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Institute for the Study of International Migration
Institute for Women, Peace, Security and Development
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FROM BIG DATA TO GLOBAL DIPLOMACY TODAY AND TOMORROW

2014 YAHOO! CONFERENCE

YAHOO! FUND ON COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, INTERNATIONAL VALUES, AND THE GLOBAL INTERNET

Wednesday
April 2, 2014
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Mortara Center
3600 N Street, NW

The online world is allowing faster, more representative, and round-the-clock access to societal behavior around the globe. Today, people from Bangladesh to Buenos Aires busily tell one another and their neighbors what they see, what they think, and what is important to them, offering unparalleled visibility in the digital heartbeat of global society. The proliferation of always-connected mobile devices means citizens and participants are often the first to report on emerging events, streaming photographs, videos, and ground reports as events unfold, while social platforms have become one of the primary organizing tools for rebel and opposition movements. Moreover, the constant stream of daily life that flows across online

media platforms provides rich contextual background information on the narratives of each region and culture.

A growing chorus of voices argues that “big data” is a usable, practical tool to help foreign policy makers, implementers and analysts increase their understanding of global issues. For example, computerized analysis of massive amounts of world press reporting yielded an innovative map of Ukraine’s protest violence useful to any individual grappling with the present and anticipating the future of that region. Can similar analysis of the “thoughts, discussions, and debates expressed in public social conversation” provide similar insights for foreign policy practitioners, scholars and students?

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

NOEL DICKOVER
Senior Program Officer
U.S. Institute of Peace

Noel Dickover is the senior program officer who heads up the Open Situation Room Exchange project at the U.S. Institute of Peace as part of the broader PeaceTech Initiative. As an internationally-experienced senior consultant at the intersection of technology and development, Noel has consulted with a number of Federal agencies, including the State Department, USAID, Administrative Conference of the U.S., Health and Human Services, and the Department of Defense.

For the Department of State, Noel initiated, developed and headed up the eDiplomacy Division's Civil Society 2.0 TechCamp program – TechCamps are international, highly interactive two-day events which partner technologists with civil society organizations to raise their digital literacy with low-cost, easy-to-implement tools to improve their mission. Noel has brought the TechCamp approach to USIP (now termed PeaceTech Exchanges) in a modified form which now include back-end funding.

As a co-founder for CrisisCommons, a global network of technology volunteers working on disaster relief efforts, Noel helped lead a movement of technology volunteers that has transformed the way regular citizens can impact crisis-response efforts in a disaster situations, starting with Haiti. He initiated a number of Government 2.0 efforts for the Department of Defense, including authoring their draft social media policy which allowed soldiers to use social media such as Facebook and YouTube.

KALEV LEETARU
Yahoo! Fellow in Residence
Georgetown University

Kalev H. Leetaru comes to the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy (ISD) as a "Big Data" and high performance computing scholar with the support of the Yahoo! Fund on International Values, Communications Technology and the Global Internet.

Before joining Georgetown University, Kalev held the Irwin, Boyd Rayward, Josie Houchens, and University Fellowships at the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science, where he was also Assistant Director for Text and Digital Media Analytics and Senior Research Scientist for Content Analysis at the Institute for Computing in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Science and Center Affiliate of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications.

He holds 3 U.S. patents (cited by 44 others) and his work has appeared in the press of more than 100 countries. His most recent work includes the first in-depth study of the geography of social media and the changing role of distance and location in online communicative behavior around the world (named the top social media study of 2013) and the creation of the GDELT Project, a database of more than a quarter-billion georeferenced global events from 1979 to the present on the people, organizations, locations, and themes connecting the world. Most recently he was named as one of Foreign Policy Magazine's Top 100 Global Thinkers of 2013.

WILL MAYO
Managing Director, DC
GNIP

Will Mayo is the Managing Director of the Washington, DC office for Gnip. In this role, Will is responsible for managing a large group of commercial and public sector customers in the Washington Metropolitan Area, as well as identifying new opportunities for organizations to leverage social media data. He is passionate about data and analytics and believes there is limitless potential for improving business decisions with the use of social data. Prior to joining Gnip, Will was based in Colorado and served as a Senior Manager in Deloitte Consulting's Strategy and Operations group. In this capacity, Will provided strategic planning, customer relationship management, and data analytics expertise to address various client needs.

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AGENDA

8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast

9:00 Welcome

Anthony Arend, Master of Science in Foreign Service Program

9:05 The State of Big Data Today

Kalev Leetaru, Georgetown

An overview of the state of big data today and how it is being used to understand the world around us.

9:20 The Social Media Landscape

Will Mayo, GNIP

The social data ecosystem and some of the key considerations that organizations need to make from a data analysis, legal, and infrastructure perspective. New developments with respect to GNIP's data services and touch on some of the applications of those in the public sector.

9:50 Big Data, but Not for Superman: Engaging and Empowering Grass Roots Peacebuilders

Noel Dickover, US Institute of Peace

How can we positively affect the attitudes and actions of grassroots peacebuilders in conflict zones by providing them data in a form they can access that relates to their situation? The PeaceTech Initiative sees this as a process of engagement and dialogue with local and international peacebuilding stakeholders around available data (Big data and local data), which hopefully will lead to more data released from actors on-the-ground, culminating in better overall situational awareness.

10:20 Break

10:30 Big Data to Visualize, Analyze, and Forecast Global Issues

Kalev Leetaru, Georgetown

A series of examples of how big data can be used to explore global issues from Nigeria to Ukraine, Iran to Snowden, and well as chart domestic reaction to policy implementation and rapidly understand policy influencers.

11:30 Panel Discussion

Noon Program Conclusion

James Seevers, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy

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