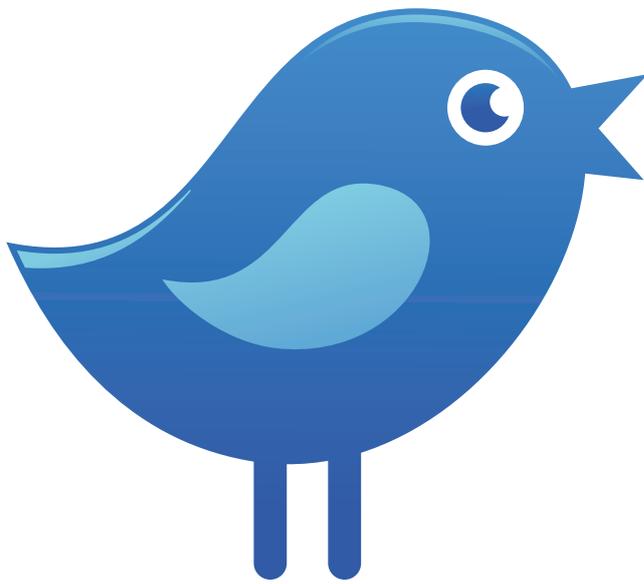




**SOCIAL MEDIA IN
COMMUNICATION,
GOVERNANCE AND
SECURITY: INSIGHTS
FROM LESSONS
LEARNED**



Event Report
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Centre of Excellence
for National Security

Event Report

SOCIAL MEDIA IN COMMUNICATION, GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY: INSIGHTS FROM LESSONS LEARNED

Report on the workshop organised by:

Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS)
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

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The workshop adheres to a variation of the Chatham House Rule. Accordingly, beyond the speakers and presenters cited, no other attributions have been included in this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Keynote Address: Social Media in Communication, Governance and Security: What Should we be Focusing on?

David Epstein, Vice President of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, Optus, Australia, argued that while social media had brought significant changes to the speed and reach of message dissemination, the phenomena should be understood simply as the latest development in the ongoing evolution of corporate communications in the public sphere. He opined that while social media had challenged the dominance of mass media, it would not necessarily replace it. He argued that when dealing with the changes brought about by social media, more pragmatism and less hysteria was required.

Panel 1: The New Media Landscape: Existing Trends and Foreseeable Futures

The opening panel of the workshop started with a presentation by Yahoo Singapore's Editor-in-Chief, Marc Lourdes, who spoke on the evolving media landscape and the ways in which Yahoo had carved out a niche by embracing contemporary strategies while respecting traditionally rigorous editorial practice. Patrick Nathan, Vice President, Corporate Information and Communication, SMRT, spoke on the array of communication techniques employed to deal with crises. While social media was deemed crucial in terms of creative engagement and broad transmission, Nathan stressed that face-to-face dialogue was still the most effective way of maintaining public trust and confidence.

Panel 2: Insights to Navigate the New Media Landscape

The panellists discussed novel communication strategies for the online realm that included opinion-shaping, positive message framing and story-telling. The first presenter, Bertha Hanson, Consulting Editor, The Middle Ground, explained how internet silos, noticeable in

online communities, were impairing constructive debates online. This occurred when a single/particular view was advocated and amplified at the expense of alternative views. She argued that readers needed to distinguish between opinions and fact so that they can be better-informed, and suggested that some 'citizen journalists' and bloggers needed to adopt principles of journalism to ensure credibility. The second panellist, Wu Jie Zhen, Executive Director, The Hidden Good, discussed the rationale for focussing on positivity when crafting messages. She demonstrated how this was done through four video clips. She argued that positive messages could negate the negativity/cynicism that was observable in online discourse. The third presenter, Meera Jane Navaratnam, Digital Strategy Consultant, Accenture, argued that the elements of a good story included: engaging/relatable storyline, emotional pull, simplicity of language, easy to recall, and contagious. These were central in getting people's attention and influencing them.

Panel 3: Governance

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

Managing Full Spectrum Communications: Experience from the Cross-government Space

Emily Hands, Head of National Security Communications, PMO, UK, said that full spectrum communications had become the preferred approach of the British government in recent years. Deployment of full spectrum communications not only entailed using the entire range of government capabilities to make positive things happen domestically, but also involved reacting to external issues that were sometimes negative. The full spectrum approach included media handling, marketing, advertising, digital communications and specialist outreach. Hands also discussed the national security communication framework that involved: (a) explaining; (b) reassuring; (c) prompting; (d) amplifying; (e) delivering; and (f) influencing. She argued that communications while helpful in explaining government policies, could not replace the formulation of good policies.

LECTURES

Dinesh Vasu Dash, Director (Information), Information Directorate, MINDEF, discussed the importance of strategic communications to MINDEF. He said that as Singapore had a citizen army, MINDEF and the SAF's relationship with Singaporeans was very important. The new media landscape posed several challenges that could undermine public trust such as politicisation of policies and issues; challenges to official narratives stemming from overconfidence/lack of information; and spread of misinformation/rumours. As such, MINDEF's engagement with the public was crucial in maintaining and enhancing trust. He also discussed how MINDEF viewed strategic communications as well as its efforts to deal with misinformation online. Bilveer Singh, Associate Professor, National University of Singapore and Adjunct Senior Fellow, CENS, discussed the use of social media by some activists and scholars to recast certain events in Singapore's history (e.g. Operation Coldstore in 1963). He argued that there was a need to set the record straight, and suggested that releasing historical documents related to the event(s) was a good starting point.

Panel 4: Dealing with Information and Misinformation on Social Media

Keshav S. Dhakad, Regional Director, IP & Digital Crimes Unit (DCU), Microsoft Asia, spoke about Microsoft's strategy to make an individual's online experience safer. He shared that Microsoft was an ardent advocate of online safety, and detailed how its PhotoDNA technology had been used to track online child predators. The second speaker, Ashwin Reddy, CEO, Fiords and former Chief Social Media Strategy Officer, Kantar Group (India), discussed the use of bots on social media networks to misinform, block information,

and provide false information to data collectors. The third speaker, Kristina Lerman, Project Leader, Information Sciences Institute, University of Southern California, discussed the ease at which emotions could spread between individuals on online social networks, which had implications for sentiment analysis. The final speaker, Ponnurangam Kumaraguru, Associate Professor, Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, India, shared his experiences in dealing with misinformation on social media, and how it led to the development of TweetCred, a plug-in to mitigate the spread of misinformation.

Panel 5: Social Media in Analysis and Investigation

Panel 5 focused on Singapore-based examples of how social media and the exponential growth of digital communications have been exploited by criminals. Alexis Loh, honours student, NUS, presented on dating apps that were being used to entice, ensnare and exploit victims. Date rape and child grooming were the two most common sexual offences perpetrated via dating apps. Yee Zhi Wei, final year psychology student, NTU, discussed online love scams, which according to statistics, had resulted in losses amounting to approximately S\$8.8M. The profile of typical scammers and their victims was also discussed. Both presenters recommended that more public education campaigns were needed to raise awareness of the risks posed by sex offenders and scammers. These findings originated from projects carried out by the students for the Police Psychological Services Division under the supervision of Deputy Director Dr Majeed Khader. The final speaker, Teo Wee Meng, Head Technology Crime Investigation Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, presented on how the Singapore Police Force, used social media to track and arrest "The Messiah", a self-professed member of Anonymous.

WELCOME REMARKS

Welcome Remarks

Shashi Jayakumar, Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore

Shashi Jayakumar, Head of the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) opened the workshop by warmly welcoming speakers and participants. He briefly outlined the work conducted by CENS, which is one of the five centres in the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore. CENS itself has four component research programmes, including radicalisation, homeland defence, cybersecurity, and social resilience. A key part of the Centre's function is to inform the thinking of local government agencies, and through workshops prompt critical thinking on what

lessons can be drawn from global best practices and what can be adapted for Singapore's needs.

Jayakumar discussed the influence of social media in the domains of communication, governance and security in contemporary affairs as well as the impact on how practitioners operate. New and innovative ways of engaging people have been developed to cut through the clutter in the online environment, and interactions between governments and citizens have, in some ways, become more personal. In the security domain, social media platforms have become rich sources of data and information for detecting crimes and national security threats as well as preventing incidences from occurring. Jayakumar identified some of the related challenges when using social media data such as obtaining relevant data quickly and preventing contamination of data from social bots.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Social Media in Communication, Governance and Security: What Should we be Focusing on?

David Epstein, Vice President of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, Optus, Australia

David Epstein began his address by reflecting on the interactive website launched by the Clinton Administration in 1997, which was considered unique at the time. Given that this initiative was introduced almost 20 years ago, Epstein found it curious that many still regarded social media as novel.

Social media is often misperceived as distinct from traditional forms of mass communication, but should instead be described simply as a development that is predominantly characterised by a many-to-many framework, as opposed to the traditional one-to-many model. Epstein believed that social media would not replace traditional media structures, and that this was key in determining how best to manage it more effectively.

Epstein observed that some entities were understandably cautious of new media as it creates unrestricted communication flows. This, ultimately, results in a loss of control of the generation and dissemination of messages. Yet, developments in media and communication platforms are not new. National newspapers, telephony, radio and television broadcasting were regarded as revolutionary not too long ago. Social media can therefore be regarded as a turbo-charged version of earlier phenomena in changing social dialogue.

With regard to improving messages, Epstein observed that participants in the public sphere can either contribute or disrupt the delivery of messages through social media. This underscores the importance for both governments and businesses to present well-conceived narratives grounded in ethical values. The challenge

is to negotiate the blurred line between effective inclusion and manipulation/propaganda. Epstein argued that the substance of a message is more important than spectacle, and that social media campaigns must strive to be authentic, personal, and dynamic in order to be effective.

In relation to the future of existing social media platforms, Epstein noted that while they do provide a podium for the amplification of diverse voices, the resulting conversation only occurs within privately-managed information exchanges, such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter. These platforms may be rendered obsolete in the future by new commercial models and technological advancements. To remain relevant, companies will need to evolve quickly, which could result in social media providers focussing more on distribution and data analysis rather than content.

Turning to security and safety issues pertaining to social media, Epstein observed that transnational cybercrime, the virtualisation of the global drug trade and the online presence of terrorist organisations were key areas of concern. An act of terrorism that once took weeks or months to plan, could now be organised within hours using social media. For law enforcement, detection is now more challenging, and involves complex decision-making processes to mobilise effective and timely responses across different jurisdictions. The capacity of state institutions could be strained as a consequence.

Epstein concluded by reminding the audience that social media is an evolving phenomena. The extent of whether social media is profoundly different from past media developments should be reflected upon. Epstein argued that it was important to carefully manage certain aspects of new media such as the speed and scale of dissemination and the many-to-many model of social exchanges. Adapting to social media need not be fundamentally disruptive.

PANEL 1

The New Media Landscape: Existing Trends and Foreseeable Futures

The Tech Revolution in Media

Marc Lourdes, Editor-in-Chief, Yahoo Singapore

Marc Lourdes began with an introduction to Yahoo and Yahoo Singapore. He observed that while many tech companies had surpassed Yahoo as a communications platform, the “grand old man of the Internet” was currently ranked third in the world for internet penetration, and was also the number one visited site globally for news, finance, and sport. Yahoo is the second most visited site in Singapore despite having one of the smallest media teams, with eight websites and four social media accounts managed by ten individuals. Lourdes said that Yahoo Singapore attempts to tread the middle ground between the traditional broadsheet press and contemporary online infotainment, and focuses on hyper-local content, which is partly informed by the Yahoo search team, which provides information on trending issues of the day.

One way in which social media has affected today’s crowded news landscape is that stories are now generated from popular online posts, which have been shared multiple times and commented on extensively. Yahoo Singapore takes a slightly more nuanced approach to this technique, digging deeper into the backstory of a particular incident and discussing any broader social or ethical implications the story may evoke.

Another feature of the contemporary news landscape is that readers’ attention spans have shrunk considerably. The average time spent on web pages has decreased from four minutes to around two minutes, yet each session is becoming more frequent. This is driven in part by the ability of users to access the Internet on their mobile devices.

Social messaging platforms like WhatsApp are also changing behaviour, as users choose to share content on platforms more commonly associated with chat-style conversations.

For Lourdes, the greatest challenge facing news media today is the danger of sacrificing accuracy in an effort to release content before the competition. When stories are pushed out quickly, the requisite layers of editing, oversight and fact-checking are reduced, and mistakes are often made. Yahoo Singapore’s mantra is not ‘first-to-be-first’ but ‘first-to-be-right’, which Lourdes agreed is an approach that all media companies should be taking, as speed without accuracy is potentially damaging.

Looking to the future Lourdes opined that web-based URL model was on the decline, and media companies could reside on purely distributive platforms. This is noticeable today with the majority of content from some media companies consumed predominantly on social media sites rather than the outlet’s website. Distributing in this way not only broadens readership but also opens up new channels for revenue and allows publishers to focus on what they are good at, which is creating engaging and informative content.

Lourdes concluded by discussing possible futures related to the media landscape. Further developments in technology will change the media landscape significantly. Advances in areas such as 360 degree video and virtual reality, promise to enhance user experience by effectively taking the consumer directly to the news story by manipulating sensory reception. Lourdes said that technology will increasingly become part of the user as devices become embedded in clothing, and that holograms seen in science fiction films will begin to challenge the current dominance of the touch screen interface.

Enhancing Public Trust: SMRT’s Experience

Patrick Nathan, VP Corporate Information and Communication, SMRT

Patrick Nathan began his presentation by proclaiming that social media was not enough in terms of public communications. Although new communication technology eases mass communication, public

transport, as a 'frontline' service-oriented organisation, requires real human interaction/engagement. SMRT is therefore focussed on building trust and staying true to its strategic narrative, while maintaining the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. The company aims to be people-centred and socially responsible, while reassuring its customers that maintenance and major upgrade initiatives are on track.

In recent years SMRT has learned lessons in effective communication, and past didactic approaches taken toward public relations have now evolved into a more human-centric approach that deals directly and simply with customer concerns. A range of communication platforms are used by SMRT to ensure its messages are delivered to commuters, and Nathan stressed the importance of understanding the difference in managing each outlet, relative to the platform's respective function. It is essential to be discerning about the various social and traditional media assets as well as understand that multiple platforms are required to effectively relay a given message. The style and substance of the message should also be appropriate to the platform from which it is delivered.

The social media sites primarily used by SMRT are Facebook and Twitter, which are employed to both disseminate information as well as maintain customer relations. Nathan revealed that contrary to common perceptions, SMRT actually receives more compliments than complaints. While the reach and influence of social media communications are clear, it is vital for SMRT to actively engage communities through traditional media and face-to-face meetings, especially during disruptive projects to improve network infrastructure.

Nathan pointed out that while a majority of passengers waiting at stations may seem immersed in their mobile phones, people are still conscious of the signs and signals around them, which provide information about potential disruptions to their journey. The implication being that while SMRT utilises mobile apps and online alerts, offline and personal communication appears to be still more effective in delivering messages.

Remarking on data fusion analysis, Nathan said it was important not to believe everything one sees, as companies may provide wonderful visualisations and infographics, which conceal inaccurate or misleading

data. Instead, companies and organisations should build their own systems of analysing data, which will lead to greater customisation that meets specific needs.

On 7 July 2015, SMRT experienced a major disruption on two of its busiest lines for two-and-a-half hours, which affected around 400,000 people. In response, the company sent out thousands of station and in-train announcements, as well as tweets, Facebook posts, and media statements. However, in the aftermath it was traditional media—television and radio broadcasts—that were deemed most effective in rebuilding public trust. These mediums were highly effective in explaining what went wrong and what was being done to prevent such events from reoccurring.

Social media was a constructive feature of this and other communication objectives of SMRT, but Nathan stressed that most important was promoting advocacy and confidence through personal contact and face-to-face communications directly with stakeholders and members of the community.

Discussion

A participant asked whether social media feedback from the public have had an effect on the strategic decision-making processes of companies. A speaker replied that while social media feedback is increasingly being taken into account, it is understood that companies are now doing business in a maturing environment with more discerning and vocal customers. In this environment, social media is just another channel of communications and not something that is a completely new phenomenon that requires a distinct strategy.

A participant asked about how virtual reality technology can be applied to online media. A speaker stressed that virtual reality (VR) is a business first and foremost. Therefore, companies will seek to earn quick revenue from it and the easiest way to do this is through gaming and entertainment. However, VR also has real-world applications that can make a difference in fields such as medicine and media. He argued that VR will be more useful for online media compared to other channels as it is able to enjoy "the best of both worlds", i.e., the best of broadcast which are videos and moving images and the best of print which are text and still

images. He added that VR is: (a) more compatible with online media as plug-ins; (b) a more robust operating system; and (c) a stronger text tag could be more easily accessed through computers than televisions.

The issue of trolling activities on social media platforms was also discussed. A speaker shared that he would ideally like to monitor all comments on such platforms, including those that appear on his organisation's social media channels. However, he explained that this would be unnecessary as Singapore society is already quite mature to police trolls. This can often be seen in the comments section, where trolls are named and shamed for their negative or unnecessary comments. The speaker explained that his organisation is more concerned with maintaining the accuracy of the articles and content they publish. He added that preventing trolling was impossible.

A participant asked if it was possible to measure the effectiveness of corporate communication, particularly with regard to social media. The speaker pointed out that his organisation uses the usual social media metrics which are in a way granular by industry standards. However, he elaborated that such metrics do not quite appeal to him as he personally likes seeing what the shift in public sentiment really is. He argued that one could use surveys but they are expensive and time-consuming. He highlighted the importance of feeling the pulse of the people, and how his company still receives a high volume of feedback via telephone hotlines and email. He explained that he needs to integrate feedback from traditional channels as well as social media platforms. Feedback from disparate channels and sources is fundamentally different, and accuracy is key when integrating them. The speaker argued that rather than industry measurements, he believes that shifts in public sentiment are the real metrics.

PANEL 2

Insights to Navigate the New Media Landscape

Shaping Constructive Opinions Online

Bertha Henson, Consulting Editor, The Middle Ground

Bertha Henson argued that social media will be increasingly used as a way of reaching out to people. As such, a key issue is to determine whether these interactive means of communication can persuade people to change their minds. Basing her argument on the phenomenon of online polarisation, she explained that individuals are not easy to convince. Many internet users join communities of like-minded people known as “internet silos”, where dissenting views were not tolerated. This results in an “echo chamber effect” through which people mutually reinforce their own opinions and beliefs.

Henson described the mind-set prevalent in internet silos as an “awful mentality”, which compels members to believe in the group they are part of, to stay within this community and support it. As these internet users do not have experience in constructing balanced arguments, they resort to a language of emotion that intensifies fundamental passions such as joy and sadness. Another amplifying factor lies in the fact that individuals might be psychologically “trapped” by their online identities, which makes it difficult for them to express and for accept divergent points of view.

Drawing on her own experience, Henson enumerated three successful rules of engagement that she adopts on her personal Facebook page: (a) forbidding name-calling; (b) forbidding use of vulgarities and intimate conversations; and (c) “hijacking” agendas, whereby contributors monopolise online conversations on topic(s) of their choice. Fellow discussants can vote to have the transgressor(s) removed from her page.

A more positive strategy of constructive opinion-making lies in the tones adopted by online writers. Not taking oneself too seriously is particularly useful in engaging people, as opposed to employing a threatening tone. Tighter control over content sharing is also effective, as this minimises the dissemination of offensive and misleading material. Henson also cautioned against

misinterpreting an issue’s newsworthiness, which could have become artificially inflated from emotive comments, reposts/sharing and seeming popularity online (viral). Fact-checking was therefore necessary to determine if the issue was really as significant/important as was made out to be.

Honesty and transparency were, for Henson, the key principles of good journalism. The former referred to public humility, such as the acknowledgment by an author of his/her limited experience, while the latter referred to the sources of information used and the potential conflicts of interest that might affect one’s credibility. Henson lamented the emergence of so-called citizen journalism, which she likened to eye witnesses rather than professional reporters. Journalists describe the nature of phenomena, the reasons why events happened and the actors involved, while citizen-journalists seemed to simply (re)post often unsubstantiated information online.

A major challenge in the social media domain pertains to the difficulty of separating personal opinion from fact, as both are often closely intertwined online. Opinion is not fact and should not be treated as such. When offering opinion, the person/entity reporting the information was just as important as the facts.

Revealing the Hidden Good: Dealing with Negativity Online

Wu Jie Zhen, Executive Director, The Hidden Good

Wu Jie Zhen explained that the Hidden Good movement was conceived about two-and-a-half years ago in response to a number of surveys, which suggested that Singaporeans were apathetic, emotionless and inconsiderate. For example, it was common to see articles on websites such as STOMP complaining about the misbehaviour of Singaporeans (e.g., sitting on reserved seats on MRT trains). It was thought that such portrayals of Singaporeans were inaccurate, and hence the necessity for a platform that highlighted the good deeds and kindness of Singaporeans.

The Hidden Good aims to build narratives of goodness/kindness primarily through simple social experiments that are filmed and disseminated online, as well as reshape perceptions and spark constructive conversations among communities by social activities/events. Wu bemoaned the pervasiveness of fluff and noise on social media, and stressed the importance of conveying positive messages that inspire empathy and positivity. The Hidden Good's vision is to create a better society by bringing to light the compassion/positivities within communities, which is often overshadowed by sensationalism and negativity in the media.

The loudest media voices in Singapore today are still from the mainstream news outlets and controversial bloggers, and Wu believes that ideas from the youth increasingly need to be amplified. The people behind the Hidden Good want Singaporeans to fall in love with their country all over again; not in a "contrived way of nationalistic pride" but through an active appreciation of the myriad little moments that people should be mindful of and thankful for. One example is that people should probably be grateful for the 350 days per year that the Singaporean public transport system operates with flawless efficiency, instead of quickly criticising occasional inconveniences to their daily commute.

The Hidden Good combines online media influence through its YouTube channel with on-the-ground community activities. The organisation collaborates with MediaCorp, as well as independent YouTube media channels, and employs user feedback to inform its on-the-ground initiatives. Partnerships are important to the organisation, which also works together with government agencies, creative industries, foundations, schools, and generally anybody interested in amplifying positive societal participation.

Wu played two videos to illustrate the Hidden Good's work. The first was an invitation to non-Muslims to participate in breaking fast (iftar) during Ramadan in 2015. The diverse turn-out and congenial atmosphere produced precisely the type of interfaith exchange and educational conversations the organisation seeks to promote. Wu observed that social media messaging only works if it is organic and develops naturally through networks, rather than being contrived or constructed.

The second video depicted a social experiment where young conscripts of the Singaporean Armed Forces (NSF) were put in a situation to determine their reaction to an attempted theft of their interlocutor's bag. All NSFs attempted to retrieve the bag by chasing the 'thief'. In this experiment, the Hidden Good wanted to change negative perceptions of NSFs by highlighting that not all were spoilt and inconsiderate.

In conclusion, Wu shared her vision of employing social media as a tool to create opportunities at the grass-roots level for people to not only deliberate on social issues, but also to take ownership in creating the type of community and society in which they would like to live.

Effective Storytelling and Influencing Online

Meera Jane Navaratnam, Digital Strategy Consultant, Accenture

Meera Jane Navaratnam observed that online consumers of contemporary media do not need to listen to, agree with, or follow the rules of those seeking to convey a certain message. While social media has significantly extended the potential reach of communication, attentive reception requires the message to be framed and delivered in ways that engage today's highly fickle audiences.

Navaratnam used the recent political campaigns in Singapore that made use of various social media platforms to appeal to voters as an illustration. It was not simply the medium which enabled political parties to communicate directly with members of the community she argued, but the use of concise emotive language and personal messaging which evoked perceptions of authenticity.

Another example cited was the divergent coverage of the haze that engulfed Singapore in 2015. Channel News Asia posted on Facebook that smoke from the forest fire was "a manmade tragedy and a crime of vandalism against society", which Navaratnam admitted, resonated with her. In order to engage effectively with people, messages have to be pitched appropriately for the platform.

Navaratnam explained that storytelling was a good way of engaging audiences. While it is easy to write a press release, create an infographic, or to discuss statistics, a successful message was ultimately about emotion-generation. Once people are engaged on an emotional level, you have their attention and can begin to influence their actions or preferences. Currently, digital media is dominated by visual content, and communicators must be attentive to ways in which images can make people stand up and believe in something, or showcase an idea or perspective.

According to Navaratnam, there were five key points to remember when attempting to engage audiences through storytelling:

1. Stories need to express emotions and tap into people's perception of who they are
2. Audiences must be emotionally invested in the message and must be given a reason to believe in what is being conveyed;
3. Messages require energy and must impel people to act
4. A clear call to action should be transmitted at the conclusion of a message
5. Communications need to be authentic and impart legitimacy

The story is always more important than the words, and Navaratnam highlighted the importance of digging deeper to look for ways people are personally affected by a particular situation or event. It is also essential to keep the message simple so that it may be easily received and understood. A key theme in content that goes viral online is that it appeals to emotion and is communicated through simple language and/or lucid images.

Navaratnam summed up by stressing that storytelling was about getting to the heart of things and making people want to pay attention to the message by conjuring emotional responses. Reaction is essential; media communication today is no longer one-way, but an interactive conversation between the conveyors of a given message and those whom they seek to engage.

Discussion

A speaker was asked to comment on how to deal with toxic behaviour online when the Internet itself facilitated unrestricted speech. The speaker affirmed that while individuals did have the liberty to express themselves freely online, there were those who were apprehensive about sharing their thoughts on social media for fear of being ridiculed and harassed. These people, the so-called "silent majority", were simply reading and absorbing rather than engaging, which meant that real debate could not occur. It was not only the readers who were adversely affected by online trolls and bullies, young writers and journalists, too, were targets, and some have even quit the industry. The bottom line was that people had to learn how to put their views/opinions across in a more civil manner.

Questions regarding ways to manage and put out effective messages and stories were also raised. A speaker responded that there is a need to ensure that messages are sent out in a sincere manner. The ability to focus on the solutions and explain how these may impact persons concerned is also crucial. Messages that are simple and straightforward would resonate more with the members of the public.

A participant enquired about how to gauge the impact of online videos. A speaker acknowledged that knowing whether the viewers were taking something away from online videos is a challenge. She revealed that her organisation uses videos as a means to discuss important topics and issues relating to Singapore, and that the impact was measured by the number of partners her organisation was able to collaborate with. She saw value in enhancing the existing work of partners through helping them use social media tools to improve communications with their target audiences.

A participant asked how government departments could better engage the public in the context of today's digital movement. The speaker acknowledged the difficulty government agencies were facing in relation to public engagement. In contrast to private companies which have very particular target consumers or audiences, government agencies need to communicate to a variety of people. She emphasised

the importance of understanding one's audience. She used the controversy over the CPF as an example and explained that one needs to identify the people who are actually engaging online negatively. Why are they unhappy? What are they uncertain about? What are their questions and difficulties? What is their age range and socioeconomic class? The speaker underscored that the government should know the different types of communities it is dealing with and based on that, it

should build a narrative that engages with each one of them distinctly. She argued that the audience should then be informed about the solution one is trying to provide and what one is trying to enable. Stories of how the CPF actually helps Singaporeans on the ground should be shared. Instead of trying to explain the facts, talk about how the experience has been and how it has enabled different people.

PANEL 3

Governance

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

Managing Full Spectrum Communications – Experience from the Cross-government Space

Emily Hands, Head of National Security Communications, Prime Minister's Office, United Kingdom

Emily Hands observed that the concept of full spectrum communications, though not new, has now gained recognition/acceptance in many governments. Full spectrum communications involves the application of governmental capabilities to enact policy actions as well as utilise communications to craft valid responses for both domestic and international issues. She argued that with the myriad of tools available, practitioners should be more discerning when employing them.

Hands explained that communications in relation to national security could be used to: (a) explain; (b) reassure; (c) prompt; (d) amplify; (e) deliver; and (f) influence the public on policy decisions by the government. Communications, however, should be seen as a way to smoothen the delivery of government policy, and not as a substitute for good policy. Hands emphasised that communications should not exist in a policy vacuum, and had to be part of a systematic delivery process. She also suggested that governments should seek to engage and project influence on both friendly and hostile states by using soft power and diplomacy.

Hands discussed the work of the Government Communication Service (GCS) within the scope of national security communications. The GCS is responsible for directing and coordinating cross-government efforts in anti-radicalisation work. Efforts undertaken include outreach to schools and communities to counter extremism. A news coordination centre is set up in times of severe crisis to facilitate seamless cross-government communications. GCS also manages a suite of comprehensive communication tools including digital, broadcast, community and discrete communications, and such tools are evaluated for effectiveness. Strategic planning is also done around the big issues facing the

government. Hands cited the example of the Greek crisis, where the British government issued warnings and practical travel advisories (e.g., tourists were strongly advised to bring extra cash and medication) to potential/existing British tourists to Greece.

Hands identified several mechanisms to fulfil government communication objectives: (a) coordination; (b) people; and (c) prioritisation of communication tools. Firstly, coordination in a full-spectrum environment involves enabling mechanisms within a crisis management framework. This includes multiple meetings, overarching strategies and concept frameworks. Secondly, people and processes are important. Finally, the prioritisation of communication channels to convey policies involves deciding on the most effective way to deliver policy outcomes. She noted that attempting to utilise all possible communication channels for every issue would result in a diluted and ineffective outcome. She argued that evaluating the effectiveness of full spectrum communication strategies should be conducted to determine if short-run objectives were being met, as well as additional analyses to ensure improvements in the long run.

LECTURES

Strategic Communication and Governance: The MINDEF Perspective

Dinesh Vasu Dash, Director (Information), Information Directorate, MINDEF, Singapore

Dinesh Vasu Dash discussed the MINDEF/SAF perspective on strategic communications in Singapore. He began by observing that media consumption patterns of Singaporeans had changed significantly over the years, and the public was exposed to a multitude of differing views and opinions in the online domain. MINDEF/SAF had to be nimble and adapt to these developments as well. Of significant concern was the negative framing of issues that had the potential to undermine support for MINDEF/SAF. MINDEF/SAF acknowledges that without the support/contributions

of citizens, it would be extremely difficult to perform its duties. It therefore places citizens at the forefront of all its efforts and activities, and actively seeks to maintain good rapport.

Dash also identified four factors in the new informational landscape that would impact the public sector: (a) increased scrutiny of policies in the public space; (b) challenges to official narratives; (c) spreading of misinformation; and (d) the politicisation of policies and issues. Firstly, the increased scrutiny of policies such as housing and transportation by the public is part of the development of Singapore. Secondly, due to the different perspectives of history available, younger generations of Singaporeans might feel that Singapore might not be as vulnerable, and are less cognisant of the potential threats facing the city-state. Thirdly, the spreading of untruths and rumours that creates misperceptions among the public. For example, the claim by an online website that goods and services tax would increase to 10% after the General Elections. This prompted the Ministry of Finance to quickly debunk the claim. Lastly, the politicisation of policies and issues could undermine institutions, and adversely affect political and public support.

Dash also discussed how informational activities were coordinated to support MINDEF/SAF's organisational objectives. Broadly, these involved: (a) public communications; (b) communication to internal audiences; and (c) community engagement efforts. In terms of public communications, various promotional/publicity events and even entertainment platforms such as movies (e.g. Ah Boys to Men) are used to increase public awareness of the SAF. Social media channels were important in this regard as well. This was underscored by the fact that the Defence Minister, Dr Ng Eng Hen, actively engages the public via his Facebook page. The MINDEF/SAF-related websites are also useful as a source of information for the public and for them to provide feedback. Internal audience communications focus mainly on personnel. Community engagement activities involve collaborating with external groups and networks to enhance education and community outreach efforts. For example, NEXUS, a national education government initiative, works closely with various ministries such as the Ministry of Education in coordinating and disseminating messages in relation to Total Defence. It also administers education programs such as N.E.

Animation in schools.

Two case studies were subsequently discussed: (a) the SG50 events where MINDEF/SAF played a significant role; and (b) how MINDEF countered misinformation online. Firstly, in relation to the SG50 celebrations, MINDEF/SAF distributed 1.2 million fun packs to all Singaporean households as part of the Golden Jubilee National Day Parade (NDP) celebrations. This involved complex and complicated logistical/coordination planning. MINDEF/SAF's heavy presence in social media enabled it to inform, highlight and share moments during the celebrations. The NDP was live-streamed online, and mobile apps detailing information regarding the parade were developed. In relation to countering misinformation online, swift responses were needed to ensure that rumours were dispelled quickly. Reframing online narratives was also critical in this regard. Dash cited the video of an RSAF marshaller breakdancing as an example of how the human dimension/face of the SAF was highlighted. Dash concluded his presentation by arguing that operations, policy and communications should be closely linked.

Attempting to Reshape History through Social Media: Implications for Governance

Bilveer Singh, Associate Professor, National University of Singapore and Adjunct Senior Fellow, CENS, RSIS, NTU

Bilveer Singh's presentation discussed how Singapore's national narratives were being challenged by revisionists in the offline and online sphere. He observed that the political discourse in Singapore had moved in a particular direction over the last 50 years, and there had been no major challenges to the national narrative in that time. However, attempts to examine non-official (alternative) accounts of Singapore's history have become increasingly popular in recent times. For example, on the basis of newly-discovered historical documents, some individuals, have challenged the official historical account of Operation Coldstore. Operation Coldstore was carried out on 2 February 1963 in response to the threat by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), which had from 1945 to 1963, sought to overthrow the government in Singapore. Many people who were believed to be communists and/or communist sympathisers were detained in the Operation. Singh argued that these 'newly-discovered' documents

were open to misinterpretation as they were devoid of context, and that recent research published by ISEAS in 2015 had provided an in-depth analysis of the incident, which disproved the revisionists' claims. Furthermore, it is the rejection of this counter-claim by the revisionists, which suggests they may have a broader political agenda.

Singh then discussed how some individuals were employing social media to advocate for and generate awareness of alternative interpretations of Singapore's history. The Living with Myths project for example, was started by several historians to contest popular Singapore narratives. The historians argue that these national narratives are myths as they "render history useful for non-historical pursuits". Facebook is one of the main social media platforms used to promote the group's activities create awareness about events/issues, conduct outreach and engagement activities, promote agendas and shape views.

The possible consequences of perpetuating alternative national narratives were a concern for Singh. For instance, as Singapore had enjoyed many decades of peace and prosperity, many, and in particular, the younger generation, could be lulled into a false sense of security. By forgetting and/or dismissing the lessons learned from historical challenges, especially those pertaining to national security, the overall resiliency of the nation could be adversely affected if a major crisis like a terrorist attack occurred in the future.

Singh suggested that novel approaches to teaching history were necessary to motivate young people to take an interest in a customarily dry subject. He also suggested that the release of national archive documents relating to controversial events in Singapore's history and encouraging more in-depth research into these events were useful. He cautioned the audience against ignoring the political agendas of some groups as they attempted to recast national narratives by reinterpreting historical events.

Discussion

A participant observed that it was challenging to measure the effectiveness and success of communication initiatives since the outcomes were often subjective,

and enquired if there were specialised techniques/approaches for doing so. A speaker admitted that this was challenging especially since the process was circular, from thinking about the measurements related to issues, to the search for an appropriate analytical method to understand causality. In this regard, social media and online communications were perhaps easier to measure quantitatively via analytics. However, the data produced may not be reflective of whether the campaign/programme/etc. actually met communication objectives. The speaker emphasised that data analysis should not take precedence over qualitative methods of acquiring insights to better understand target audiences.

A participant observed that existing national narratives were not resonating with millennials and enquired if meta-narratives needed to be adjusted. The participant also asked if there was space for competing narratives to exist. A speaker replied that internal threats to Singapore did exist but were not apparent. As such, the meta-narrative remained largely relevant but required occasional adjustment. The speaker also argued that it was important that future generations realise that even in times of peace, Singapore did face international and domestic threats. And awareness of these threats and their complexities should be made known through education.

Another speaker added that it was important to look beyond narratives and focus on the geostrategic and geopolitical realities facing Singapore, such as the limited resources of the country, and being in a region with both geographically and militarily larger neighbouring countries. The idea of vulnerabilities might not resonate as well with the population when the county was experiencing success, but the speaker stressed that it was crucial to continue highlighting the vulnerabilities of Singapore. The speaker added that the Singapore story comprised several narratives rather than a single one. He opined that no individual or organisation could own a narrative even in the online realm, and there would always be individuals with newer perspectives/views. The challenge is to find new and innovative ways to convey the lessons of the past. The speaker felt that the younger generation was interested in Singapore's history, and how this was taught to them was important.

Dealing with Information and Misinformation on Social Media

Social Media and Online Child Predators: What Investigations Reveal

Keshav S. Dhakad, Regional Director, IP & Digital Crimes Unit (DCU), Microsoft Asia

Keshav S. Dhakad's presentation focussed on Microsoft's initiatives pertaining to online safety. He began by stating that Microsoft was determined to maximise desirable online experiences, while minimising undesirable ones, for instance, actively trying to protect children in cyberspace. He argued that digital citizenship was necessary to combat illegal online activity.

Dhakad identified how misuse of the Internet was occurring specifically through the 4 Cs: Content, Contact, Conduct, and Commerce. In terms of Content, anonymity afforded to individuals had resulted in the availability and proliferation of questionable material such as hate speech, terrorist propaganda, extremist literature and so on. Contact referred to unwelcome or unwanted solicitation online, such as spam and chat messages from unknown and often dubious sources. According to Dhakad, it is easy for criminals to track and target an individual from data available online. Children, he pointed out, were one of the most vulnerable groups. This was because their naiveté made them easy targets for predators, cyberbullies and scammers. The Conduct of criminals is also significant, as this often involves IP theft, piracy, harassment, as well as information-gathering on potential victims including children. Dhakad observed that as the online footprints of children had increased over the years, it was now easier for predators to target their victims. Commerce referred to the commercialisation of data in cyberspace whereby individuals sold, revealed and/or exchanged personal data of individuals.

Dhakad then discussed how Microsoft was using technology to combat criminal behaviour online, and in particular, child exploitation. PhotoDNA for example, is a free tool to help stop child exploitation images from being shared online by converting such "images into a common black-and-white format and uniform size, [and] then [dividing] the image into squares. A numerical value

that represents the unique shading found within each square is then assigned to the image". "Together, these numerical values represent the PhotoDNA signature or hash of an image, which can then be compared against signatures of other images. While the technology cannot be used to identify a person or object in an image, nor can it be used to recreate an image, it can be used to find copies of a given image with incredible accuracy and at scale across the 1.8 billion images shared online every day, even when the images themselves have been altered". Once an illegal image has been detected, a report can be made to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and/or other relevant agencies. Microsoft collaborates with NCMEC and other international agencies, and reported images are added to the NCMEC database so that analysts can track and create profiles of both proliferators and consumers of such images. PhotoDNA has been shared "with more than 100 companies worldwide, including Facebook, Twitter, Kik, and Flipboard".

Dhakad concluded by reminding the audience that that the dualistic nature of the Internet will continue to drive both growth and innovation in digital technology, but at the same time, also result in increases in illegal activities.

Social Bots and Social Media Analysis – Insights from the Private Sector

Ashwin Reddy, CEO, Fiords, and former Chief Media Strategy Officer, Kantar Group

Ashwin Reddy's presentation focussed on how social bots were increasingly used to manipulate online information, and subsequently, human/user behaviour. He used the example of how social media was used as a tool for mobilisation as well as a tool for disseminating misinformation in the social disturbances in Mexico City. Activists had used social media platforms to mobilise and communicate, and were thus able to avoid police blockades and to inform other protesters not to enter the protest zone. However, this method of communication was compromised when a large

number of users seemingly began to tweet gibberish on the Twitter account used by the activists. As a result, activists were unable to avoid the police blockades. It was later suspected that these “users” were actually bots.

Bots are algorithms designed to mimic human actions and behaviour on social media platforms. The sophistication of the bots varies, and less complex versions can be developed and/or acquired easily. The ability to create fake identities, which explains how bots appear ‘human’, is also easy to do (e.g., websites such as fakenamgenerator.com). Reddy admitted that it was very difficult to detect a bot even for IT security companies. Bots have reportedly been used by both private and public sector entities. Reddy cited an example where bots were used to skew survey results to favour a particular outcome.

Reddy then talked about some basic techniques on how to detect bots on Twitter. First, bots often shared links to fraudulent websites and drove traffic to them. Second, looking for verified Twitter accounts was another method to identify bots as authentication procedures were harder to mimic. Third, bots post prolifically (e.g., more than 120 tweets a day), which exceeds normal human usage.

In closing, Reddy discussed if bots could be used for positive purposes. He emphasised that bots were a dual-use technology, and highlighted that bots have been used to trawl the Internet for smart content and infiltrate online extremist communities. With regard to infiltration, bots could pretend to be users of the ‘right’ social demographic that extremists were targeting, and subsequently help disseminate anti-extremist material once it gains access to the closed social media group/site. Potentially, these bots could also transmit intelligence that otherwise would not have been obtainable.

The Majority Illusion in Social Networks

Kristina Lerman, Project Leader, Information Science Institute, University of Southern California

Kristina Lerman’s presentation discussed social perceptions on the Internet, and how attitudes and

norms could be shaped/influenced by peers on social media. Lerman argued that perceptions derived from reading friends’ sentiments on social media were often incorrect. To illustrate, Lerman observed that many respondents indicated that they believed their friends to be better drinkers than they actually were.

Lerman explained that this phenomenon is related to the Friendship Paradox, an observation by sociologist Scott Feld in 1999, which states that on average, an individual’s friends have more friends than them. In contemporary times, this paradox is observable and holds true for online social networks as well. For instance, research in 2013 conducted by the speaker and her colleagues showed that the paradox applied to more than 95% of Twitter users. Moreover, two new paradoxes were identified: the virality paradox, which states that one’s friends receive more viral content than one, on average; and (b) the activity paradox, which states that one’s friends are more active than one, on average (i.e., they receive more viral content than one, and send out more viral content on average). [editor’s note: practical implications include: (a) analysis of users’ friends rather than user generates better insights; (b) influencer(s) can be identified; and (c) information overload will invariably result, suggesting that alternative methods of communication are needed to better target the audience.]

Lerman then talked about the majority illusion, where a small number of highly connected individuals can skew the perception of many. “In a social network, this illusion may cause people to reach wrong conclusions about how common a behaviour actually is, leading them to accept as a norm, a behaviour that is globally rare”. She also discussed the related phenomenon of social contagion, where people act in a certain way based on the behaviour of those in their network.

Lerman hypothesised that the majority illusion is so pervasive that even a small percentage can yield a large effect on social networks. This effect would be greater in models where there are a few highly connected hubs and high degree nodes. The effect is also amplified by individuals who are perceived to be more popular and active. Lerman said that the effect is also amplified among disassortative networks.

In conclusion, Lerman observed that the majority illusion may be able to explain why support for seismic events such as the Arab Spring and push for same sex marriages may have surged in recent years. The friendship paradox may have skewed the social perception in support of these movements, and caused the seemingly rapid shift in support levels.

Mitigating Misinformation Spread on Micro-blogging Web Services using TweetCred

Ponnurangam Kumaraguru, Associate Professor, Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, India

Ponnurangam Kumaraguru's presentation focused on dealing with misinformation generation on social media apps particularly during emergencies/disasters. He observed that Twitter is increasingly being used as a source of real-time information, but such information was, at times, unreliable. Using the Mumbai bombings as an example, he observed that incorrect information about the number of blasts had created unnecessary panic. Similarly, in the Boston Marathon bombing, misleading and incorrect information had resulted in misidentification of suspects, the spread of rumours as well as caused unnecessary distress.

Kumaraguru explained that during crises, the dissemination of accurate information is not as quick because investigations are still ongoing. In this period when there is a lack of information, it is easy for misinformation to be generated and spread. This is especially so on social media as individuals (directly/indirectly affected by the crises) are anxious for information. Improvements are therefore needed in terms of: (a) reducing the time needed to push out credible and accurate information; and (b) reducing the occurrences of misinformation immediately following a crisis.

Kumaraguru then introduced TweetCred (TC), which "is a real-time, web-based system to assess credibility of content on Twitter". "The system provides a credibility rating between 1 to 7 for each tweet on the Twitter timeline. The score is computed using a supervised automated ranking algorithm, trained on human labels obtained using crowdsourcing that determines credibility of a tweet based on more than 45 features.

The system considers various factors to determine credibility such as, the tweet content, properties of the user who posted the tweet, external URLs or pictures shared in the tweet. TC functions as a plug-in of Google Chrome, and was jointly developed by the Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) and the Precog Research Group at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi (IIITD).

TC is still undergoing tests, and while it shows promise in terms of assigning "automatic credibility ratings to users on a large scale", there are challenges that have to be addressed such as human biases and the context of the tweet.

Discussion

A participant asked about the extent of online child abuse. The speaker replied that the depravity was extremely troubling. The problem required the involvement of multi-stakeholders across borders as there were multiple social media platforms that were being used. The speaker added that victimisation was an extremely sensitive and complicated issue. Even if victims are identified and informed of how their photos or those of their children had been compromised, they sometimes refuse to communicate or cooperate due to the trauma of the revelation.

A participant asked how social media platforms and networks could guard against bots that inundated users with spam. The speaker replied that although spam prevention features were now common, these were not fool proof. Malware are becoming more sophisticated every day, and can easily exploit loopholes on social media platforms despite spam blocking.

A participant asked if bots could be used for positive purposes. The speaker replied that there were weather bots that provided users with alerts, information and updates on the weather at a particular location. The user tweets a bot on Twitter, and the bot replies with the requested information.

A participant asked if bots could be used to counter negativity online. The speaker replied that this was possible but warned that it could be quite challenging

to convince users that the messages were from a credible and human source.

A participant asked whether individual choices were premised on the perceived preferences of friends in social network structures. A speaker replied that this was observable in many cases whereby social practices are strongly influenced and driven by the behaviour of others. Another participant enquired if the effects of social influence or contagion might change if social

media becomes more immersive, for example with the introduction of virtual reality (VR) technology. The speaker replied that social media usage involves cognitive constraints or heuristics, affecting decisions as to what to pay attention to on social media. Such cognitive aspects are extremely important in understanding social media use, but in the VR space, this becomes more complicated due to the increase in cognitive processing required in such an environment.

Social Media in Analysis and Investigation

The Love Trap: Using Dating Apps for Sexual Offences

Alexis Loh, NUS and Majeed Khader, Deputy Director Police Psychological Services Division, Concurrently Director, Home Team Behavioural Sciences Centre

Alexis Loh began by discussing trends related to sexual offences and mobile phone apps. Dating apps (created by both Singaporean and foreign developers), such as Paktor and Tinder, had increased in popularity due in part to the anonymity afforded to users and the ability of users to curate their profiles. However, the ability to obscure one's identity also enabled individuals to use such apps to commit crime (e.g., love scams). With regard to sexual offences, date rape and child grooming were the most prevalent crimes that involved mobile phone apps in Singapore.

Loh then talked about how investigating sexual offences nowadays incorporated both online and offline (physical) approaches. For instance, in a case of date rape, the digital footprints of the suspect can be reconstructed through "smartphone forensics", which recovered information and location data from the suspect's mobile device. Established forensic methods such as swabbing or examining a victim's post-attack injuries were used concurrently as well.

The psychology behind online dating was also discussed to explain the appeal of dating apps. According to the "Social Compensation" perspective, online dating provides socially inept individuals with a medium to interact with less inhibition. Online dating provides users opportunities to compensate for their real-world dating anxiety. On the other hand, the "Rich-Get-Richer" perspective looks at the motives for online dating by socially competent users. Individuals with low dating anxiety and greater social skills look at online dating as a complementary tool to further maximise their ability to fulfil their sexual needs.

Loh observed that perpetrators often commit sexual offences through the confluence of a victim's risk factors and situational risk. Victims with histories of emotional distress and/or mental health issues can be more

vulnerable to sexual offences. Situational risk, or the context where the victim and perpetrator coexist, was also deemed important. For date rape, the presence of drugs and alcohol along with the misinterpretation of social cues can lead to heightened situational risk. For child grooming, the lack of parental control proved to be the most significant form of situational risk. Loh stressed that the interaction between victim and situational risk should be met by authorities with holistic assessments of an online dater's digital characteristic and his/her risk profile.

Loh concluded with several recommendations. From a legal standpoint, she argued that there should be more stringent penalties imposed on individuals who deliberately misrepresent themselves on dating apps. In terms of education, she argued that more initiatives to raise awareness of the potential risks of using dating apps should be developed. For instance, police and school partnerships could be made to promote safer surfing habits among youth. There should be sex education programmes that should cover taboo subjects like sexual orientation. Parental awareness of dating app-enabled sexual offences should also be promoted.

Stealing More Than Just Your Heart: Online Love Scams

Yee Zhi Wei, NTU and Majeed Khader, Deputy Director Police Psychological Services Division, Concurrently Director, Home Team Behavioural Sciences Centre

Yee Zhi Wei began by defining online love scams (OLS) as a type of online fraud where "scammers prey on those looking for romantic connections online. After gaining the trust and affection of their victims, scammers ask for monetary help for various reasons". According to statistics gathered from Singapore, there had been a 143 percent increase in OLS between 2013 and 2014. For 2014 alone, it was estimated that financial losses due to OLS totalled S\$8.8M. Yee remarked that there were two factors which could have led to the increasing number of scams in Singapore: (a) high

internet penetration rate; and (b) the growing number of single, unmarried individuals.

Love scammers, Yee revealed, do not operate alone but in concert with a syndicate. The scammers typically come from countries such as Nigeria and the Philippines. The “executor” of the scam, that is, the person who corresponds with the victim, takes instruction from an “organiser”. The organiser, in turn, controls the “enforcer” who blackmails the victim and is also the “money mover”.

The usual modus operandi of scammers involves persuading the victim to send out small amounts of money initially before asking for a larger amount. In some cases, the scammers request small tokens and trinkets from the victims first, so as to not arouse suspicion. These paltry requests enable the scammers to assess the willingness of victims to make more substantive transfers in the future.

Victims are often Singaporean women aged 40 to 50 years old. These women would typically be single or divorced, coming from mixed educational backgrounds. From a psychological perspective, several factors increased “victim susceptibility”. Based on prior research, victims often are afflicted with pre-existing issues such as low self-control and lack of pre-meditation. Victims would also often exhibit a tendency to idealise their prospective partners as people brought to them via “fate” or “destiny”.

Interestingly, scammers rationalise their actions to presumably alleviate their feelings of guilt. Some adopt a “denial of the victim” approach, stressing that the scam was a ruse and was not deliberately intended to cause emotional harm. Others adopt a “denial of injury” approach where a scammer assures himself/herself that the victim was rich enough to absorb the financial loss.

Yee recommended several policy initiatives to counter the proliferation of OLS. First, she advocated greater public awareness through media campaigns. While there were already advertisements calling for greater vigilance against love scams, Yee pointed out how they can be further improved by using more concise language and providing more detailed information to avoid scams. Second, Yee stressed the importance of law enforcement agencies to collaborate more closely

with online dating site operators. Finally, supporting interventions available to victims of OLS must cover both the financial and emotional losses incurred.

Using Social Media to Investigate Crimes: Insights from the Singapore Police Force

Teo Wee Meng, Head, Technology Crime Investigation Branch, Criminal Investigation Department

Teo Wee Meng began by explaining that in Singapore what is often termed as “cybercrime” involves two types of illicit activities. First, are “cyber-enabled” crimes, which are ordinary criminal acts incorporating the use of information technologies such as social media. The second, the focus of Teo’s presentation, involved “high end” incidents such as attacks against websites and other digital infrastructure.

In Singapore, the most high-profile cybercrime case to date involved the defacement of websites by a hacker called James Raj Arokiasamy aka “The Messiah”. Arokiasamy claimed that he was part of the online hacktivist group Anonymous. Prior to his arrest, Arokiasamy was responsible for the defacement of several websites of Singaporean private and public sector organisations such as the Ang Mo Kio Town Council, the Singapore Arts Museum, and even the Straits Times. On 5 November 2013, Arokiasamy threatened to launch a massive cyberattack against the Singapore government in an Anonymous-styled video.

Arokiasamy was arrested on 4 November 2013 by the Malaysian police in Kuala Lumpur. His initial success in defacing websites made him “cocky”, and as such, failed to conceal his online activities effectively. Arokiasamy had also used fairly simple intrusion techniques, which made it easier for investigators to pick up the trail.

Teo discussed several lessons learned. First, he stressed the importance of engaging “friendly forces”, i.e., other government agencies and private companies who could help in identifying and tracking suspects in cyberspace. Second, collaboration with other security agencies was important. He reiterated the necessity of forging closer ties between police forces as exemplified by the joint efforts by the Singaporean and Malaysian law enforcers to apprehend Arokiasamy. Third, the lax security practices of end users were a major concern. Human

failure was often the cause of security breaches, with proper procedures often being neglected in the name of convenience.

Discussion

A participant enquired if the SPF had the capabilities to investigate crimes involving more sophisticated encryption. The speaker, using The Messiah case as illustration, replied that it would have taken longer for the SPF to track Arokiasamy had he used “onion router” software to encrypt his online activities.

A participant asked what made Singaporeans vulnerable to love scams. The speaker remarked that the ageing population of Singapore or the “silver tsunami” could be a major factor. As the number of senior citizens needing companionship increased, the larger the pool of people to exploit.

A subsequent question was posed on incidents where victims were scammed more than once. The speaker replied that re-victimisation could occur when a victim remained in a state of denial, falsely believing that his/her newfound online relationship was genuine.

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 5 November 2015

- 0830 – 0900hrs **Registration**
Venue :
Taurus & Leo Ballroom Foyer, Level 1
- 0900 – 0915hrs **RSIS Corporate Video + Welcome Remarks by Shashi Jayakumar,**
Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU
- 0915 – 0950hrs **Keynote Address**
Chair:
Shashi Jayakumar, Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU

Speaker :
Social Media in Communication, Governance and Security: What Should we be Focusing on? by **David Epstein, Vice President of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, Optus, Australia**
- 0950 – 1030hrs **Panel 1: The New Media Landscape: Existing Trends and Foreseeable Futures**
Chair :
Shashi Jayakumar, Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU

Speakers :
The Tech Revolution in Media by **Marc Lourdes, Editor-in-Chief, Yahoo Singapore**

Enhancing Public Trust: SMRT's Experience by **Patrick Nathan, VP Corporate Information and Communication, SMRT**
- 1030 – 1045hrs **Networking Break**
Venue :
MMB Foyer, Level 1

1045 – 1200hrs **Interactive Syndicate Discussions**

Syndicate 1
Venue :
Aquarius Ballroom, Level 1

Syndicate 2
Venue :
Gemini Ballroom, Level 1

Syndicate 3
Venue :
Pisces Ballroom, Level 1

1200 – 1330hrs **Lunch**
Venue :
Capricorn Ballroom, Level 1

1330 – 1430hrs **Panel 2: Insights to Navigate the New Media Landscape**
Chair :
Caitríona H. Heini, Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU

Speakers :
Shaping Constructive Opinions Online by **Bertha Henson, Consulting Editor, The Middle Ground**

Revealing the Hidden Good: Dealing with Negativity Online by **Wu Jie Zhen, Executive Director, The Hidden Good**

Effective Storytelling and Influencing Online by **Meera Jane Navaratnam, Digital Strategy Consultant, Accenture**

1430 – 1545hrs **Interactive Syndicate Discussions**

Syndicate 1
Venue :
Aquarius Ballroom, Level 1

	<p>Syndicate 2 Venue : Gemini Ballroom, Level 1</p>	<p>0900 – 0930hrs Registration Venue : MMB Foyer, Level 1</p>
	<p>Syndicate 3 Venue : Pisces Ballroom, Level 1</p>	<p>0930 – 1050hrs Panel 4: Dealing with Information and Misinformation on Social Media Chair: Norman Vasu, Deputy Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU</p> <p>Speakers :</p> <p>Social Media and Online Child Predators: What Investigations Reveal by Keshav S. Dhakad, Regional Director, IP & Digital Crimes Unit (DCU), Microsoft Asia</p> <p>Social Bots and Social Media Analysis – Insights from the Private Sector by Ashwin Reddy, CEO, Fiords and former Chief Social Media Strategy Officer, Kantar Group</p> <p>The Majority Illusion in Social Networks by Kristina Lerman, Project Leader, Information Sciences Institute, University of Southern California</p> <p>Mitigating Misinformation Spread on Micro-blogging Web Services using TweetCred by Ponnuramam Kumaraguru, Assistant Professor, Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, India</p>
1545 – 1600hrs	<p>Networking Break Venue : MMB Foyer, Level 1</p>	
1600 – 1720hrs	<p>Panel 3: Governance Chair : Kumar Ramakrishna, Head of Policy Studies, Office of the Executive Deputy Chairman, RSIS, NTU</p> <p>Speakers :</p> <p>Managing Full Spectrum Communications - Experience from the Cross-government Space by Emily Hands, Head of National Security Communications, PMO, UK</p> <p>Strategic Communication and Governance: The MINDEF Perspective by Dinesh Vasu Dash, Director (Information), Information Directorate, MINDEF, Singapore</p> <p>Attempting to Reshape History through Social Media: Implications for Governance by Bilveer Singh, Associate Professor, National University of Singapore and Adjunct Senior Fellow, CENS, RSIS, NTU</p> <p>Regular Q & A</p>	
1720hrs	<p>End of Day 1</p>	<p>1050 – 1115hrs Networking Break Venue : MMB Foyer, Level 1</p>
1800 – 2030hrs	<p>Workshop Dinner (By Invitation Only) Venue : Peach Blossom, Level 5</p>	<p>1115 – 1300hrs Interactive Syndicate Discussions</p> <p>Syndicate 1 Venue : Aquarius Ballroom, Level 1</p> <p>Syndicate 2 Venue : Gemini Ballroom, Level 1</p>

Friday, 6 November 2015

Syndicate 3

Venue :

Pisces Ballroom, Level 1

Syndicate 4

Venue :

Libra Ballroom, Level 1

1300 – 1400hrs

Lunch

Venue :

Capricorn Ballroom, Level 1

1400 – 1545hrs

Panel 5: Social Media in Analysis and Investigation

Chair :

Damien D. Cheong, *Coordinator, Homeland Defence Programme and Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

Speakers :

The Love Trap: Using Dating Apps for Sexual Offences by **Alexis Loh**, *NUS* and **Majeed Khader**, *Deputy Director Police Psychological Services Division, Concurrently Director, Home Team Behavioural Sciences Centre*

Stealing More Than Just Your Heart:

Online Love Scams by **Yee Zhi Wei**, *NTU* and **Majeed Khader**, *Deputy Director Police Psychological Services Division, Concurrently Director, Home Team Behavioural Sciences Centre*

Using Social Media to Investigate Crimes – Insights from the

Singapore Police Force by **Teo Wee Meng**, *Head Technology Crime Investigation Branch, Criminal Investigation Department*

Regular Q & A

1545 – 1600hrs

Networking Break

Venue :

MMB Foyer, Level 1

1600hrs

End of Day 2

1830 – 2030hrs

Closing Dinner (by Invitation Only)

Venue :

AquaMarine, Level 4

LIST OF SPEAKERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

SPEAKERS

Keshav S. Dhakad

Regional Director, IP & Digital Crimes Unit (DCU),
Microsoft Asia

Dinesh Vasu Dash

Director (Information), Information Directorate, MINDEF

David Epstein

Vice President, Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, Optus,
and former Chief-of-Staff, Kevin Rudd Govt. Australia

Emily Hands

Head of National Security Communications, PMO, UK

Bertha Henson

Consulting Editor, The Middle Ground

Majeed Khader

Deputy Director Police Psychological Services Division,
Concurrently Director, Home Team Behavioural Sciences
Center

Ponnurangam Kumaraguru

Assistant Professor, Indraprastha Institute of
Information Technology, India

Kristina Lerman

Project Leader, Information Sciences Institute,
University of Southern California

Alexis Loh

Fourth year psychology undergraduate, National
University of Singapore

Marc Lourdes

Editor-in-Chief, Yahoo Singapore

Patrick Nathan

VP Corporate Information and Communication, SMRT

Meera Jane Navaratnam

Digital Strategy Consultant, Accenture

Ashwin Reddy

CEO, Fiords and former Chief Social Media Strategy
Officer, Kantar Group (India)

Bilveer Singh

Associate Professor, National University of Singapore
and Adjunct Senior Fellow, CENS, RSIS, NTU

Teo Wee Meng

Head Technology Crime Investigation Branch, Criminal
Investigation Department

Wu Jie Zhen

Executive Director, The Hidden Good

Yee Zhi Wei

Final year psychology undergraduate, Nanyang
Technological University, Singapore

CHAIRPERSON

Damien D. Cheong

Coordinator, Homeland Defence Programme and
Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National
Security (CENS), S. Rajaratnam School of International
Studies (RSIS), NTU

Caitríona H. Heintz

Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National
Security (CENS), S. Rajaratnam School of International
Studies (RSIS), NTU

Shashi Jayakumar

Senior Fellow and Head, Centre of Excellence for
National Security (CENS), S. Rajaratnam School of
International Studies (RSIS), NTU

Kumar Ramakrishna

Associate Professor and Head of Policy Studies in the
Office of the Executive Deputy Chairman, S. Rajaratnam
School of International Studies (RSIS), NTU

Norman Vasu

Senior Fellow and Deputy Head, Centre of Excellence
for National Security (CENS), S. Rajaratnam School of
International Studies (RSIS), NTU

ABOUT CENS

The **Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS)** is a research unit of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Established on 1 April 2006, CENS raison d'être is to raise the intellectual capital invested in strategising national security. To do so, CENS is devoted to rigorous policy-relevant analysis across a range of national security issues.

CENS is multinational in composition, comprising both Singaporeans and foreign analysts who are specialists in various aspects of national and homeland security affairs. Besides fulltime analysts, CENS further boosts its research capacity and keeps abreast of cutting edge global trends in national security research by maintaining and encouraging a steady stream of Visiting Fellows.

ABOUT RSIS

The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** is a professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. RSIS' mission is to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of security studies and international affairs. Its core functions are research, graduate education and networking. It produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Region Studies. RSIS' activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia Pacific.

For more information about RSIS, please visit www.rsis.edu.sg.

ABOUT NSCS

The **National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS)** was set up in the Prime Minister's Office in July 2004 to facilitate national security policy coordination from a Whole-Of-Government perspective. NSCS reports to the Prime Minister through the Coordinating Minister for National Security (CMNS). The current CMNS is Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Mr Teo Chee Hean.

NSCS is headed by Permanent Secretary (National Security and Intelligence Coordination). The current PS (NSIC) is Mr Benny Lim, who is concurrently Permanent Secretary (National Development) and Permanent Secretary (Prime Minister's Office).

NSCS comprises two centres: the National Security Coordination Centre (NSCC) and the National Security Research Centre (NSRC). Each centre is headed by a Senior Director.

The agency performs three vital roles in Singapore's national security: national security planning, policy coordination, and anticipation of strategic threats. It also organises and manages national security programmes, one example being the Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior National Security Officers, and funds experimental, research or start-up projects that contribute to our national security.

For more information about NSCS, visit <http://www.nscs.gov.sg/>



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