is? Do you feel that the Open Government Initiative has increased the pressure for military organizations to be more involved on social media?

Somewhat. I don't know if its increased it, what I will tell you is it in all the training in public affairs and one of the things I think the military has done very well over the last 10-12 years is we become a lot more open, because one of the adages for public affairs is maximum disclosure minimum delay. There's always a battle within an organization whether military or corporate, in dealing with or communicating with their publics whether its internal (their employees), or external (the American public or their surrounding communities). The constant battle is providing the information out there that they need and should have verses, like in our case, the operational security issues, so yes it would be very nice to be able to put out there.. like if you remember at the very beginning of the Afghan war and even at the very beginning of the Iraq war, back in the early 2000s, we would not announce troop deployments. As it became more routine we did and that was part of keeping the families informed. I think the reason for that was because when we were first going into Afghanistan or Iraq to conduct military operations, we didn't want to broadcast to the enemy that, "hey we're coming after you." When it became more routine, well at that point, they already know we're there because we are fighting now, and it was just a rotation so there was no operational security breach or reasons not to announce that particular units were going. What that allowed us to do once we got to that place in our communications efforts is that we could be more open and it really helped both the communities and the family members know much further out in advance that hey, you know like when I deployed the first time all I could tell my wife is "I'm leaving in the next week and I'm not telling you where I'm going." Um as it became more routine, six months out I knew and I could start preparing my wife and kids, "hey daddy's gonna be gone for the next year." Um so from a public affairs aspect, the Open Government Initiative is not anything new because we approach everything maximum disclosure minimum delay, but always keeping that operational security mindset in there. Where I think we've gotten better, to wrap that back up, when we first went to war, you know there's always pressure from the intelligence people and all the other staff sections not to put anything out, and from the public affairs we are arguing, "no, there's nothing classified about this, there's nothing sensitive about this, the American people have a right to know." So then there is the constant push back and forth between the two on what can be released. We have the same arguments with lawyers all the time and I'll give you an example. When a soldier is charged with a crime, the lawyers don't want us to put out the charge sheet, the charge sheet is a public document, so yes the charge sheet can go out, now its got to be redacted to protect people's privacy so we don't violate the Privacy Act of 1974. So there's always that give and take, and from the Public Affairs aspect, we have to protect the privacy of individuals, the health insurance affordability privacy act or protected health information, but we also need to and continue to push or commands to be moral and to provide as much information to the public as we can. (11:41)

3. What do you feel is the military's overall social media goal? Is the goal of CST the same? If not, explain.

The social media goal is probably the goal of everything we do, I mean we are broken down, there is three pillars, there is media operations, community engagement and command information. And then they talk about internal and external information and I am a firm believer that there is no such thing as internal only information anymore, you can't just talk to just your soldiers because soldiers are going to get out there on social media or email. The overall goal of any of those, whether it's a community engagement event or putting out a newsletter, like we put out a newsletter every quarter called leaders for life, whether it's a commanding general going out to talk to the community, or whether it's a media engagement we have, it's the same thing. Social media is the platform or a tool for us to be able to get our message out and to connect with whatever publics that we are trying to reach. And now that has been a dynamic shift within the army over the last two to three years. We used to talk about our audience, who is our target audience that we want to reach? We have had a lexicon change in that that we call them publics now and there is a reason for that, when you're talking about audiences that engrains a one-way conversation, you have an audience out there watching a movie and they're watching the movie, where as if you have a public discussion or a discussion with your publics, its two-way communication. And that's another thing that social media allows you to do very quickly, have a two-way conversation that you can't do particularly with a media interview. Once you do the interview, the reporter puts it on air or put its in the newspaper or a magazine, there's no way to engage in two-way communication, so you don't know if your messages or what you are trying to put out to the American people or your surrounding communities is actually getting to them. Yeah you saw it in the newspaper but you don't know how many people have read it or what their attitudes are towards what you're putting out. With social media, it allows that two-way conversation. We can post, a prime example or deputy commanding general was just promoted to brigadier general he got his first star. We posted a couple of good photos of him out on our Facebook page, 67, 000 likes, that tells me 67,000 people have looked at that photo and liked it. We've got tons and tons of comments a lot of them congratulatory to him. So that tells me that that was a successful campaign because wanted to get out there that hey this is a great thing for this officer, great thing for his family, great thing for the command. Whereas if we would've just put that in the post newspaper, I couldn't tell you how many people we've reached. It doesn't allow the public to comment and say those thing to the general, whereas with social media it does allow us to do that, it really opens up that two-way communication without sitting down and doing a formal type meeting (15:12).

I would say yes it is, and its looking at who are your publics that you're trying to reach, so for CST, its reaching out to the cadets that are here, its reaching out to their families and their loved ones, its reaching out to their local communities where they live and where they go to school at. So if I post something about a soldier form Western Illinois University, which is where I went to school at many many years ago, I would tag the Western Illinois Facebook page or Twitter page to then expand. And that's another great thing about social media vs. traditional media is if I do an interview with a local paper,

that's as far as its going to go, the AP might pick it up if it's a really big story, but typically that's only with bad news. But with social media, you are able to reach out and touch numerous publics just by using particular keywords or tags to where you can expand your reach as far as your imagination can go really. So yeah my goal is the same thing. So that we get the goal out there and have that conversation.

4. Explain the most difficult aspect of managing social media for a military organization.

You see this across Facebook and some of the other social media platforms, but typically on Facebook. Soldiers posting inappropriate material, doing stupid things, or posting things that would violate operational security. I mean you wouldn't post in there, hey I'm getting ready to deploy tomorrow if we were going somewhere other in the world were everybody doesn't know we're at right now, so that's not something you would want to put out there ahead of time. That's something that we're dealing with and that's probably when Facebook really took off and twitter took off and a lot of the commands embraced them. You see unit pages up everywhere, the younger commanders embraced it, what you see is one of my frustrations in dealing with the senior people now this has again changed in recent years, but when this all first started you know really happening here 10 years ago or so, you saw senior commanders not embracing it at all. They did not want a Facebook page, they didn't want to engage. They would get very upset when a soldier would post something that they didn't think was appropriate. The challenge is how do you govern that? We have Army regulations for just about everything, there is actually a public affairs regulation. Some of them are punitive, some of them are just instructional rules but there is no punishment if you don't it just provides you a guide on how to do something. One of the struggles that we were having, both at the army level and at the department of defense level was creating a policy or regulation that would govern social media. Can you then govern, we are still wrestling with this, can you govern a soldier when he is off duty on his own personal Facebook or twitter account not associated with the military at all and he puts something out there that you think is inappropriate, can you then go after the individual for the inappropriateness of that. One of the things you saw if you've been reading the news here recently, this is an air force example, but the two instructor pilots down in Texas that were relieved of their instructor pilot duties because of something they posted out there on twitter dealing with drugs, and it was done as a joke, but it got them relieved. And now the air force has had to back off of that because a judge has said, "no you can not punish them for that, it's called free speech." They weren't doing it on behalf of the air force and they weren't doing it on an official air force twitter page, they were doing it on their personal page on their off time. That is probably the biggest challenge we have, providing enough guidance to our young soldiers on what is appropriate what is not appropriate and then making sure the commands don't overreact when the soldier does do something stupid. Now there are appropriate times, like two years ago three years ago where there were the Wisconsin National Guard soldiers that where doing the rehearsals for the funerals so they had the flag draped coffin and they were practicing how to do a formal military funeral and that went all around the country and made national news because these young soldiers were joking around around the coffin and doing funny poses and that offended a lot of people, mainly veterans and people on active duty. But that became a huge national story because one soldier decided

to post that on their personal Facebook page, and how do you regulate that. Now, they could go after them because they were on duty, they were in uniform and they were doing things absolutely inappropriate. Now the punishment wasn't real severe but that's the danger in social media. (21:37).

5. What kind of training do social media managers have before managing social media pages for the military?

Yes, there is now an actual requirement within the united states army that anybody who is managing a social media or external facing webpage account, an official one, there is mandatory training that is done online that they have to go through, and you have to do it annually. And its pretty much the do's and don'ts of what's appropriate and what's not appropriate, its not very detailed and its not technical such as how do you post things, how do you get a boost for your post, that's not a part of that formal training. But this takes about 15 to 20 minutes to do for anybody who is managing one of those pages. On top of that, the online social media division from the Army public affairs, they post a social media handbook that gives the do's and don'ts, talks about what to do if there is an imposter page out there for your boss, its actually a very good handbook. Matter fact the other three services (the Navy, Air force and Marines) took the Army's handbook and they're adopting it for their use. Its not formalized training but it's a very good handbook and is constantly updated by the Chief of Public Affairs. And about every other month we get an email from the Chief of Public Affairs that the online social media puts together and it gives some good tips on how to do different things. What I am going to do for this summer, I have actually expanded the time that the interns need to come here by several days before the cadets show up. I'm bringing in a couple of NCOs that are trained in journalism from a reserve unit and we are going to do a full week of training versus that two days. And the other thing I'm looking at is bringing out two actual professional instructors from the Defense Information School at Fort Meade that will give classes and then work with the interns not only for social media but for journalism, how to properly write a cutline, the proper ways to take photos, to kind of work with them on the front end. And what I'm going to do is bout a month later, bring them back to again work with them to see where you are with what I taught you, are you improving? Can we take it to the next level? That's my intent to do that. And then at the Defense Information School where all public affairs soldiers, officers from ALL services, they're incorporating social media much more into all of their courses. So when a soldier goes through their advance individual training to learn to become say a photojournalist, they're getting a big block on how to conduct social media, same with the PAO and broadcasters. And the NCOs go back through what is called advance NCO course or the basic NCO course, basically when you make E6 or E7 in the Army, you have to go back to your NCO academy. Part of that training that they have to go through, there is a big chunk in there about social media. That's just for public affairs. For the rest of the army, they don't get anything.

6. What posting frequency do you feel is sufficient for social media pages?

My goal is there ought to be a minimum of several posts a day. And the reason why I say that is with having both the basic and advance course here, we are going to have 20

different regiments here at any given time. There is enough going on with summer training that we should be doing at least a post a day if not more.

7. What benefits have you noticed from using social media in the military? Answered in question three.

8. What type of content would you like to see more of on military based social media pages?

I think you have to look at the publics, your trying to tell the cadets story and reach out to the family members and possibly other university students who might want to join the army, so I think if you show a bunch of guys and gals in a classroom getting "death by PowerPoint presentation" so what? When you are showing someone repelling off of a 30 foot tires those action type things I think are a lot more compelling. As far as other little short stories such as something really cool happens to a cadet that day, that would be something for twitter. It really depends on the particular situation on which platform you want to use and figuring out I think probably the biggest mistake folks make is that they just throw everything on Facebook or twitter, and there is no forethought as to who you are trying to reach and why, and if you have that forethought, you put a plan together that says, here's my target publics and here's the stuff I want to get out to them. Then you can gear or post towards that and you would have a more chance of success.

Respondent b

1. What is your professional background in social media?

I've been in and out of public affairs both in the private and public sector since 1982, I have a degree in Journalism and Public Relations from the University of Georgia, 1976. I'm a graduate of the department of defense public affairs officer course. Three years with the 24th infantry division, 3 years with the supreme headquarters allied powers reserve (Europe?) as a public affairs officer, 5 years at the Army recruiting command as a staff officer in their marketing and advertising department along with two years and the last half of that as the battalion commander in the touring unit and then retired and I had a number of public affairs positions. In both Kentucky and D.C. I was recalled to active duty in 2006 as a public affairs staff officer for headquarters department of the army public affairs office, I served 3 years here and then I became a civil servant in public affairs in 2009, during that time I, probably around 2012, I got on social media specifically twitter as part of my work to amplify the army's message under the moniker @armyspokesman and I use that extensively during the period of 2012-2014 until I left, and then I was an employee at the U.S. Army Cadet Command where I oversaw and then maintained and executed during cadet summer training the work of the CST interns for their public affairs office.

2. Are you aware of what the Open Government Initiative is? Do you feel that the Open Government Initiative has increased the pressure for military organizations to be more involved on social media?

In principle, yes, I can't site a chapter or verse, but I've known for a long time the government has been leaning towards openness, which has long been a principle of journalism and public relations theory that government should be open and forthright and forthcoming with information to the news media and the general public. I'm aware of these initiatives and I'm a firm believer in them.

I would say yes, with the advent of social media there have been opportunities for the government to communicate not only with journalists… and this is where I am most familiar with the twitter as @armyspokesman, a large number of reporters did follow me on twitter, many of them contact me via twitter and quoted me from tweets, but we also have seen an opening of opportunities for government communicators to communicate to a much larger audience. I know that's certainly something that we did with cadet command, I would say, and I don't know if we did any audience surveys, well we didn't when I was there, but our audience consisted of these groups, internal audience (cadets and cadre), parents, veterans, and prospects. We briefed you that one of the goals of CST was recruiting and retention and as such it was my desire to portray the activities that were taking place at CST in a positive light in order that prospects would seek out more information on army ROTC and that people who were currently in the program would be more inclined to stay. And so yes, I see social media as an important communications tool for government, for information and at least with the army for recruiting and retention.

3. What do you feel is the military's overall social media goal? Is the goal of CST the same? If not, explain.

I would say that based on my experience that its information sharing to provide a better understanding of the Army's roles and missions, the people in the army and the programs we have in order to generate positive support for the army and it's policies and programs.

I do, its certainly much more narrow in that the CST public affairs social media activities, well the audience was narrower first of all, and our messages as a result were also much narrower for example we used social media in some affect to inform families of end of camp ceremonies, we used it to announce the live streaming of graduation ceremonies and end of camp commissioning and those are the kinds of things that we will not be doing here at this level at the headquarters of the department of the army . we do our own social media just around the corner here, but all those principles apply.

4. Explain the most difficult aspect of managing social media for a military organization.

In the defense information officer school one of the things that we take with us as students of the public affairs officer course are the principles of what we call SAPP security, accuracy, policy and propriety, and those are all things that are key challenges for any agency whether its military or not to control. In exchange for the quickness, reach and engagement of social media there is *some* giving up of those things. Now you or one as the manage of the page, when you are sending out the message you control those things but what you lose is control of the feedback that you get. And that might not

always be accurate, complementary or proper and classification guidelines don't always come up in Army ROTC CST, but certainly at the army and department of defense level, those kinds of things are concerns as well.

5. What kind of training do social media managers have before managing social media pages for the military?

    I mentioned the public affairs officer course in fort mead Maryland as part of the defense information school, there is a block of instruction or core curriculum for social media, I don't know how long it is, it's a two month course overall for everything that goes into a public affairs officers training but I don't know how long social media is. The good news these days is that a lot of people that come into that training already have their sleeves rolled up in their fingernails dirty with the use of social media already.

6. What posting frequency do you feel is sufficient for social media pages?

    Well you my recall that when I was in CST I directed that we start off at one post per day part and then as we spiked in terms of the maximum number of cadets present and the corresponding increase in the number of activities, I said well we will increase from their and then we will go back to one per day part. And a lot of it, as you'll remember was very repetitive, it was like a groundhog day. But in the army we don't have that, we have a number of lines of efforts throughout the Army, there's the training part, and our training is a very set piece, like CST but lets take airborne training for example there's a new airborne class that starts every week and it's a three week long course and the first week is called ground week and you learn the principles of military parachuting and how to make a proper landing and how to exit and aircraft, and then the second week is what's called tower week and you actually do some simulated jumps out of a 34ft tower and later on in the week you jump form a 250ft tower to give you that sensation of flight. And the first one is on a guide wire and the second one is on a free fall. And the third week is jump week and the qualification for your jump week its five jumps. So at jump school its much like CST its repetitive of those three phases. But there is the training aspect and whether its airborne, ranger, weapons or language training or CST. Or the secretary army designee was interviewed by the center of armed services committee today on his nomination to be the secretary of the army. ON the other end of the spectrum those very formal senior high level activities in the army .. so it runs a spectrum. I don't know what their frequencies are but its probably at least one post per day part, if not more. And then others as needed. (16:05)

7. What benefits have you noticed from using social media in the military?

    I was skeptical at first, I thought that twitter was something for kids and movie stars, but my boss, who was the director of media relations, he was a visionary he worked for General Odierno for about 4 years, at one point of time in his tenure probably 2011 or 2012 he said okay I want all of you to get a twitter account and we all kind of rolled our eyes. And he said no I'm serious I want you to do this it's a new thing and I want you to tweet three times a day and I want you to build your followers and we'll see how it goes.

He said, "now it's a new thing, but I want you to think, years ago the telephone was a new thing, the fax was a new thing, email was a new thing and we saw what happened there so lets get on board and see what happens, we'll try to be the vanguard of this operation." Well some weeks past and I thought you know maybe I'll try too so I signed into @armyspokesman and I added my twitter handle to my signature block on my email so after some interaction with reporters, which I had regularly, they would start to follow me and then all of those followers would just build and it came to past that I was quoted on twitter based on what I had tweeted. I was a skeptic but I cam to believe that being on twitter was like having my own AP wire machine in my back pocket. And for my purposes I tailored it to defense issues so I could use it as an information source, I could read the twitter feed and it made me a better public affairs officer. I could tell by leadership what reporters and opinion leaders where saying if not at that moment that day.. and twitter could serve or has served as a medium among which news breaks, and so during the course of the day I would be in my office in the media relations department and I would have my meetings and typically MSNBC or CNN were on the TV in my office but I also had my twitter feed on so I kept one eye on the TV and the other on twitter, so it was a valuable resource for me as an engaged PAO.

8. What type of content would you like to see more of on military based social media pages?

    I think we do a pretty good job as it is, I think the department of defense has a good program and I think the army's social media department has a good calendar and balance. That's a big question for a big tent. Some units do it very well and are engaged, and some units aren't. In some ways it's the wild west, and there's trolls and naysayers and people with ulterior motives but a good PAO will see all that and say okay we need to engage and we need to take the risks and umm those are calculated risks and we're going to do our best.

Respondent c

1. What is your professional background in social media?

    I've been a public affairs officer for 14 years, I've done that from garrison to deployed in Iraq Afghanistan both as a lower level PAO and the as a deputy in my last deployment as the Deputy Director of the NATO headquarters resolute support. As part of those duties I started initially as the deputy public affairs officer for garrison working on webpages and so helping approve those for posting and reviewing them, and then after my first Afghanistan deployment I became one of the admins for the recruiting commands Facebook page which was newly formed. Then when I was the Deputy Director for Resolute support I was also one of the administrators for the commands Facebook page and I am currently and administrator for all of Cadet commands social media, which include Facebook, twitter and flicker and YouTube as our primary social media outlets. Social media since 2009

2. Are you aware of what the Open Government Initiative is? Do you feel that the Open Government Initiative has increased the pressure for military organizations to be more involved on social media?

Yes, an initiative that makes the government more transparent with communication with the American public in particular but the global public also.

I don't think its increase the pressure of the military organizations to be more involved in it because the military, and this is my perspective, seemed to be one of the early adopters of social media when it first started become popular as a way to be able to communicate with the publics, especially to do two way communication where you were getting feedback and it wasn't just the old model of public relations of pushing out a press release and never getting any feedback.

3. What do you feel is the military's overall social media goal? Is the goal of CST the same? If not, explain.

The overall goal is to be able to communicate what we do. Especially with recruiting command, cadet command and organizations that are part of the accessions model for the army of letting people know what opportunities exist immediately in the military and combatting those rumors out there that might not necessarily contain truth on what its like to be a soldier in the military, or serving over seas in a combat environment.

I think for CST, based on our publics we have a couple different goals, one of our goals is to keep the family members of the cadets who are in the training kind of in touch with the cadets so they can see what the cadets are doing and understand what these future leaders go through in the process of becoming a 2nd lieutenant and then we're also reaching those cadets who have not come to CST yet so they are seeing what their peers in earlier positions are going through and it gives them a chance to better prepare themselves for their turn for CST, and also to reach those prospects out their that we want to kind of attract to our program, where they see quality college students going through this program and training and becoming 2nd lieutenants.

4. Explain the most difficult aspect of managing social media for a military organization.

I think for a lot of military organizations, the most difficult aspect is deciding what social media platforms to be on and not overextending yourself. So like this office has three people, so we can be on a lot more social media platforms, but can we really manage them along with our other day to day activities such as media relations, command information, you know putting out a quarterly newsletter, prepping the CG for media engagements so not committing yourself to social media platforms that aren't sustainable in the long run, I think is the biggest challenge. And having a plan, because I think a lot of organizations don't actually come up with a plan of what they're going to do over a time period and its kind of a hit and miss, so they're not building a consistent rhythm of posting and getting stuff out there that their publics can go "okay I know every Thursday there's gonna be a throwback Thursday that talks about the history of Army ROTC"

5. What kind of training do social media managers have before managing social media pages for the military?

But now they have the security training that all social media managers have got to go through which is very basic, it just talks about what you should and shouldn't post on social media. Other than that its really up to the organizations to look for opportunities to get informed on social media training so that your managers actually understand the social media environment better than they would if they were just trying to figure it out. That's really for older guys like me who haven't been on social media their entire life. I think it's a bit more intuitive for say my 22-year-old daughter who probably barely remembers not being on social media.

6. What posting frequency do you feel is sufficient for social media pages?

Just based on my experience, if your audience is receptive to it, between 3 to 5 during a high level event is efficient and it'll attract people, you wont push too many away, but in the long run probably 1 to 3 is ideal because you get information and postings out there and that's on any of the platforms like 1 to 3 posts on Facebook, but you can also do others stuff, like you're doing periscope for an example, so people can touch different aspects, get different information and you're not kind of overwhelming them all the time.

7. What benefits have you noticed from using social media in the military?

I think it gives us a bigger reach, and for ROTC its important because I'm not just reaching the communities around Fort Knox, I'm reaching a global audience and we get people on our Facebook page who send us messages form Afghanistan, Pakistan and Africa, so we're hitting the global audience out there but it also gives us a better ability to have a two-way conversation with those publics. So its not just us pushing out a press release or doing a media interview or getting only our point of view out there, we're getting information back, and with our 100th anniversary one of the things we're getting... we asked former cadets to send us historical photos and we've actually been getting good photos of these different people and organizations of events that took place 30 years ago. Which helps us build our two-way communication with them because its stuff they're interested in. It just a way to connect better with the American public and our global publics.

8. What type of content would you like to see more of on military based social media pages?

I like action stuff a lot like photos and videos with minimal wording. So less two or a page and a half stories posted as part of your content and more of a short blurb of what's going on with a photo or a short blurb in the video that lets you get out there what is the action that's going on and provide some context.