

NATO ACO/ACT

DIGITAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT



DIGITAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT GUIDE

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Foreword

As technology and capabilities evolve, managing digital and social media becomes an essential component for communicating effectively. Digital media is a robust and relatively recent evolution in NATO's ability to directly communicate with our audiences.

Digital media management is the process of harnessing and combining capabilities to achieve communication goals. The effective use of this media matches diverse skills to a Commander's intent, including creatives, analytics and production. As a broader community, building effective digital media products and campaigns for NATO necessitates that we understand, utilize and blend technological advances with NATO content.

The goal of the introductory Digital Media Management Guide is to help our community accomplish this intent by streamlining, standardising and synchronising digital media management.

What do we mean by streamlining, standardising and synchronizing our digital media management?

To streamline our efforts, the Digital Media Management Guide helps with the creation of compelling, consistent content, and the effective sharing of information in line with existing regulations and operational security.

It's deliberately designed to be an overview and to serve as a companion, not a replacement, to the Allied Command Operations Public Affairs Handbook Version 2014. In this sense, it is important to note this guide is for information purposes only and does not replace official policy.

To standardize our efforts, the Digital Media Management Guide steers media practitioners through digital media management from beginning to end with the aim of serving as an introduction to basic elements of media outreach, products and activities and to share best practices throughout the NATO military public affairs community.

The guide is formatted for A4 printing, and is also an interactive pdf with clickable links. Updates will be posted on the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) NATO Secret Portal and the Supreme Allied Command ACT Connect portal. Updates will be disseminated periodically. We hope you find this guide to be a useful tool as we seek to maximise our impact through standardisation of the digital media management process throughout NATO military public affairs.

We would like to thank Shannon Smith for her efforts in spearheading and coordinating this initiative and all those who provided feedback.

To ensure that this guide meets the needs of the various commands, we appreciate your continued inputs.



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TYPES & TERMS

in digital and social media

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Promotes social interaction among users through posts, commentaries, links, photos and videos (e.g. Facebook, Google+).

BLOGS

“Web Log.” Websites with regular entries of commentary or other material (e.g. WordPress, TypePad). “Vlogging” is blogging with video.

MICROBLOGS

Content in a limited message format (e.g. Twitter, Tumblr).

VIDEO SHARING

Provides a location where users upload, share and view videos (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Meerkat, Periscope).

PHOTO SHARING

Uses a website to host and share images (e.g. Flickr, Instagram).

LOCATION-BASED

Allows users to check-in and connect with people as they explore a particular place (e.g. Foursquare).

SOCIAL NEWS/BOOKMARKING

A forum where users share social news in trending topics. Some social news feeds combine social bookmarking on news-related items, allowing users to manage specific content according to preference (e.g. Reddit, Digg, Delicious).

VISUAL BOOKMARKING

A platform that uses a “visual” bookmark feature to allow users to share Web links to information through imagery (e.g. Pinterest, Fancy, StumbleUpon).

DIGITAL MEDIA

the medium used to create content

&

SOCIAL MEDIA

the platforms we use to communicate
messaging online

BITLY – A free site that shortens URL links to make them easier to share on social networks.

CLICKBAIT – Usually a sensationalised headline designed to pique curiosity and attract clicks.

CONVERSION RATE – A common social media metric used to demonstrate the percentage of people who completed an intended action (i.e. filling out a form, following a social account, etc.).

EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY – promotion of an organisation by its staff. Most effective when genuine: where members share and distribute by choice, not by direction.

ENGAGEMENT RATE – The amount of interaction, depending on the platform (likes, shares, comments) a particular piece of content gets.

MEME – A single image, gif, or video expressing a cultural symbol or concept with a simple text element, which has been spread widely and quickly (i.e. “has gone viral”). Pronounced so as to rhyme with “team.”

GEO-TAGGING – Enables geographical identification metadata to be embedded into photos, videos, posts through location-based applications and devices. The data usually consists of latitude and longitude coordinates, but can also include altitude, bearing and place names.

GIF – Graphics Interchange Format. Serve as small-scale animations and short film clips. Pronounced with a hard G.

HEADER IMAGE – The large photo displayed at the top of your profile on various platforms. Can also be called banner or cover image. Dimensions vary depending on the platform.

PODCAST – A series of digital media files, usually audio, that are released as episodes.

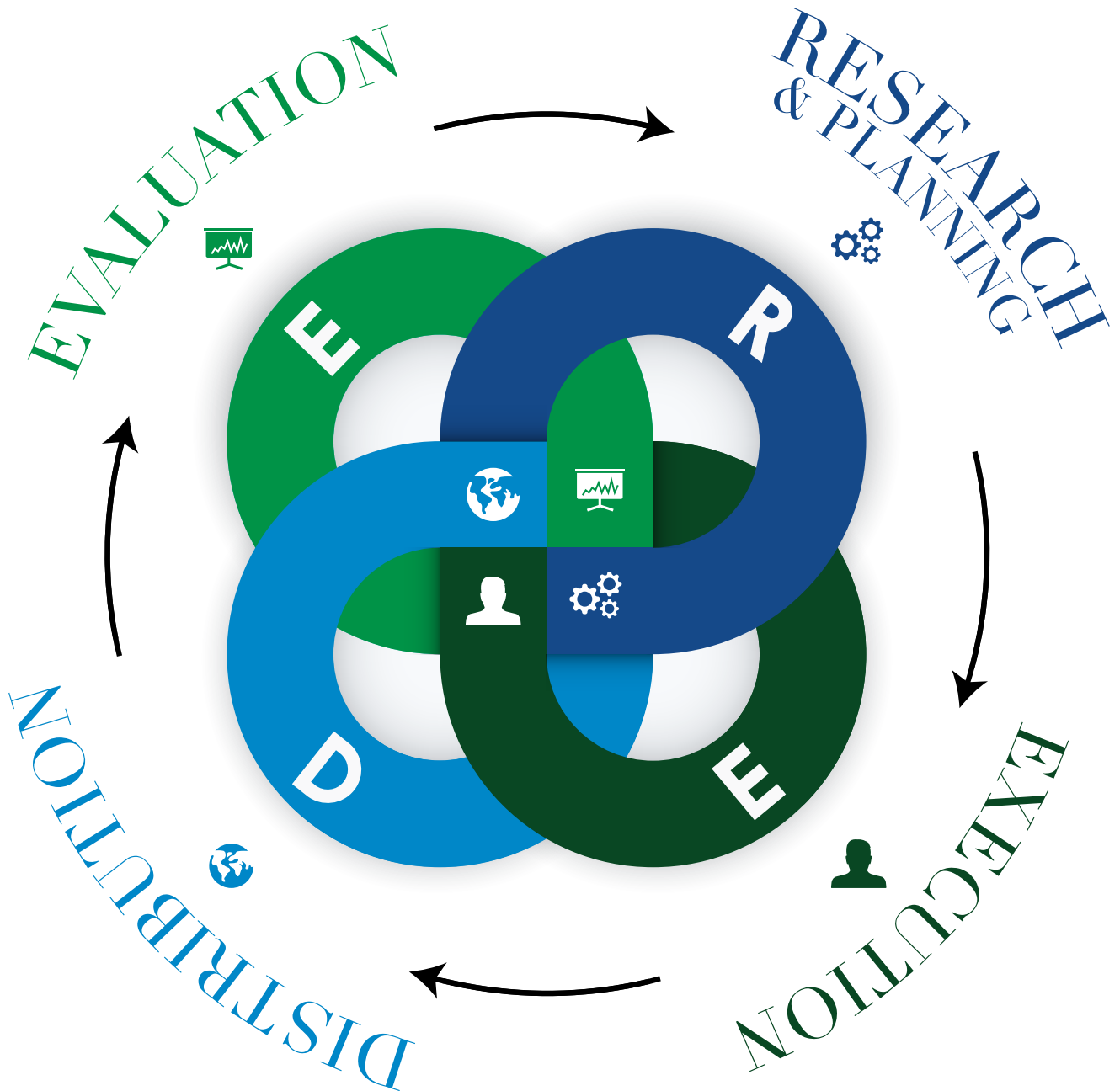
TIMELINE – Area on your Facebook account that allows you to display photos, videos and posts by event date.

TWITTER CHAT – Discussions that occur on Twitter around a specific hashtag at a certain day and time.

TROLL – A person who creates controversy in an online setting, often in a disrupting or disparaging manner.

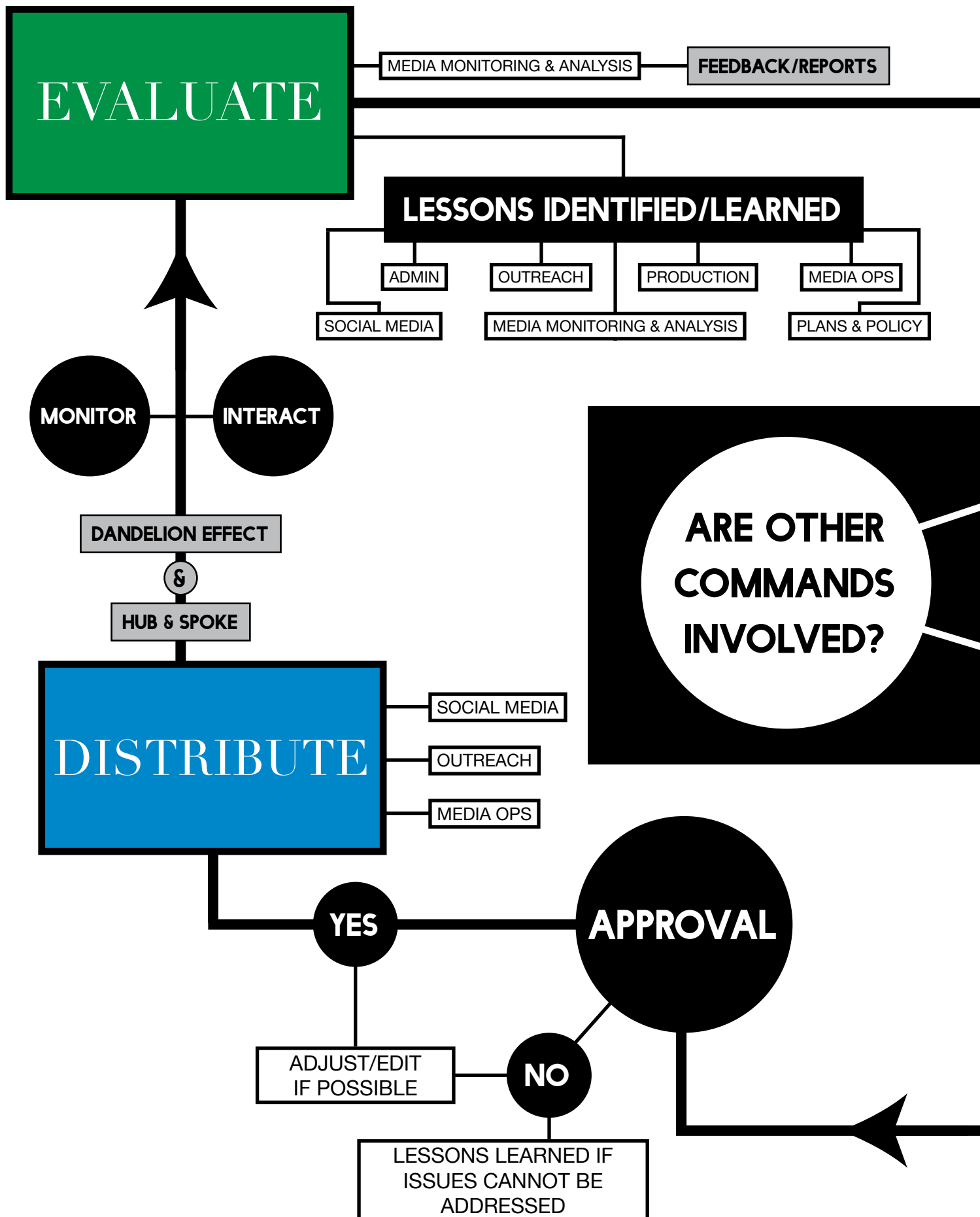
USER-GENERATED CONTENT – Created by your audience, people outside your internal organisation.

DIGITAL MANAGEMENT *PROCESS FLOWCHART*



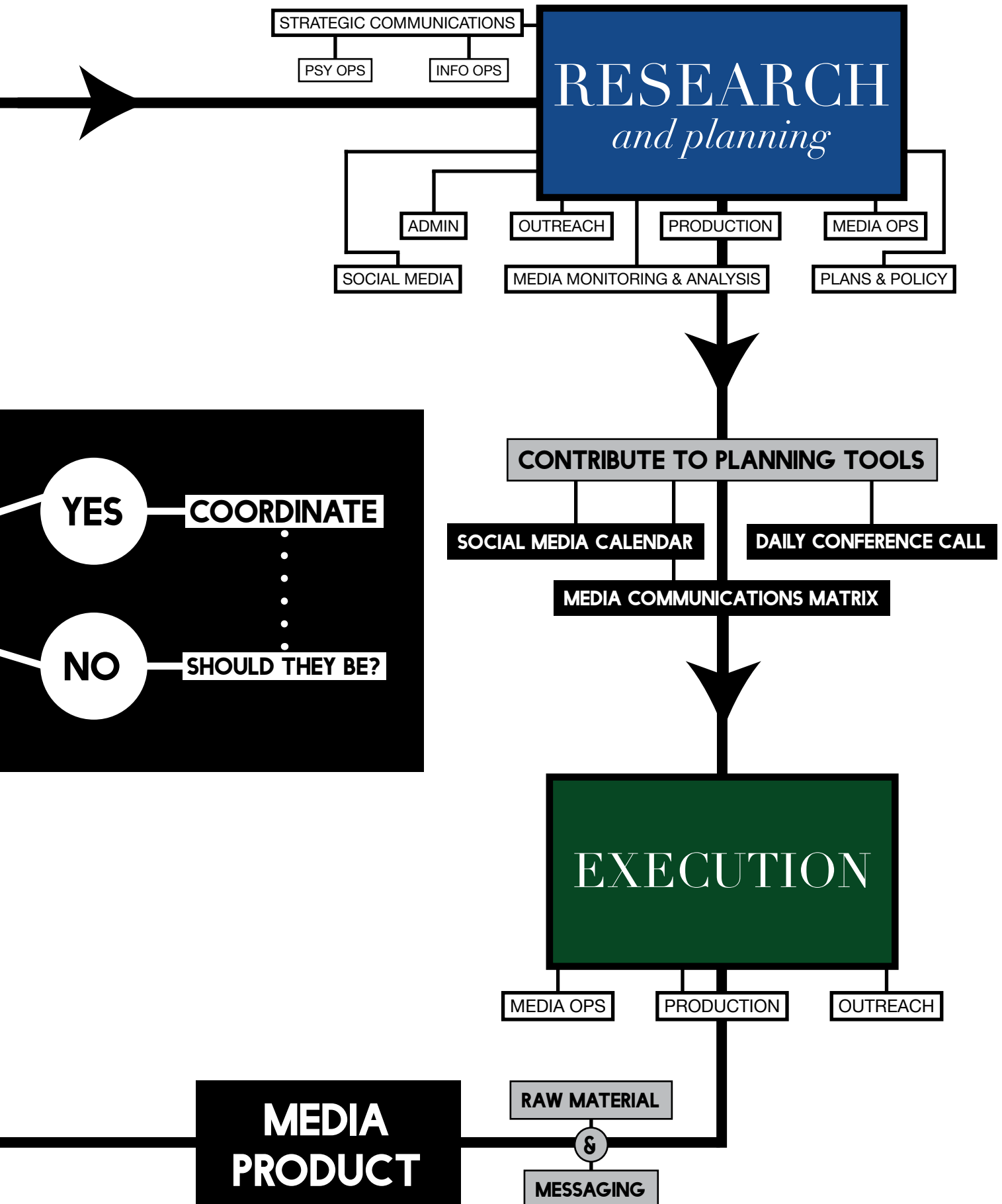
This is a simple version of the digital media management flowchart, which demonstrates the concept and evolution of the process. Each part of the process is linked with others, contributing to one another throughout the cycle. No part is independent. Neither is there a beginning or end, but rather a repeated, continuous cycle.

DIGITAL MANAGEMENT *PROCESS FLOWCHART*



START HERE

BUT REMEMBER IT'S A CONTINUOUS CYCLE



RESEARCH

and planning

(You can't be effective unless you know what you want to achieve)

Research and planning are key to success in any military operation.

This is also true of public affairs in the digital domain.

Research can identify influential audiences and information needs, which will inform decisions such as appropriate messages, preferred delivery methods and required intensity.

You must also be able to evaluate or reassess the communications strategy to be able to refine and tailor the plan as things evolve or change.

A properly researched plan will help the public affairs team anticipate possible issues and more easily adapt to situations. It also helps establish performance objectives that are both realistic and measurable. Without these, you may never know if you have achieved the goal you set out to meet.

Finally, a plan will help you maximise the capacities of other units or commands. Public Affairs Officers must develop detailed, easily understood digital management plans that are integrated into the planning staff's efforts and reflect command priorities.



DEVELOP CAPABILITIES AND STRATEGY

To meet communication objectives, you must define goals within your role to contribute to the command's mission. Plan your activities around meeting the following goals:

Inform NATO personnel and family members of command news, announcements and accomplishments, to promote readiness of the command.

Keep audiences informed and motivated through information about our role and activities.

Build cohesion through inclusion of contributions by all Allies and partner nations.

Engage in dialogue with the transatlantic community including employees and family members to build awareness and understanding about our role and activities.

Achieve greater awareness and support for our command's mission among the global community to ensure future success.

PRIMARY AUDIENCES

With digital media and social media platforms, we can potentially reach everyone with access to a computer or phone. However, we should still consider who will be most impacted by information and products.

NATO strives to interact with a variety of audiences, each with different interests, levels of understanding and technological capabilities. Communicating effectively with these audiences is essential to promote understanding and support for NATO.

IDENTIFY
the priority audience
&
DON'T EXCLUDE
other potential audiences

External Audiences: All non-NATO entities, including the media and the general population.

Internal Audiences: Chains of command, families, military and civilian personnel.

Theatre/Regional: Local interest due to proximity.

Third Party Actors/Key Influencers: Think-tanks, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Key Stakeholders: Organisations, commands, corporations or people with a vested interest.

"Fence Sitters": The great undecided. Those who have yet to show interest or disinterest in NATO.

Adversaries: Those working to counter NATO efforts.

NATO can communicate to these audiences directly, through third party advocates, or through the media, all of which may echo or dispute NATO messages.

It is important to understand that the media is both an audience and a medium by which NATO tries to reach a wider audience.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Regardless of the model used, the following key questions guide all military PA planning.

- *Who* is your audience?
- *Why* are you communicating? What effect is sought?
- *What* is your message?
- *How* are you going to tell it?
- *When* are you going to tell it?
- What is the overall *environment* into which you are communicating?
- How do you *measure progress* or success?
- Are there limiting *factors*? (e.g. security, privacy)
- How does this *fit* into the overall NATO picture?
- What *assets* are required?
- Develop a *visual imagery* dissemination plan. How will PA get images to the general public?
- Who are the *subject matter experts* to speak on these issues? Are they willing to speak, prepared to speak and available to speak at the decisive points?
- Are there *national restrictions* for release?

USING STRATEGY AND COORDINATION FOR CONSISTENCY

PAOs must advise commanders on the best communication options to use, and also maximise various technologies, social media platforms and training to derive the greatest effect when communicating actions and intent.

Coordination between commands and departments will help determine the content that needs to be created for each event or situation, and will help facilitate completion of these projects through appropriate resource allocation and by eliminating duplication of effort.

COORDINATE

for consistency and to eliminate redundancy

&

SHIFT AS NEEDED

identify opportunities and adapt accordingly

SELECTING PLATFORMS

Social media platforms should be used as a tool to position key themes and messages into the social space. Social media managers and operators should be provided with key themes and messages for events and topics, and then given the latitude to engage with audiences in creative, consistent and meaningful ways.

Digital and social communications strategies should not be rigid. Don't be afraid to adapt as needed. If a platform or technology has arisen that might be useful, test it

for your communication purposes. If a communications capability has lost its effectiveness, then shift gears. Just make sure to coordinate with other commands and consider all pros and cons first.

Depending on the type of content, different social media platforms may be more or less appropriate. Choose the best platforms for the command based on communication objectives, audience preferences and the ability to fill platforms with content. Coordinate with other NATO commands and stakeholders to be consistent, with the understanding that not every command has the same capacity to use various platforms.

Once platforms are selected, use the provided checklist below to help ensure the site or platform has the necessary elements to fulfil requirements.

CHECKLIST

Incorporate the following on all sites and platforms

User Terms of Agreement: An account must have a user terms of agreement statement.

Labelled as official and as a government organisation. Use the official logo to brand visually.

Official URL: The account must have a URL to an official website.

Open to the public: Publicly accessible.

Security Settings: Include two-step verification if available. Use complex passwords, with a different password for each platform.

Point of contact: The account must list a valid .nato email address.

DEVELOP A PLAN TO MANAGE SITES & PLATFORMS

• Objectives for the site:

What do you hope to accomplish?

• Audiences:

Who are you trying to reach?

• Content type/frequency:

What is important or interesting to your audience?

What type of content will you post /share?

• Comment policy:

How will the page be moderated? Will comments require approval before posting, or get published immediately? What determines if a post should be removed and is this policy transparent and visible?

• Site administrators:

Who has access? Ensure there are multiple administrators to allow for vacations, emergencies.

• Monitoring policy:

Who will monitor the page? How often? How will you respond and engage with your community?

• Transition plan:

When people or positions change, how and when will you transfer roles to ensure capability is not lost?

• Evaluating:

How will you track posts to evaluate how content performs over time? What tools will you use?

THE CONVERSATION PRISM

The world wide web is evolving.

There is a *massive* world of digital and social media out there, influencing how people access content, how they process and evaluate information, and how they express themselves. As much as possible, we want to tap into the nature of social media to connect and distribute content widely. This goes beyond the selection of the platforms we operate; it shapes how we create the content for consumption in this environment. Social media is here to stay, and it's bigger than just the traditional core platforms. Could we possibly operate and fill all these platforms? Perhaps not. But, we can try to understand how they feed into one another and impact our core audiences.



The “Conversation Prism” was developed in 2008 by Brian Solis and Jess3. It’s a visual map of the social media landscape, an “ongoing study in digital ethnography that tracks dominant and promising social networks and organises them by how they’re used in everyday life.”

For more information, visit their website: <https://conversationprism.com>

PLANNING CONTENT

It's important to stay consistent, relevant and active. How do you accomplish this? Most of this can be done through prepwork and organisational planning through a content calendar or plan. Each command should use the established tools (below) to plan their content and coordinate with other commands regarding work distribution and release.

Media Communications Matrix: A detailed list of all upcoming events and activities. Includes dates for Distinguished Visitor days and media days, and provides a point of contact for the lead command. Commands can collaborate through a regular video teleconference (VTC) as to which events have the greatest opportunities for coverage.

Daily Conference Call: Commands share their local PA activity, queries and upcoming releases. A great resource for awareness and finding content to amplify, as well as syncing content for upcoming events. Also useful for awareness of various issues and events that may affect other sections and divisions within a command.

Social Media Content Calendar: Consider creating a social media content calendar to help organise planned activity. These can be as detailed as needed to prepare future content for specific dates. Social media calendars help members plan ahead for large events, so they are not caught off guard, and also help generate “evergreen” content for periods of low activity. This doesn't mean you can't be spontaneous; rather, you should be prepared to be flexible. Please see example below.

RELEASE AUTHORITY AND CHAIN OF APPROVAL

Any command use of social media must comply with public affairs policy and guidance.

Content posted must be already in the public domain (still adhering to copyright and privacy laws) or approved for release by the commanding officer, public affairs officer, or other personnel with release authority on behalf of the command.

It is imperative to establish and follow formal release authority and approval procedures. These should be clearly defined as part of the planning stage.

ASSIGN ROLES

avoid single points of failure

&

SEEK ADDITIONAL APPROVAL

for special topics

Without clear rules regarding information release, mistakes impacting NATO credibility and professionalism might be made. Without designating the personnel responsible for approval, timeliness of material might suffer.

Avoid single points of failure and set designated alternates for approval roles. In addition, create a list of unique topics that need special approval to post, such as national sensitivities.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan 1 - 7	Jan 1, 17	2	3 NATO exercises with Operation ACE Guar	4 Resolute Support Vi	5 Handover / Takeove	6 annual review videc BAP CoC Lithuania; BAP Germany; HQ A	7 NATO participates ir
Jan 8 - 14	8 #ForAFG; Kabul	9 #ForAFG; Kabul JFC Naples assumes	10 #ForAFG; Kabul	11 #ForAFG; Kabul AirCom HQ photo ir HOTO HQ ARRC fror KFOR story on soldi RS retweet condemi	12 #ForAFG; Kabul annual review videc Shared LANDCOM p Historic winter pictu HOTO facebook sha HOTO press release;	13 #ForAFG; Kabul Shared LANDCOM p Shared NATO's milit;	14 #ForAFG; Kabul Royal Air Force on f
Jan 15 - 21	15 #ForAFG; Kabul	16 #ForAFG; Kabul Canada joins SNMG COC SNMG1; MARC KFOR donations NATO AWACS traini RS, DCOM visits Bru	17 #ForAFG; Kabul IMS - MCCS JFC Naples Story fir Kosovo Force donal NATO Women; Carn	18 #ForAFG; Kabul Belgium eFP Change of Comman General Scaparrotti MCCS - SACEUR; NA Poland in Afghan; F	19 #ForAFG; Kabul Admiral Howard; Ne Baltic Military Winte Kuznetsov; MARCOI Lithuania - eFP Photo: SNMG1 Non	20 #ForAFG; Kabul Afghan Winter Trair Cyber Coalition General Nicholson C General Scaparrotti Germany eFP	21 #ForAFG Afghan Air Force tra
Jan 22 - 28	22 #ForAFG; Kabul NATO Allies sled tra NATO Declassified	23 #ForAFG; Kabul CSEL in Afghan MineCounterMeasu Royal Danish Air Fo Video: Estonian Cor	24 #ForAFG; Kabul NFIU - Slovakia Ope UNSCR 1325 - Story	25 #ForAFG; Kabul	26 #ForAFG; Kabul Kissinger visits SHAI	27 #ForAFG; Kabul SNMG1 in Keil, Gerr	28 SNMG2 in Istanbul;

This example is the content calendar used by NATO SHAPE, using Microsoft Outlook. Colours are used to identify which platforms will be used to distribute the content, representing the following: Blue - Facebook, Purple - Twitter, Teal - Website. National days, historic dates, exercises and complex media campaigns can all be organised here.

DEVELOP AN IMAGERY PLAN

The demand for imagery, to include still, video, surveillance and gun camera video, has increased in recent years as social media, imagery repositories, websites and other technological advancements have proliferated.

PAOs cannot request photos in a reactive manner or employ photographers with minimal guidance and expect to receive images of the right quantity, quality or, most importantly, content. Likewise, merely sending a photographer to an event or operation does not provide the guidance to address deadlines, transmission requirements or release authority of the images.

PAOs must develop imagery collection and dissemination plans and ensure they are included in operations plans. On the macro level, these plans are addressed in organisational Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) and appendices to the PA Annex. On the micro level, they are stated by detailed task and purpose by the photography team's supervisor.

When developing an Imagery Plan, these are just a few of the elements to consider:

Mission Objectives: How can imagery support?

Special Considerations: Agreements, restrictions, cultural taboos, or ethical issues that could limit imagery.

Dissemination: How will the imagery be published? In what format(s) should the imagery be submitted?

Timing: Will imagery be published immediately, archived for later or released as part of a phased plan?

Reception: Who will receive the imagery? How will they process or edit the images?

Transmission: What are the methods available for transmitting imagery? Are there bandwidth issues?

Release Authority: Who will release imagery?

Define End State: Make sure the team understands what "mission complete" looks like, and all expectations.

MILITARY PA OUTPUTS

Other products that contribute to the planning stage of public affairs activity include the following:

PA Strategy: The broad military PA approach that sets overall themes and goals for an organisation or initiative. This usually covers a longer period and should include enduring themes and overarching messages.

PA Plan: The details relating to the planning and conduct of a military PA-related activity; in other words the guidance detailing the why, what, where, when, how and by whom.

PA Guidance (PAG): A brief package of information provided as guidance to support the public discussion of organisational issues and events. This can include responses to anticipated media questions, military PA policy and community relations guidance. PAGs should also address the method(s), timing, location and other details governing the release of information to the public.

Messaging Products: Frequently, situations will dictate an immediate need for media response lines (MRLs), talking points (TPs), or lines to take (LTTs). PAGs and PA plans should already contain these proactively, but please remember lines alone do not replace a formal media plan.

OPERATIONAL SECURITY

The use of digital media and social media platforms poses risks regarding OPSEC and can lead to OPSEC violations. NATO adversaries are known to scan blogs, forums, chat-rooms and other social media platforms to collect information that may be harmful to NATO operations or personnel.

OPSEC IS PARAMOUNT

It is incumbent upon all personnel to consider the risk to themselves, their families, their peers and the mission when publishing information to the Internet.

Information and/or imagery may individually, or in conjunction with other information, provide insights into current NATO operations, equipment, capabilities, tactics and intentions.

CONDUCT TRAINING

Hold regular OPSEC training for everyone in the workplace.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

All information that is posted to social media platforms must be approved for public release. Knowingly or unknowingly releasing classified information into the public domain could lead to legal and/or disciplinary actions. If there is any doubt regarding the OPSEC implications of posting certain information, consult with PA or security staff. Monitor official social media presence and ensure users are not posting sensitive information.

BE VIGILANT

CRISIS RESPONSE

The best way to manage your response to a crisis effectively is to be prepared

Every issue or event, if not managed properly, could potentially escalate into a crisis. In a crisis, it is likely you will use social media and online platforms as the first resource to react and put out information. Because social media provides speed, reach and direct contact with audiences, it is a key tool in facilitating distribution of command information, as well as providing a place where people can receive updates.

BEFORE

- Establish a command presence on relevant social media platforms. You can't build trust in an instant; establish credibility and reliability through consistent, quality posts and activity.
- Plan and train multiple people at your command on crisis media management. Establish a list of personnel who may function in different roles to eliminate your structure collapsing if certain individuals are not present.
- Establish a list of alternative internal communication methods to contact one another in case the primary method is disrupted (e.g. Facebook messaging instead of texting).
- Keep an eye on the current issues in the media that could lead to your issues becoming a crisis.

DURING

- Use all available communication channels to distribute information to affected audiences.
- Communicate relevant and timely information as it is released; do not attempt to wait for the issue to be resolved completely. Be careful not to increase panic with misinformation, but don't delay posting released information that might be beneficial to the safety and security of others. Keep the public informed of developments as they occur. Remember OPSEC at all times.
- Listen to what people are saying, and answer questions as accurately and quickly as possible. Be aware that the prominence of crisis situations create an opportunity to use your platform for attention.
- Separate your team of available personnel according to tasks.
 - Someone to coordinate information and receive updates
 - Someone to put together new posts
 - Someone to approve or seek approval from higher authority as necessary
 - Someone just for online monitoring.

AFTER

- Thank community members for their support and their assistance in disseminating information, and answer their questions continuously.
- Canvas for lessons learned and incorporate changes into your crisis plan.
- Continue to provide updates and information.

EXECUTION

(Bringing all those plans together to create results)

Within PA, applied journalism is the term that describes using journalistic skills and writing techniques to deliver specific messages to target audiences. The following section covers the basic types of writing formats used for release, as well as the key elements that make quality content, whether it be for photos, video or articles. Research and coordination determines what content will be created in order to communicate messaging, and will help determine the necessary assets to achieve maximum effect and reach in order to achieve these goals. The next stage involves completing the plan and adjusting to changes, if necessary.

NATO personnel, such as photographers, videographers and/or editors, are assigned to accomplish whatever task is deemed necessary for the completion of the mission, upholding the professional standards and expectations for quality and credibility. Media products should engage, entice and inform our audiences, while encouraging them to share the message.



CONTENT CREATION

Considerations for creating compelling content to ensure visibility

- Make it engaging and visually interesting - don't just 'check the box'
- Do not use military slang or acronyms in organisational posts or articles
- Always explain references as if your audience is completely new to the topic
- Ensure the quality and substance of posts reflect the values of NATO
- Provide variety in types of media, consistency in quality
- Do not violate endorsement or copyright rules

PHOTO AND VIDEO ELEMENTS

Remember, the picture sells the story. There is a line between news-editorial versus art: photos and videos can be creative and thought-provoking, but must tell the story.

FOCUS

Is the photo or video properly focused? Depth of field can be used for effect, but photos still need to be sharp where it matters.

CLEAR SUBJECT & PURPOSE

What or who is the subject of the photo/video? Is it an exercise, a leader? Can you tell what is happening? Is it an accurate reflection of the action or events? Does it accurately depict the nature of the subject?

ACTION & REACTION

Does the action add understanding to an event or issue? Is the subject emotive or expressive? Capture the action and then capture the reaction to the action, e.g. soldiers in a parade, and audience members watching the parade.

COMPOSITION

Field of View: How close the subject appears relative to the camera: extreme long shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up and extreme close-up. Extreme long shots establish the scene, while close-ups provide intimacy and medium shots are preferred for interviews. A variety of these shots help tell the story and hold audience interest.

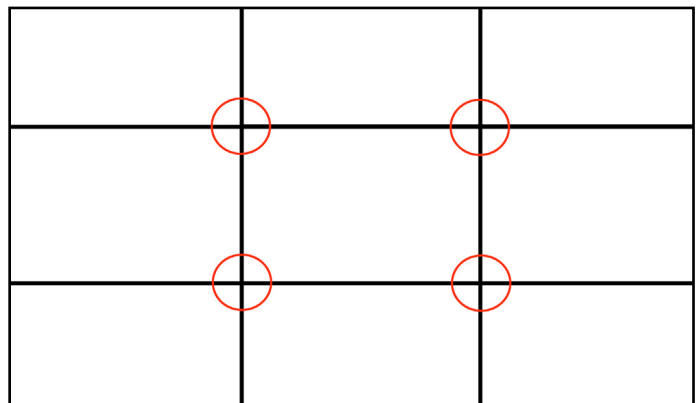
Context and Background: Incorporate a relevant background, whether it's a ship, aircraft or work centre. Consider where to place the horizon to emphasise the ground or sky. Avoid distractions in the background: lampposts, branches, competing elements, intrusive light or colour.

Headroom: The location of the subject's head within the frame. Leave some space so the shot doesn't feel too tight and to allow for post-production edits.

Nose Room/Lead Room: Leave room in front of a person when they are pointing, looking, or moving in a certain direction to indicate direction of travel.

Cut-off Lines/Points: Natural cut-off points that should be avoided like the waist, knees and elbows. When subjects are framed with these points at the edge of the screen, it appears as if the subject's body ends abruptly.

Rule of Thirds: Subjects placed in a visually appealing, dominant position by dividing the frame into three equal sections, vertically and horizontally, placing the subject on one or more of the four intersecting points.



Vary Angles and Proximity: Take both vertical and horizontal shots. Get in close when it's safe and respectful to do so. Intimate shots evoke more emotion.

Take shots from different angles: straight on, above, below, from unique vantage points wherever possible. However, ensure your photos still tell a story; don't sacrifice audience understanding for creativity. Beware that some angles can produce specific responses in viewers; see examples below.

High Angle: Camera is at a higher position, above the subject. May make the subject seem smaller, or less significant. An extreme high angle is called a "bird's-eye view."

Low Angle: Camera is at a lower position, below the subject. May cause the subject to seem intimidating or almost giant-like.

Dutch or Oblique or Canted or Angle: Not horizontal or vertical, but tilted. Creates a feeling of imbalance or transition.

Camera Movement (video)

Pans: A camera turns while placed on a tripod.

Tilts: Vertical pan.

Dolly or Trucking or Tracking: A camera moves while placed on a moving object.

Hand-held Shots: As described. Can produce a “fly-on-the-wall” effect, but is often disorienting if not stabilised.

LIGHTING & EXPOSURE

Aim for a well-balanced image, without areas that are too dark or too bright, also known as “blown” out. Information in these areas is lost, and the eye is naturally drawn towards the brightest parts of an image. Use natural/ambient light whenever possible. Use your flash to fill the subject and eliminate shadows when needed. Use a tripod for long exposures in dark environments.

COLOUR

Adjust white balance and pay attention to the temperature of the light. Colour can shift the mood of the photo (i.e. yellow seems warm and inviting, blue seems cold and distant). Be careful to not editorialise a situation unintentionally with colour.

QUALITY

Always take photos at the highest resolution possible, preferably 300 dpi (dots per inch) and using a RGB colour profile. High resolution photos can be reduced for online use, but low resolution photos cannot be increased for publication. However, don't let limitations in equipment stunt your coverage; use what is available!

Take as many photos as necessary to accomplish the mission and provide variety and context. Digital technology advances make storage capacity and capability greater than ever before. However, keep in mind that more raw product means more to edit and sort through in post-production, which can affect speed in processing.

WRITING FOR MEDIA PRODUCTS

CUTLINES & CAPTIONS

The terms ‘outline’ and ‘caption’ have become interchangeable over time; both give context and information.

Cutline (Traditional Definition): A stand-alone statement accompanying a photo release. The first sentence has the five W's (who, what, when, where, why) in present tense, the second sentence contains additional information usually in past tense.

Caption (Traditional Definition): A “headline” for a photo or video (e.g. “NATO gets intelligence chief”, followed by the full cutline).

Social Media “Cutlines”: Writing for social media audiences should be inviting and simple, with preference for quick understanding over formal style rules. Still try to encapsulate the information, but be more conversational.

Example:

“Mass Communication Specialist Petty Officer First Class Shannon Smith, from Hickman, Neb., takes a photo aboard the flightdeck of the amphibious transport dock ship USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19).

versus

PO1 Shannon Smith, from Hickman, Neb., takes a photo aboard the flightdeck on USS Mesa Verde.

CUTLINE GUIDELINES

Present Tense

Always write the first line as if it's happening now.

Describe Action

Clearly explain what is happening.

Identify in Detail

Usually list people in photo from left to right. Identify the location, provide detail and context.

Avoid Editorialising

Don't assume what someone is feeling or thinking, e.g. “enjoys a parade” versus “watches a parade”

Spellcheck

BROADCAST: RADIO & VIDEO

Writing for these formats still requires answering the five W's and two H's but requirements for length might mean adjustments in writing. Broadcast pieces are rarely longer than five minutes; short, informational pieces range between 10-30 seconds.

The best way to check the length of a broadcast release is to time it while reading aloud. This practice gives you an accurate idea of the length, and can help identify problem words and phrases. Reading aloud can also help determine if it has “ear-appeal”, that is, interesting, clear and understandable.

In order to not waste time writing copy only to cut for length, use this general rule of thumb to gauge word count to time: 10 seconds - 25 words; 20 seconds - 50 words; and 30 seconds - 70 words.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

These are basic guidelines for video and photo products, with the understanding of limitations in equipment, personnel and capability.

Video Basics

- Format: .MOV XDCAM HD in PAL (.MP4 H264 HD 25 Mbps as a fallback)
- Shots should be steady and in focus. In edited multimedia products, shots can vary between 3-7 seconds for diversity, sometimes shorter if a particular effect is desired.
- Interview at least two sources for soundbites. These should be 7-15 seconds long, using a unidirectional microphone, not ambient sound.

B-Roll

- No longer than 5 minutes, consisting of the best shots and soundbites.
- Shots should be in a sensible order, and follow the *Dope Sheet*: the suggested voiceover script.
- Each shot should be held for a minimum of 5 seconds.
- Include a *B-Roll Shotlist*: A document listing shots by timecode and description, including full names, titles and an explanation of the action, in enough detail to enable someone to use the B-roll without any additional footage.

Indicate type of shot: wide shot (WS), mid shot (MS), close up (CU), pan or tilt.

A series of very similar shots can be labeled as various shots (VS).

Soundbites may vary in language. Indicate language and location, and add English description.

Photo Basics

- Format: JPEG, 2200 pixels (height or width), 300 dpi and approximately 1-3 MB per photo.
- Batches of 5-7 of your best shots, with subject and angle variety.

Metadata/IPTC Content

- Cutline and credit line should be embedded into file using a photo editing program. Include a text file with this information if unable to embed.
- Consider spelling, grammar, keywords as these are extracted for publishing and online searches.

File Naming Example

- use the following format for consistency in labelling media products
- ***Date: (YYYYMMDD) + Content Author + Subject Description + File Extension***
e.g. 20150910_owen.ruth_FGS_Hamburg_test_fire.mov

Ethics

- Imagery must accurately reflect situations. Alteration or misrepresentation of events will erode credibility and trust.
- Permitted edits (without changing meaning of photo): dodging, burning, toning and cropping, slight colour correction, converting colour to black and white), with special exceptions for investigations and security concerns.

NEWS ELEMENTS

Stories should always be authentic, in good taste and have mass appeal. The ABCs of journalism apply, that is, accuracy, brevity and clarity. Information must be accurate as an absolute, writing should be as succinct as possible to maintain audience attention, and information should be presented clearly.

Accuracy

Use correct spelling, grammar and facts.
Information must be accurate to build trust and credibility.

Brevity

Keep it short. Be concise.
Avoid redundancy.

Clarity

Be understood. Write at the reading level of a 13 or 14 year-old person, but do not condescend. Put issues in context.
Explain terms and acronyms.

QUOTES

News stories should also include quotations from your key organisation representatives. These quotes, if used judiciously and effectively, can contribute to the story's readability, credibility and value. Quotes can provide an individual's point of view on a topic, they can add personality and interest to an issue, and they can help your audience better understand or relate to the subject.

Don't include dry quotes listing information that would be better condensed in a separate sentence, but remember to always attribute the information.

"The battle group will be comprised of 1,000 soldiers from three countries and will arrive in January," said Captain Lewis.

versus

The battle group, set to arrive in January, will be comprised of 1,000 soldiers from three countries, according to Captain Lewis.

EDITORIALISING

Don't use personal opinions in posts and news stories. Write in the third person. Attribute statements, facts and opinions to sources. It is possible to accidentally editorialise despite the best of intentions, such as saying someone is the most skilled. Beware of absolutes, such as saying a unit has always had the best safety record.

It's risky to assume facts, or to regurgitate statements that haven't been verified, so always re-write by citing facts or attribute to a source quote instead.

Petty Officer Smith is exceptionally qualified.

versus

Petty Officer Smith has a Bachelor's Degree in News-Editorial Journalism.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

When writing, information should be collected to answer the "5 Ws and 2 Hs".

Who: Include full details of person or group on first reference: rank, first name(s), last name(s). Full details of unit spelled out. On second and subsequent references use only the individual's last or family name.

What: Explain what happened/is being announced. Round numbers up or down.

When: Day and month. Don't include calendar year if the event or announcement is in the same year as publish date.

Where: Location but remember OPSEC.

Why: Explain the significance of the news event.

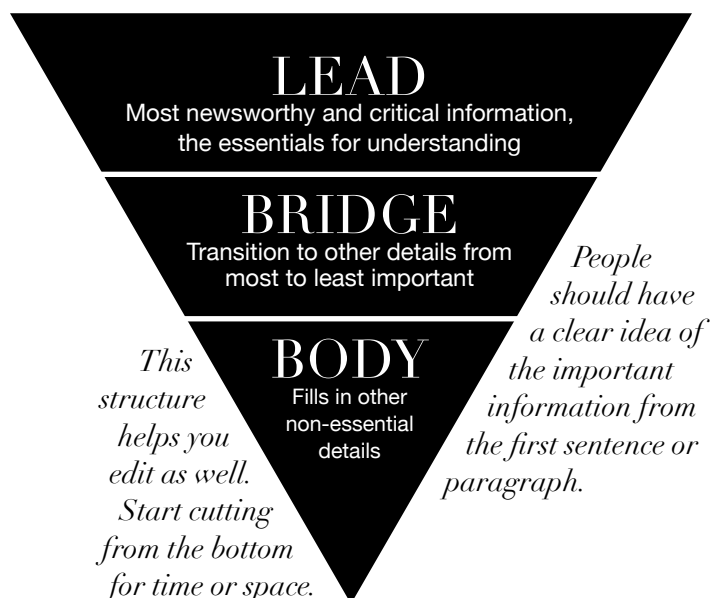
How: How will something be implemented? How did an incident happen? If there are Security, Accuracy, Privacy or Policy considerations that preclude releasing this information, state the reasons for omitting (see next page).

How much: What is the cost, if relevant?

Other: Where to go for more information, resources.

INVERTED PYRAMID

Once information is gathered, organise it using the inverted pyramid structure, which places information according to importance. This helps ensure the most critical information reaches the audience quickly.



PRINT PRODUCTS

While photos and videos are both necessary and valuable as visceral and immediate ways to access a story, they can't provide all the details, context and information alone. Written articles still provide a medium for storytelling in which complex, in-depth information can be provided in a descriptive and captivating way.

NEWS STORY

The news story is particularly effective for conveying factual information in a concise, standard format. Always write news stories in the active voice and the present tense. Be careful to avoid jargon, slang and abbreviations.

FEATURE WRITING

Sometimes referred to as 'soft news,' this product uses detail, character, anecdotes and emotion through a more descriptive, less formulaic writing style. The subject material must be timely and of interest to your intended audience.

Human-interest feature: Focuses on how an event affects an individual or group, or focuses on an individual's life to bring awareness or recognition to that individual or a broader topic.

Informative feature: Examines a subject or event in considerable depth.

NEWS RELEASE

Sometimes referred to as a press release. The news release provides both information and advance notice to external media regarding policy developments, operations, events and activities they may wish to cover in greater depth using their own resources.

As a fair and common practice, news releases should be sent to all appropriate media agencies that you interact with. Not all activities warrant the issuing of a news release. Sending non-news releases too frequently can backfire, resulting in media ignoring them altogether.

MEDIA ADVISORY

A mechanism to advise the media. Not a stand-alone story or release, a media advisory is used to advise or inform news agencies of upcoming, newsworthy events or activities. Media advisories may announce news conferences, visits by prominent individuals, etc. A media advisory is issued when you want to let the media know that something will be happening in order to generate interest and invite media to cover.

BACKGROUNDERS OR FACT SHEETS

Backgrounders or fact sheets are prepared to provide detail about a comprehensive subject or a subject that is detailed and complicated. Often prepared to accompany a news release to give amplifying or background information on a particular subject to provide context and information.

THE HOMETOWNER

Can be a feature story or photo and cutline sent in the form of a news release to community newspapers in the hometown of the person. Hometowns link an individual's "home" with information about current operations, policies and activities, which can raise personal morale and community support and understanding for the nation's military and NATO.

DON'T VIOLATE SAPP

Consider the following before including information in an article

Security: Formally classified or sensitive information, or information that falls under operational security, should not be included.

Accuracy: Information must be accurate and not speculative.

Propriety: Respect potential sensitivities. Don't post information or photos that could distress family members. Avoid profanity, obscenity, gore, excessive violence, or ridicule-inducing content. Do not show or imply a bias towards any commercial agency or product.

Policy: Does the release align with policy regarding how and when to release and who can release it? Release authority must have the authority, competency and ability to release.

ELEMENTS OF MASS APPEAL AND SHARE-ABILITY

*Content should be authentic, in good taste and be interesting.
The following elements of newsworthiness have mass appeal.*

Immediacy: Something happening now.

Timeliness: Relates to specific current event.

Prominence: High-profile people or events.

Proximity: Local, affects community.

Relevance: Something of interest to the public.

Suspense: A situation that is unfolding.

Emotion: Common experience or feelings.

Consequence: Cause and effect; impact.

Progress: Some sort of evolution or change

Oddity: Something unique, bizarre or rare.

Entertainment: Funny or amusing.

Sex: Gender, sexual orientation, or scandal.

Money: Financial interest or component.

Danger: Risk.

Controversy: Provokes public discussion.

Conflict: Sports, wars, even people vs. expectations.

WHY DO PEOPLE SHARE THINGS?

The more people find something entertaining or informative, the more they share, increasing your reach!
A New York Times study identified some key reasons people share content.

BRING VALUABLE CONTENT TO OTHERS

49% said sharing allows them to inform others, to entertain and even potentially change opinions or encourage action

TO DEFINE OURSELVES

68% share to give people a better sense of who they are and what they care about

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU!

Sharing behaviour is more about your audience's relationship with others than a direct response to you.

SELF-FULFILMENT

69% share information because it allows them to feel more involved

TO GROW AND NOURISH RELATIONSHIPS

78% share information online because it lets them stay connected to people they may not otherwise stay in touch with

AWARENESS FOR CAUSES OR BRANDS

84% share because it is a way to support causes or issues

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Creating content more likely to be shared can increase visibility through reach and can also impact understanding. 73% said they process information more deeply, thoroughly and thoughtfully when they share; 85% said reading other people's responses helps them understand and process. Consider the elements below when creating content to maximise our potential to reach audiences.

Value: Assess what readers will get from the content you produce. What's in it for them?

Self-definition: Content that shows a piece of identity, whether it's a person's nation, military, etc., will help them express themselves to others.

Passion: Inspire people to care about NATO, about its people and operations with personal content.

Trust: Credibility and transparency mean everything. People will not share things they don't trust.

WEB STORY PUBLICATION

Regarding your website, please refer to ACO Directive 095-005. No changes are to be made to the website template without prior authorisation from SHAPE PAO.

Headline

- This is the first, and sometimes only, thing your audience will see. Make your headline accurate, simple, straightforward and interesting to entice readers into clicking through.
- Must be different from the summary and first sentence of the article.
- Use present tense.
- Do not capitalise your entire title.
- Try to avoid using too many acronyms in the title.

Story Summary

- This is a short description of the article, limited to one or two sentences. It will be displayed with the thumbnail image accompanying the story in the news archive section on the website.
- Do not simply copy and paste the beginning of your story.

Story Composition

- Start with a placeline (See style guide, page 24).
- Story should have five to six paragraphs maximum.
- Story must include a quote.
- Use the inverted pyramid scheme.
- Ensure that you leave a space between paragraphs and use the paste text function to avoid inputting formatting from another source such as Microsoft Word.
- Give attribution to who wrote the story as a separate line at the bottom in bold italics.

*e.g. Story by **SHAPE Public Affairs Office***

Photos

- You need two photos, one for the thumbnail and one for the body of the story.
- The photo in the body **MUST** have a cutline with attribution given to the photographer or outlet who provided the photo to you.
- Do not publish additional photos at the end of the story. It looks sloppy and unprofessional.
- If you have additional photos, use a more suitable platform (such as Flickr) to publish. Include the link to the additional photos at the end of the article with a call to action.

e.g. To view more photos of Exercise Dynamic Mongoose, please [click here](#).

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SACEUR and CSEL visit Bosnia and Herzegovina



10 NOV 2016

SARAJEVO, Bosnia and Herzegovina - Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Curtis M. Scaparrotti, and Command Sergeant Major Davor Petek, Allied Command Operations Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL), met with senior political and military leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina on Wednesday, November 9.

During the visit, General Scaparrotti met with President Ivić and members of the Presidency to discuss the way forward in building capacities essential to achieving Bosnia and Herzegovina's long-term security, as well as full integration into the Euro-Atlantic system.

"I would like to emphasize the progress Bosnia and Herzegovina has made on key requirements such as the Defense Review and the registration of defence properties, on its path towards full NATO membership," said Scaparrotti. "It is important to bring these to the finish line by the established deadline," he added.



Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Curtis M. Scaparrotti and Command Senior Enlisted Leader Sergeant Major Davor Petek address NATO Headquarters Sarajevo command teams on Thursday, November 9. - Photo by U.S. Air National Guard Technical Sergeant Chelsea Clark

While in Sarajevo, General Scaparrotti was able to take the opportunity to talk with the Minister of Defence, Marina Pendeš about Bosnia and Herzegovina's contributions to the Alliance and concerns in the region.

"I want to thank the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina for their active support to the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan and the other work with Allies and partner countries in many other areas," said Scaparrotti.

Finally, General Scaparrotti met with Major General Friedrich Schrötter, Commander European Union Force Althea before addressing the NATO Headquarters Sarajevo command teams. While speaking to the command teams, SACEUR and CSEL stressed the significant importance of the command team relationship and role of the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Corps. SACEUR and CSEL were also briefed on the ongoing initiatives of the NCO Corps development in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Story by SHAPE Public Affairs Office

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STYLE GUIDE

quick reference items

NATO uses the Reuters style guide, with some exceptions, for copy editing for continuity across numerous language styles. This condensed list contains the most frequently used items. Use your handbook for more or visit the [Reuters Handbook of Journalism](#).

DATES – Place in order of month-day-year. Place the year inside commas if a specific date is used, e.g. Aug. 2, 1990. Spell out full months unless used with a specific date, e.g. January 1990 versus Jan. 2.

With durations, use prepositions and conjunctions instead of hyphens unless using range as an adjective. e.g. “from May 22 to 24”; “between 1939 and 1945”; “the 1939-45 war.”

Write 9/11, not 9-11.

NEWSWEEK CALENDAR – Includes a week in either direction of today’s date where dates can be used more conversationally. If not within this time frame, use full date upon reference, e.g. ‘NATO SHAPE celebrated its 65th anniversary on Monday’ versus ‘Armistice Day is Nov. 11.’

Don’t use the newweek calendar for cutlines, always use full date for posterity and to avoid confusion.

DATELINES & PLACE LINES – These are used at the beginning of an article to indicate location of release. A dateline is comprised of the place and the date, while placeline is the place only. NATO uses placeline, not dateline.

The city is written in uppercase, followed with a dash. Cities recognised internationally stand alone; include the country or state in title case for lesser known or confusing cities.

SPELLING

use British English, except for official spellings for U.S. names and titles.

&

NATO

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Brussels). Use acronym at first reference with the full name given later.

Misc.

ACRONYMS –

Spell out on first reference, except for NATO.

KILOMETRE –

Use km (no period, same singular and plural) unless in a phrase.

ARMoured VEHICLES – If in doubt about the name, use armoured vehicle.

Aircraft

Use aircraft not plane, airplane or fighter jet. Capitalise, but don’t put in quotation marks, the names of aircraft, e.g. Hercules. Hyphenate when the number is preceded by letters, e.g. Boeing 777 but MD-90. Use makers’ names according to Jane’s All the World’s Aircraft, e.g. MiG-35. Use numerals for aircraft speeds, e.g. Mach 1. Aircraft names

use a hyphen when changing from letters to figures, no hyphen when adding a letter to figures, e.g. F-15 Eagle/Tu-22M.

AIR BASE, AIR RAID

AIRSPACE, AIRSTRIKE, WARPLANE

AWACS – Airborne Warning And Control System.

UAV – Spell out unmanned aerial vehicle on first reference.

Battle

BATTLEFIELD, BATTLEDRESS, BATTLEFRONT, BATTLEGROUND
CEASEFIRE

often on a wide front, by air, sea or ground forces.

RAID – Use only when a force attacks and then leaves an objective, as opposed to occupying it.

Ships

WARSHIP – A naval vessel, though not necessarily an armed one. Identify the type – e.g. fast patrol-boat, corvette, frigate, destroyer, cruiser. Never use battleship as a synonym for warship.

AIRCRAFT CARRIER – A floating airfield, it carries fixed-wing aircraft on its flight deck and/or helicopters.

GUNFIRE, GUNMAN, GUNPOINT

OFFENSIVE –

More specific than attack. An extensive attack spanning days,

ASSAULT SHIP – A warship that supports amphibious and air operations against a land-based enemy.

SUBMARINE – A submarine may fight submerged or on the surface, using torpedoes or tactical or strategic missiles. Two main types depending on propulsion method: nuclear and diesel electric.

UNITS & FORMATIONS

Note: check for national exceptions.

Use capitals of a specific unit, e.g. the 1st Infantry Division, use ‘division’ otherwise.

SQUAD – The basic building block of an army, equivalent to the British section of eight soldiers. Three squads/sections form a platoon.

PLATOON – The essential tactical unit in any army, capable of pa-

trolling, attacking and defending independently. An infantry platoon typically has three sections or squads.

COMPANY – Usually three platoons commanded by a major or captain. In a cavalry unit the term squadron may be used.

BATTALION – The basic building block of any big military formation, a battalion comprises about 500 to 1,000 soldiers, broken down into companies, platoons, squads or sections.

BRIGADE – Several battalions or regiments grouped together.

DIVISION – A group of brigades.

CORPS – Usually at least two divisions.

ARMY – At least two corps.

INFANTRY – Soldiers who fight on foot.

REGIMENT & SQUADRON – Be careful with this term. Use varies.

SPECIAL FORCES – Lower case unless referring to a specific unit title. Use with care and avoid using subjective terms such as elite.

TASK FORCE – A force organised for a special operation.

TROOPS – Use in the plural for large, round numbers. A troop may also be a small unit of armour or guns.

WEAPONS

AIR-TO-GROUND, ANTI-AIRCRAFT

SAM – Spell out on all references: Surface-to-air missile.

UNCONVENTIONAL WEAPON – Avoid. Might also mean nuclear or chemical weapons. Be specific.

WMD – Weapons of mass destruction. Spell out on first reference.

TITLES AND NATIONALITIES

Military Titles: Ranks should never be abbreviated and should be capitalised when referring to a specific individual. At second and subsequent reference, use the surname OR his or her rank, e.g. Major General John Brown becomes either Brown or the general (not the major general). Ranks in the non-English-speaking world should be translated to English without hyphens.

Titles: Capitalise an official’s title when it immediately precedes the person’s name, but when the title follows the name or is used alone use lower case, e.g.: ‘President Tom Smith’ but ‘the president said he welcomed the British prime minister, Janet Courage.’

Service Components: Service components are never capitalised when referring to the service as a whole, e.g. the U.S. army, the French navy. Exceptions are armies that have a unique name, e.g. the Palestine Liberation Army. Capitalise army when referring to a specific formation, e.g. the U.S. 1st Army. Use numerals for military units: 1st Army not First Army. Use Air Force as two words. Capitalise Marine when referring to the U.S. Marine Corps or to its members, e.g. ‘Six U.S. Marines.’ Do not refer to Marines as soldiers.

Nationalities: Nationalities are written out in full and not abbreviated in stories and in sports results. The only exception is U.S. for United States. Use United Kingdom (not Britain), the Netherlands (not Holland) and Taiwan (not Chinese Taipei). Distinguish between North and South Korea.

National Names: You need not specify a minister’s nationality in the first paragraph of a story that names the country and comes from a dateline in that country. Under a Washington dateline, for example, write ‘Secretary of State Joan Smith’ not ‘U.S. Secretary of State Joan Smith.’ There is likewise no need to specify the nationality of groups that obviously are of the nationality of the country datelined.

DISTRIBUTION

(Dissemination and networking)

Social media is a public affairs responsibility.

Social media gives NATO the ability to engage quickly and dynamically with widespread audiences in an economical and effective manner. It has become an important tool for NATO messaging, outreach and communication with both internal and external audiences. NATO uses a wide range of platforms to engage and disseminate information: command websites, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. These platforms enable us to distribute information in various formats; the written word, video, audio and imagery.

NATO social media enables the entire organisational network, as well as allies and partners, to stay connected and spread themes and messages of importance across the Alliance. It allows us to tell the NATO story both effectively and efficiently.



BEST PRACTICES

For social media writing and posting

USE CAPTIONS

Provide context for a photograph or video with the 5Ws. Keep it simple and understandable.

USE THE REVERSE PYRAMID

Put most important information at the top, keep it brief. Don't count on audience clicking "read more."

LOCALISE

When sharing from other sources, make the content relevant to your audience; tie it back to them.

BE SELECTIVE

Make sure photos and video tell a story. Just because you can post all your photos doesn't mean you should.

BE UNIQUE

Look for creative, unconventional ways to highlight a topic.

BE A SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Provide details and context into events and issues.

BE TIMELY

Release content as quickly as possible without sacrificing quality or proper release authority.

ADMIT MISTAKES

Correct them immediately. Make a note when posts have been edited. (Erratum)

POST LINKS (CORRECTLY)

Use shortened URLs with a call to action to drive traffic to command websites.

DO

DO BE CONSISTENT

In quality, type of posts, frequency.

DO BE CAREFUL

Take extra time to check for accuracy, spelling and grammar, context and political sensitivities. Don't rely on being able to edit a post.

DO EXERCISE MODERATION

Don't go too long without posting but don't spam either.

ASSUME

your audience knows anything at first glance.

BE TOO FORMAL

Don't use press releases, unless necessary. Be conversational and simplify for easy digestion.

VIOLATE SAPP

Remember Security, Accuracy, Propriety and Policy.

POST WITHOUT PREVIEWING

See how posts display on desktop and mobile. Don't post pdfs as graphics.

DON'T

BE OVERLY

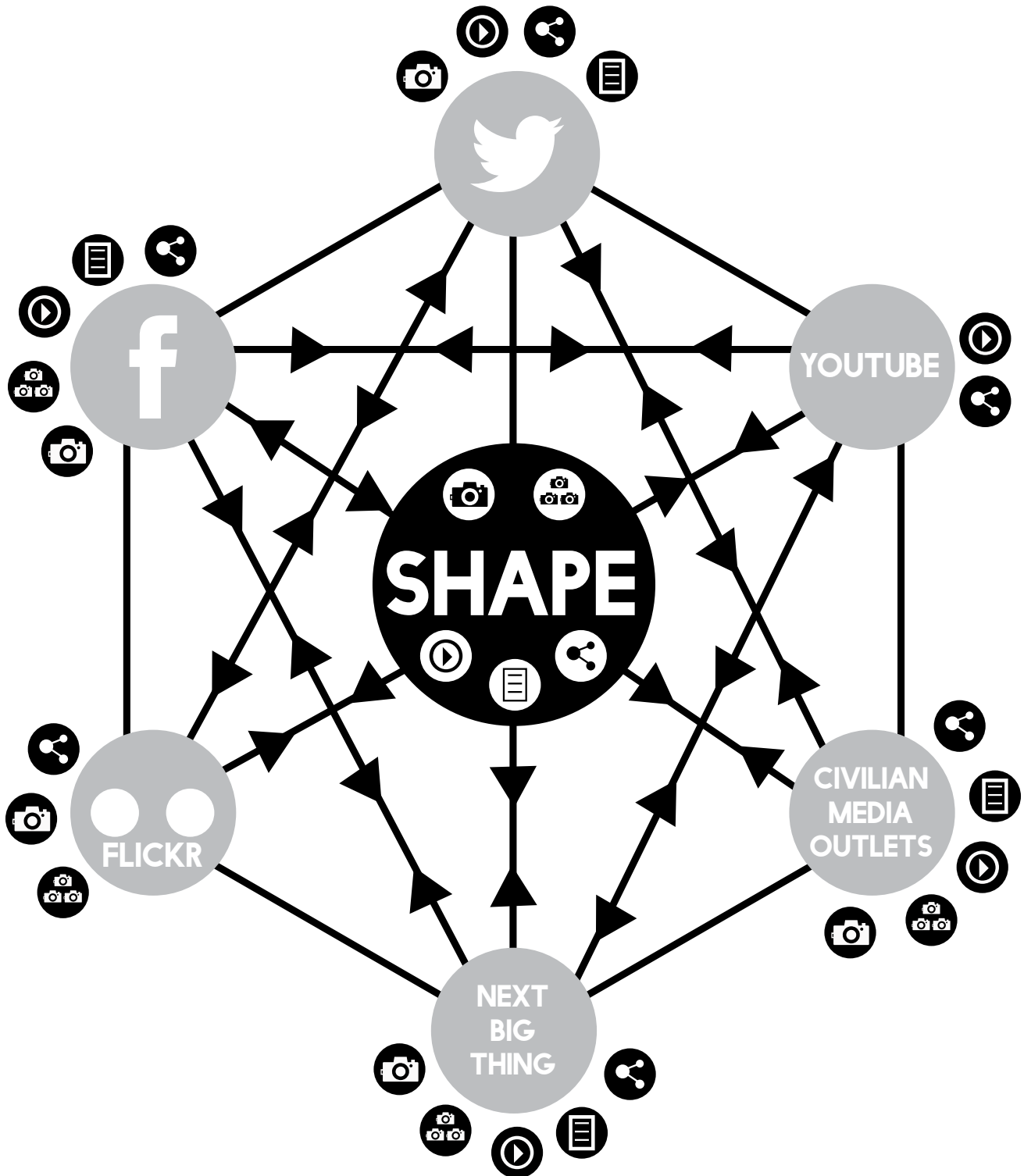
SELF-CONGRATULATORY

Reflect pride in NATO and adhere to messaging guidance, but don't go overboard or appear to distort the truth.

CROSS-PLATFORM SHARING

Use your media effectively to spread your messaging and content as far as possible

Content variety is key to helping you distribute the same information in different formats. In addition to posting content to your own platforms, you can also increase spread and impact by distributing content directly to external media. Think of your command website as the hub of a wheel, the centre of activity, and your various platforms as the spokes, supporting you as you move forward.



REPURPOSE POSTS FOR EACH PLATFORM

Don't blast the exact same message on all platforms! Rewrite posts each time, using the format and elements best suited for the intended platform. Share the content equally and link your platforms back to one another. Make sure to always include the link back to the hub (the command website) so your audience can easily navigate to your other platforms.

PLATFORM CONTENT GUIDELINES

Content should be shared across platforms, but use these general guidelines when deciding what platforms work best for certain content.

Direct Distribution

- Have a list of media sources, local and international
- Inform participating media where more information can be found
- For large content, use a reliable and professional file-sharing service

Website

- Hosts content
- Great for news stories
- Acts as a hub to link everything together

DVIDS

Defense Video & Imagery

Distribution System

- DVIDS is the primary repository of U.S. military imagery, with other contributors
- Imagery and content is made available to the media in a reliable and standard format
- Maintains a searchable archive of video, photo and print products
- Promotes products posted on its site to hundreds of media outlets
- Helps contributors track when and where material is used

Facebook

- Use photos and video for the most traction
- Don't spam: keep under five posts daily
- Try to keep text short: under two sentences if possible
- Use photos in posts when linking to other content; remember the aspect ratio changes per post type
- Link to any outlets referenced
- Share content from other sources; tag commands and other pages

Youtube

- 1-3 minute videos are ideal
- Include a 5Ws description
- Link to other platforms

Twitter

- Tweet often, but don't spam
- Schedule tweets to spread them throughout the day
- Retweet to reach different time crowds, but avoid verbatim repeats
- Every character counts! 140 is the maximum
- Use videos, photos and graphics; make sound on videos optional
- Tweet once per thought
- Consider live tweeting events
- Use hashtags! Tag commands and other relevant pages, but do not begin a tweet with a mention

Flickr

- Post multiple high-quality images, but be selective!
- Include cutlines with 5Ws
- Use keywords to help users find photos in searches

HASHTAGS

Hashtags categorise topics on social media platforms and can be used to link content together. They can help you reach a wider audience, consolidate coverage and encourage interaction through user-generated content.

#DO

- Use hashtags in sentences
- Be creative but avoid confusion
- Provide context and content
- Capitalise words for clarity
- Hashtag nations, locations
 - Use #NATO if NATO is mentioned in the tweet

#DON'T

- Use more than three per post
 - Save them all for the end
 - Post hashtags alone
 - Be afraid to adapt
- Use the hashtag 'exercise'; instead, use the exercise's name

Research

See which hashtags are already in use. Look for associations with other content and organisations, as well as other possible interpretations. Look for trending hashtags throughout your campaign to see if issues arise.

Combinations

Due to the lack of spaces, your audience might misread your hashtag. Keep it simple and short; evaluate if words could accidentally be combined in any other way.

Coordinate

Plan hashtags across commands and distribute to media covering events. Use hashtags consistently.

OUTREACH

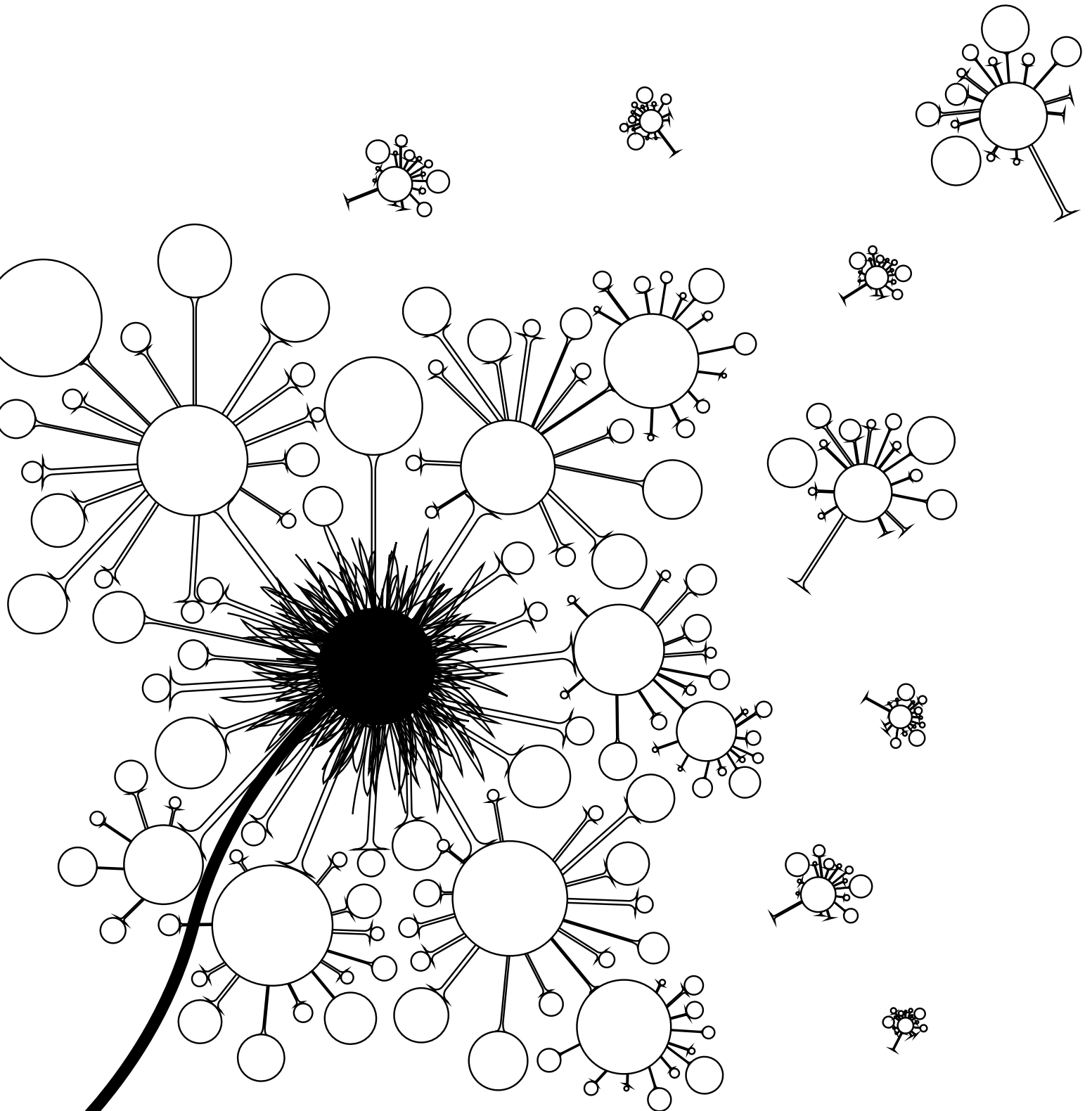
Personal interaction, tours and events

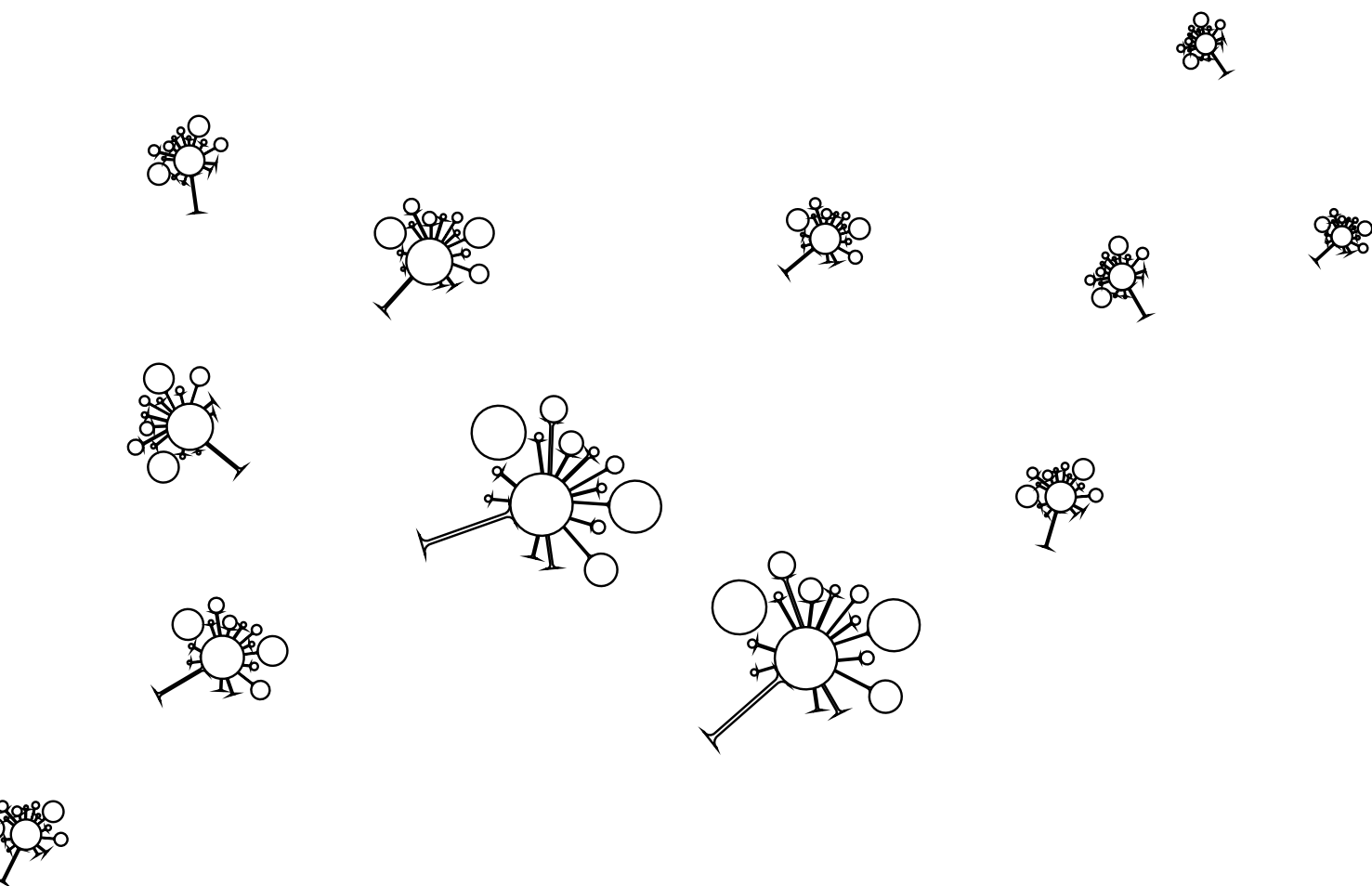
Content: Coordinate with production team for coverage of touring groups and other events. Determine products to be provided according to personnel availability, prominence of event and potential impact. Some events may warrant a story, with photos and video, others may not.

Reach: Tell visitors about social media platforms where their photos or story will appear so they can like/comment/share. This is an opportunity to reach their friends and family: people who might not otherwise be interested in NATO, but now have a personal connection.

DANDELION NETWORKING

Utilise the massive network of stakeholders from different commands, nations and regions to increase spread of content and messaging.





Coordinate and pay attention

Follow and like other organisations and commands, but be mindful when making these decisions. Consider national sensitivities and don't follow religious or political-affiliated organisations.

Share content relevant to your audience

In addition to all the awesome content you create as a team, don't forget to "curate" content from other sources! That means sharing relevant content for your audience, whether it's from other connected commands and pages or elsewhere online. This increases content without affecting your local workload and everyone benefits from the increased audience. It's an easy way to keep your page updated, and you can define yourself as a page your audience frequents for news and updates. Just make sure what you're sharing is accurate and from a reputable source.

Don't forget to personalise and localise

Put the content into context for your audience with a call-to-action or information. e.g. "Check out JFC Brunssum's album featuring NATO allies participating in Exercise Anakonda".

Credit and link

Tag other accounts in posts and shares. List links to your website and other platforms in information sections of your pages for easy access.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN OPEN DOOR

Social media is an extension of communications and PA activities. It is an informal community designed to facilitate conversations between people and audiences across the globe.

Units are therefore strongly encouraged to foster engagement with audiences with dialogue, develop innovative ways to facilitate interaction, answer questions, responding to comments and solicit feedback and ideas.

Building a rapport with an audience who is involved and engaged can have significant benefits, especially during a crisis. Social media is an excellent forum to dispel rumours, provide needed context and prevent mis/disinformation.

Correcting mistakes

Digital media and social media platforms are a core component in demonstrating transparency; errors must be handled accordingly.

A proper approval chain alleviates most of the risk of errors, but the nearly constant use of social media

platforms, combined with the expectation of immediacy, may result in occasional mistakes.

- Maintain all efforts towards transparency by editing or deleting the post with an apology (if appropriate) and acknowledge the error.
- If the mistake was factual, post the factually correct information, and note what has been changed.

Enforcing policy

Each official social media platform within NATO must have a 'terms of use statement', as mentioned previously. Social media platforms must be more specific when it comes to their comment policy (See next page).

This ensures users know the rules regarding what is and is not allowed, and the penalties for violations.

Engaging the audience

When an answer can be given quickly and simply, respond directly to online questions.

More difficult or detailed questions should be referred to existing official channels. Media queries should be directed to the appropriate PA office.

IMPOSTER ACCOUNT *common indicators*

- Not registered/verified
- Very few photos, or all photos posted in same date range
- Few friends or followers
- Account name and photos don't match
- Obvious grammatical errors
- Nearly accurate names like JEFNC Naples versus JFC Naples
- Key information is missing
- Behaviour: official accounts don't send friend requests or personal messages, and they don't tag individuals in posts

Look for false accounts

Keep on the alert for imposter, unofficial, fan and parody accounts.

Individuals or groups may try to impersonate organisational pages or their people for private gain (either financial or to gain access to people and information), damaging reputations and threatening security.

When these accounts are identified, document and report them to the host platform and keep a record.

BUILD A COMMUNITY

Create more than a depository for information: build and foster a community to inspire loyalty!

MAKE IT INTERACTIVE. Build loyalty through accurate, consistent, interesting content. Encourage interaction through calls to action and Q&A sessions. Welcome audience participation and feedback.

POST A COMMENT POLICY AND ENFORCE IT. Don't let trolls use your page for negativity.

RESPOND IN A TIMELY MANNER. Let people know you're listening. Respond when possible. Always adhere to standards of personal and professional behaviour in your role.

PROVIDE SOMETHING UNIQUE. Provide an in-depth and transparent look into NATO, with information and access they can't get elsewhere. Connect complex issues with personal stories.

BE AUTHENTIC. Content and interactions should be honest, transparent and trustworthy. Talk with people, not at them. Have a conversation.

SHOW PERSONALITY. Identity is essential. Maintain strict standards for quality and professionalism in posts and content, but don't be afraid to be friendly or fun. Your tone and attitude can help your audience understand and relate to your content.

NATO COMMENTS POLICY

TERMS OF USE STATEMENT

All NATO social media platforms should include a clearly posted comment policy that indicates to users the rules surrounding online interaction with NATO. This maintains NATO credibility when deleting comments that do not adhere to the policy. An example of a comment policy is as follows:

1. This forum is open to anyone wishing to comment and share feedback and opinions about SHAPE and its missions and operations. We ask that all users do this in a respectful manner.
2. No graphic, obscene, explicit, abusive, hateful, racist or defamatory comments will be tolerated. These will be removed as soon as identified and offenders may be banned.
3. No solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency. Similarly, we do not allow attempts to defame or defraud any financial, commercial or non-governmental agencies.
4. Details about ongoing investigations, or legal, or administrative proceedings that could prejudice the processes or could interfere with an individual's rights will be deleted from this page.
5. Apparent spamming or trolling will be removed and may cause the author(s) to be blocked from the page without notice.
6. No copyrighted or trademarked images or graphics may be posted. Imagery posted should be owned by the user.
7. No comments, photos or videos that suggest or encourage inappropriate or illegal activity.
8. No documents of any kind should be posted on this page.
9. You participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username and any information provided.
10. All information posted to social media sites will be no higher than unclassified. Any sensitive information that poses a threat to operational security or safety of personnel will be removed.
11. The appearance of external links or the use of third-party applications on this site does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of NATO or SHAPE.

EVALUATION

(Replicate successes, adapt with lessons learned)

An essential part of the process that is often overlooked is the analysis and evaluation stage – yet this stage is pivotal. Analysing and evaluating lets us know whether our efforts in every other stage of the process have been successful, and shows how we can improve for next time. This helps ensure the collective work of public affairs personnel is as effective as possible, and also provides information for future decisions.

Analysis and evaluation should feed into every aspect of a communications plan: from asking ourselves during the planning stage what we want to achieve in the first place; to analysing the media environment during the execution stage; to evaluating after the event whether we achieved our aims and what we could do better next time.

Not every command has a dedicated section to perform this role, but if we build measurable aims into the planning process, it can take as little as a few minutes to see if we are meeting our goals, and this allows us to adjust.



ASPECTS OF EVALUATION

Why should we evaluate?

Evaluation saves time, resources and effort by identifying what is effective and helping us avoid replicating mistakes. It is also the ‘proof’ that hard work is paying off. It translates efforts into results senior leaders can readily understand, and takes personalities out of the discussion.

When should we evaluate?

Evaluation should be done throughout an event or exercise: don't wait until the end!

Before an event: Monitor and analyse the media environment you will be communicating in. What is the best way to communicate your message in this particular environment? What has worked well in the past? Are there any gaps in understanding that can be filled? Identify from the outset how you will know when you have been successful.

During an event: Monitor the media environment and analyse to what extent the results are helping you achieve your aim. This allows you to adjust accordingly, before it's too late. Are our social media posts not being shared as widely as we'd hoped? Perhaps we should add a video. Is our event getting pick-up, but not among our desired audience? Perhaps we should consider engaging more in the local language. We should then monitor the new approach and evaluate whether this is more successful.

After an event: Compare the final results with what you said you wanted to achieve during the planning stage. Were the goals met? Why/why not? What can you change for next time?

Experiment

Develop a post or campaign

Engage

Reply to comments; create a “call to action”

Measure

Have clear goals to measure effectiveness

Repeat

Alter behaviour as informed by analysis

How should we evaluate?

To analyse and evaluate traditional media, you need to first collect the data by monitoring the media online, which can be done through the websites.






To collect social media data, use the platforms themselves. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube provide analytics tools, which allow administrators to track views, impressions and engagement. These tools also store this data long-term, which enables you to measure trends and compare recent activity with previous results.

What are we looking for?

Analysis: is objective. It is not an opinion, rather a statement of results.

*What results did you get?
Which factors of your communications campaign were the most/least successful?*

Evaluation: is subjective. Try to draw links between practices and results and tailor your strategy accordingly. Share your results widely, framing them as lessons identified/learned for the future.

Measuring Social Media Success @NATO				
	AWARENESS	APPRECIATION	ACTION	ADVOCACY
	page view post view reach	like 	page like link click enter competition comment + or -	share mention + comment
	impressions profile visits	like	follow link click polls reply or DM	+ mention retweet
	video views	watch time like dislike	subscribe click comment	share embed + comment
	page views reach/impressions	like	follow clicks comment + or -	share mention + comment

On social media, the above table from NATO HQ may be useful to navigate the range of audience interactions. The goal should be to move our audience from left to right.

Why do you think you did/did not meet our aims? What factors do you think affected your ability to meet aims? What can you change for next time?

Looking at both traditional media and social media, analysis and evaluation should be qualitative and quantitative, to help you answer the question: Did we meet our goals? Addressing the following points will help towards this.

Did we get the numbers we had hoped for? Why/why not?

To what extent do the results reflect the measurable aims you outlined in the planning process?

What was the quality of coverage?

Quantity is not everything. Are your messages reflected? What is the tone of the coverage? A post shared a hundred times can be negative if our audience is reacting unfavourably. No one wants a post to go viral for the wrong reasons.

Did we reach our intended audience?

It is not enough just to get your message heard. It has to be heard by the right people. If your intended audience was youths in the Baltic states, a video on CNN may be considered less of a success than, say, being showcased on a well-followed Baltic Times blog in a local language.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION REPORT

Bring all elements together to record findings in a short report. This report will be used to assess recent activity, but should be kept for future reference with similar events. Using such reports will help build "Lessons Identified" into the new communications plan, ensuring we learn from mistakes and take advantage of all opportunities.

Aim

- This should be established before the beginning of the activity, during the planning stage. If you're wondering, "why is this in the last section then?" - remember digital media management is a cycle, and each section feeds into the others. Planning, execution and distribution should all contribute towards the goals you've set out to meet, so you can evaluate your success and respond accordingly.
- The aim should contain specific communication goals that are to be achieved. The aim should be quantitative and be directly linked to performance measurements. Use the SMART acrostic below to develop the aim.
- *e.g. To achieve 10% more shares of our social media posts than during the last similar event.*

S - specific
M - measurable
A - achievable
R - relevant
T - time-bound

Analysis:

- This must be objective, using raw data and evidence to support statements made.
- *e.g. We achieved 8% more shares. The most successful share was of video "name", since it was shared by a third party validator.*

Evaluate:

- This can be subjective, using your experience and research to give context when trying to understand successes and failures.
- *e.g. We did not reach our aim, but coverage was positive and we succeeded in disseminating our message. The main element towards achieving more shares was that a third party validator shared our content, which propagated our message and reached a new audience. We will build on this success by planning to proactively engage third-party validators in our social media posts. Also, a large sporting event in the region overshadowed some of the coverage of our event. To mitigate this in the future, during planning we will be sure to research local events that could impact the reach of our messages.*

PERSONAL CONDUCT

(Personal and professional behaviour are linked when made public)

In general, NATO views social media platforms positively and respects your rights as individuals to express yourself. With that in mind, by the nature of your profession and your connection with NATO, your online interactions are as much a reflection of NATO, and your affiliated military force or country as they are a demonstration of your character.

You are personally responsible for what you say and post. Consider how the public might interpret a post, without any context and from an outsider's point of view. If in doubt about posting, err on the side of caution.

With so many people from different ranks, services and nations, keep in mind that your communication and conduct should always be professional and appropriate.

MC 0475/2, NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs, states that NATO personnel are “advised to consult with their chain of command before publishing NATO-related information and imagery to the internet.”



STANDARDS OF PERSONAL CONDUCT

1. *Label personal opinions as such*
Exercise caution in offering personal opinion that could be interpreted as an official position. Clearly indicate the separation by using a disclaimer such as ‘the views, thoughts and opinions offered are personal and do not represent endorsed or official policy’.
2. *Stay in your lane*
Avoid any area of expertise where you do not have first-hand experience or knowledge. Also acknowledge the existence of different perspectives. Do not guess or assume information. Refer any questions outside your expertise to a subject matter expert (SME).
3. *No public opinions on political or policy matters related to NATO*
Also, do not comment on work-related legal matters.
4. *Replace error with fact*
When you see misrepresentations about NATO in social media, you may identify and correct the error, but always do this courteously and with facts. Avoid heated arguments and be respectful.
5. *No classified information*
Remember OPSEC! Don’t post classified, sensitive or ‘For Official/Internal Use Only’ information, and make sure information is releasable.
6. *Be cautious with information sharing and don’t violate privacy*
Don’t post anything infringing on the proprietary, privacy or personal rights of others.
7. *Be aware of the image you present and be respectful*
Don’t do anything that discredits yourself or NATO, including using inappropriate language or content. Do not post any defamatory, libellous, hazing (demeaning initiation rituals), bullying, stalking, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material. Think about potential consequences, and how the post would be received by others.
8. *No endorsements*
Do not use NATO to endorse or promote products, companies, political or religious affiliations.
9. *No impersonations*
Misrepresentation through manipulating identifiers in an attempt to disguise, or to impersonate your identity, is prohibited.
10. *Obey applicable laws*
Respect copyrighted and trademarked material. Posting or sharing music, logos, songs, or other information that is protected by copyright, trademark, or any other restriction is illegal. Follow national/federal law, service direction and instructions and NATO policy.
11. *Common sense and best judgement*
Once something is out there, you can’t take it back. Be careful and cautious when posting to keep from saying/posting something you shouldn’t. You bear the responsibility for what you post.

SECURITY AND SAFETY RISKS

Digital and social media is valuable, but can also be dangerous

PROFILE AND COVER PHOTOS ARE PUBLIC

Don't post social media profile pictures showing you in uniform or at NATO if they are not privacy restricted.

ADVISE FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO BE PRUDENT

You can restrict your own settings, but not theirs. Make sure they know what they can post.

CHOOSE FRIENDS WITH CARE

Restrict privacy settings and don't add people you don't know or haven't met in person. Be circumspect in the information you share.

PRIVACY & INFORMATION

Social media is a gateway into your life, and provides details that can compromise your safety. Think about what you post and who can see it.

REGISTERING AND USING SITES

Carefully consider requests and permissions. Don't share logins or passwords. Change passwords frequently.

DON'T POST PERSONAL OR WORK DETAILS

Don't publicly post your full name, rank, position, date or place of birth, addresses, or ID information. There may be some situations where this information is necessary, but consider the risks, and the possible combination of public information from multiple sources that could be used on standard password reset questions.

DON'T BROADCAST LOCATION OR PLANS

Don't post your specific location in real-time or geo-tag your photos. This helps prevent others taking advantage of this information.

SAFEGUARD

Details About Your Work

Information such as establishment/unit locations, telephone numbers, ranks, unit strength, position details or role, could be used to target your workplace. Do not post details concerning security procedures. Check photos do not contain ID cards/official passes, keys, computer screens and other potentially sensitive materials or equipment.

Operational Information

During operations and missions, information protection becomes even more important, and attempts to gather information by others may become more determined.

Do not release online information about: operational programmes, deployment details, mission-specific information, capability shortfalls, casualty details, morale.

INFORMATION RELEASED IN ERROR

Security is everyone's responsibility. If you see information on the public internet that you believe may have been released without appropriate authorisation, report the matter immediately to your chain of command so that mitigating action can be taken. If information is sensitive, personal or operational in nature, report the matter immediately via the chain of command to the local security officer.

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*SOCIAL MEDIA
DIRECTORY*

**Not ACO/ACT*



The information contained in this handbook does not supersede or replace existing legal authorities and policies in effect, but is intended to provide supplemental guidance specific to digital media management. While this guidance is primarily directed towards official NATO uses of digital platforms, NATO personnel remain bound by the standards of ethical conduct as employees regardless of the media platform or whether NATO systems are used.