



PRESS RELEASE

06.21.2012

AFP launches “the e-diplomacy hub” An innovative tool for exploring the world of digital diplomacy

THE “HUB” VISUALIZES, ANALYZES AND MEASURES THE PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE OF DIPLOMATIC ACTORS ON TWITTER, ACROSS THE GLOBE AND IN REAL-TIME

The presence and power of social networks to shape events emerged clearly during the first phase of the Arab Spring, and will continue to evolve as a tool for strategic diplomacy. Both states and civil society – sometimes in opposition, sometimes in cooperation – are now using these powerful tools to further foreign policy goals and influence public opinion. The e-diplomacy hub opens a real-time window onto this world, and allows the user to interact with it as well.

Driving the app is a database stocked with more than 4,000 individually-validated accounts spread across 120 countries, ranging from heads of state and ministers to experts, activists and politically-motivated hackers. Algorithms designed by AFP measure levels of influence for both states and individuals, and calculate which issues – represented by “hashtags” – are dominating the global conversation among digital diplomats. Users can customize the “hub” to highlight the e-diplomatic activities of their home country, or any nation of their choosing.

The e-diplomacy hub is composed of half-a-dozen screens, or chapters. A map “dashboard” shows the e-diplomatic network of states and international organizations, as well as the tweet “dialogue” between states. It also identifies hot diplomatic issues by displaying the five hashtags most cited by all accounts within the database, and the volume of tweets-per-country for each hashtag.

Two screens rank countries and individuals along a scale of e-diplomatic influence, taking into account a basket of indicators – updated constantly – including the number of followers, the volume of retweets and the frequency with which actors respond to messages. These pages show real-time feeds and Twitter profiles for each account in the database. “Timeline” options open up graphs showing influence over time, measured in weeks or months.

A “hot spots” screen compares how the diplomatic actors from different countries or organizations are talking about the same issue, while a “links” screen shows who is following whom. Finally, a “conflicts” page displays background information and AFP photos related to conflicts in the world involving illegal armed groups. A special Twitter feed is composed of the tweets from these groups, as well as a basket of experts on terrorism. AFP will also generate analyses written by its correspondents based on the use of the “hub”, as well as an editorial package on the subject of digital diplomacy.

[To look at e-diplomacy](#)

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