

Foreword

Issue 113 of the *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* (RMPE) is dedicated to a topic of great interest to foreign ministries and their academies the world over: the use of digital tools to perform diplomatic duties and how these affect the nature of the profession. The articles pose basic, but transcendental questions: How is diplomacy to be practiced in the era of social media? How can digital media be used to positively influence audiences that are physically distant, yet interconnected by Internet? Is it possible to identify and measure the impact of digital public diplomacy? To what extent does all this modify the practice of diplomacy?

Although the advent of the digital era has transformed international interactions in multifarious ways, the papers in this issue focus specifically on the practice of public diplomacy. In this case, public diplomacy is deemed the set of communications efforts implemented by a State to influence and mobilize other actors, in keeping with its own interests and values. The digitalization of this aspect of diplomatic practice is an inevitable process in a world in which virtual tools and platforms allow for real-time interaction, affording access to broader audiences that have become more and more involved in international politics and decision-making.

The digitalization of public diplomacy should not be viewed as an end in and of itself, but as a vehicle that adds value to the communications strategies deployed by foreign ministries. Ideally, its execution requires a strategic vision and a systematic course, mapped out by both conceptual elements and empirical experience. The aim of this issue of the RMPE is precisely that—to contribute to the conceptualization of an

activity so in tune with our times, help identify best practices and analyze its impact. Our authors are prestigious international experts, who have compiled knowledge on the subject accumulated to date, while the analysis of a series of cases reveals both the advantages and challenges of digital public diplomacy. We hope this issue will be of practical value to those who practice diplomacy in a professional capacity, both in Mexico and the rest of the world. For this reason, we have decided to publish the electronic version of the RMPE in English and Spanish, marking the first-ever bilingual issue of our review.

These articles illustrate that the diplomatic academy of Mexico is not only interested in, but has the capacity to contribute to global debate on the evolution of the profession and its outlook. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Daniel Aguirre Azócar, Ilan Manor and Alejandro Ramos Cardoso for the hard work they put into coordinating this important project. Thanks to their input, issue 113 of the RMPE is one of the first publications in Spanish on digital public diplomacy, one that invites us to reflect on how diplomacy is viewed and practiced in an increasingly interconnected world in which technology is progressing in leaps and bounds.

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