Intelligence Communication in the Digital Era: Transforming Security, Defence and Business. Edited by Rubén Arcos and Randolph H. Pherson. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

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Recommended Citation

Intelligence Communication in the Digital Era: Transforming Security, Defence and Business. **Edited by Rubén Arcos and Randolph H. Pherson. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. ISBN 978-1-137-52378-5. Notes. Sources Cited. Index. Pp. vi, 114. $67.50.**

In their new co-edited book, Rubén Arcos and Randolph H. Pherson explore the complexities of intelligence communication in a digital era. The team of contributing authors have ranging expertise centered on intelligence analysis and communication. In particular the authors have backgrounds specific to strategic communications, competitive intelligence, business analytics, gaming, simulations, critical thinking, structured analytical techniques, and experiential learning. This puts the contributors in a prime position to present a book on how best to communicate not only intelligence, but information in general, making full use of the digital technologies available. In their presentation, the authors are mindful of different learning styles present within the digital era. Taking this into consideration, they help guide readers to become better communicators of intelligence.

This book is an excellent addition to the Intelligence Studies, Communication, and eLearning literature. Across the six chapters the authors discuss how information is best presented using digital platforms. When devising presentation strategies the authors consider the technology available, like that of multimedia assets, infographics, video, audio, and hyperlinks, as well as consumer learning style. Technology and learning style go hand-in-hand as consumers should not be overwhelmed by technology in use, but instead actively engaged, to allow for maximum learning and information retention. While the authors discuss communication strategies within the intelligence community, this book is relevant for anyone communicating information using digital technology, including individuals in the business world, and also those working in online training and education.

The book touches on a number of different themes, including the changing nature of the communications environment, presentation skills, the delivery of impactful intelligence, the communication of risk, group collaboration, and general producer/consumer relations. The underlying message is the need for information producers to more effectively present information to stakeholders and end-users, something which is further elaborated on in the final chapter. In chapter six, the author discusses the challenges intelligence analysts face specific to navigating the political environment and understanding stakeholder needs, while at the same time presenting sound analytical products. Intelligence analysts pride themselves on delivering unbiased assessments, however the book sends a message that the consumers of intelligence "rarely view intelligence products as neutral" (94). With this being the case, the book presents an overview of how information can be communicated in a persuasive, yet ethical, manner that helps make it "stick" in the minds of consumers.

The authors put the themes of the book into context by first discussing the changing nature of information and communication technologies. They explain how this new generation of users is better equipped to understand information in a digital format. Due to the vast amount of data available, a key challenge stems from determining how best to present this information in a non-overwhelming manner. Chapter one furthers this idea by examining how multimedia assets can be integrated into reports delivered to government decision-makers. The inclusion of media elements allows for a more interactive presentation where the end-user can dynamically interact with the intelligence itself, skimming through information largely known, and clicking on hyperlinks, videos, and etc. to obtain additional information where gaps exist. Rubén Arcos argues the current digital environment must be taken into consideration when presenting intelligence to consumers. In particular the designers of intelligence information need to consider the overall design of the presentation, including the interactive elements a user may experience. The focus must move beyond the intelligence itself to also include how end-users process the information presented. In this chapter the author presents the prospect of analysts creating a multimedia report, where the report itself is interactive, allowing the user to click through various areas to quickly find information. The goal is not to overwhelm the consumer with flashy infographics, but to ensure the information is conveyed in a tangible and efficient manner.

The importance of how information is presented is further explained in chapter two where Mary O'Sullivan walks the reader through the way digital information is consumed by stakeholders. By considering the learning of the end-user, an intelligence producer can present data in a more effective manner. Care is given to the way information is presented on the screen, including the formatting of the text as well as the maps, videos, photos, audio, and animations used. Word choices and subheadings are also discussed as these elements can make or break how a piece of data, or how the presentation of that information, is received. The author provides insight on the different kinds of readers, so analysts are better able to accommodate each learning style to ensure the information presented is not lost on the reader. Here, the theme of understanding how to navigate within one's environment comes to light as the author explains how information is meant to persuade one's audience.

The way information is presented is further discussed within chapters three and five. In chapter three John Pyrik focuses on the impact of cognition specific to risk communication, and also includes a discussion of the engagement of emotion and reason within threat communications. Like chapter two, chapter five focuses on knowing your audience, and again demonstrates the importance of taking different learning and action styles of key decision-makers into consideration when presenting information. Cognition and other factors play an important role in information retention, something important to consider when discussing communication and presentation strategies. Chapter four moves away from the discussion on how information can be best presented, and instead looks at how collaboration can

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effectively take place in a digital environment. This is discussed specific to the development of an analytical product within the intelligence community, however the collaborative framework presented is applicable to groups outside of the intelligence arena.

In sum, Rubén Arcos and Randolph H. Pherson have put together a successful book that provides insight on effective digital communication strategies. The concepts covered would be beneficial to anyone working within the intelligence community, in addition to people who regularly present information to end-users in a digital format. Individuals working within eLearning in particular would find chapter two insightful as it relates to lesson development and design in an online environment. Overall this book provides much needed insight on communication and collaboration strategies within a digital environment.

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