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"Understanding Social Media's Contribution to Public Diplomacy"
How Embassy Jakarta's Facebook Outreach Illuminates the Limitations and Potential for the State
Department's Use of Social Media
By Melanie Ciolek

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Introduction

      As social media platforms have grown in popularity around the world, calls for the U.S. State Department to utilize them have also increased. The perception that these new technologies "redefine how foreign ministries communicate and collaborate with publics"[1] by enabling interaction has become widely accepted, even though far fewer understand how platforms like Facebook and Twitter actually create opportunities for engagement. While the State Department has embraced the concept of using social media tools as another way to engage with audiences around the world, there is confusion about using social media as a public diplomacy tool and skepticism about whether or not its use can prove effective.

      Public diplomacy includes efforts to engage, inform and influence foreign audiences in order to promote intercultural understanding and encourage support for U.S. policies. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have not fundamentally changed the objectives of public diplomacy, but are just new tools for facilitating engagement and dialogue with audiences in an evolving information environment. Whether the use of these tools is considered "effective" should be based on whether they contribute to the objectives of public diplomacy, demonstrate evidence of engagement, and strengthen potential for future interaction.

      A case that illuminates some of the strategies and challenges associated with assessing social media's role in public diplomacy is the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta's use of Facebook. Embassy Jakarta has undertaken an extensive Facebook campaign to engage young Indonesians in dialogue, especially about President Barack Obama's planned visit to Indonesia. In the last few months, Embassy's Jakarta Facebook page has experienced an exponential growth in "fans." As of late April 2010, the Facebook pages for the U.S. Embassy and two consulates in Indonesia had more fans than all other U.S. embassies and missions combined.[2] Embassy Jakarta has used its understanding of the evolving information environment to develop an effective strategy for using Facebook within its larger public diplomacy efforts.

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[1] Evan Potter, "Web 2.0 and the New Public Diplomacy: Impact and Opportunities," *Engagement: Public Diplomacy in a Globalised World.* London: Foreign & Commonwealth Audience, July 2008. (Accessed 12 Apr. 2010) http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/publications-and-documents/publications1/pd-publication/web-2.

[2] Thomas Crampton, "U.S. Embassy Jakarta: More Facebook fans than all U.S.Embassies Combined" Interview with Tristram Perry, *ThomasCrampton.com*, 19 April 2010. (Accessed 19 Apr. 2010) http://www.thomascrampton.com/indonesia/us-embassy-indonesia-facebook-jakarta/.

This paper intends to demonstrate that social media tools can contribute to public diplomacy when their use responds to the audience and considers the overall information landscape. While President Obama's visit has yet to occur, it's possible to see how the Embassy's effective use of Facebook helps advance U.S. public diplomacy objectives while producing visible interaction with its audience and building a basis for continued engagement. By recognizing both the limitations and potential of social media within Indonesia's information environment, Embassy Jakarta's Facebook outreach provides valuable lessons for developing future State Department outreach efforts. Improving comprehension of social media's contribution to public diplomacy can help State Department practitioners and policymakers communicate its value to Congressional lawmakers who ultimately determine the financial resources allocated to public diplomacy efforts.

Reviewing the context of U.S.-Indonesian relations, Indonesia's overall media environment, the growth of Facebook in Indonesia, the strategic approach to the Embassy's Facebook efforts, and the engagement created will show how this is an effective use of State Department social media outreach. It is also necessary to consider the limitations and challenges to this outreach in order to identify the lessons that will be most relevant to future use of social media.

U.S.-Indonesia Relations and the Impact of President Barack Obama

Since Barack Obama became president of the United States, Indonesia has become a more hospitable environment for conducting U.S. public diplomacy. Obama's election is a significant reason behind the remarkable improvements in Indonesian attitudes about the U.S. and has quickly become the dominant factor in bilateral relations. In 2009, the Pew Global Attitudes project found 63 percent of Indonesians had a favorable view of the U.S. (up from 37% in 2008) and 71 percent said they had confidence in Obama to "do the right thing regarding world affairs" (up from 23% who said they had confidence in George W. Bush).[3] The four years Obama spent in Indonesia as a child have formed a powerful cultural touchstone, and his planned visit to the country (recently postponed from March until June) has generated a great deal of

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[3] "Indonesia: Opinion of the United States," and "Indonesia: Confidence in the U.S. President," *Pew Global Attitudes Project Key Indicators, 2002-2009*. (Accessed 1 Apr. 2010). http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=1&country=101 http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=6&country=101.

anticipation.[4] The dominant view is that both the U.S. and Indonesia stand to benefit from a strengthened relationship facilitated by Obama's personal connection.

While Indonesia's status as "the world's most populous Muslim democracy"[5] gives it special prominence among U.S. policymakers, it most often attracts the attention of the international media and the American public in the aftermath of natural disasters or attacks on Indonesian targets frequented by Westerners, like the JW Marriott and Ritz Carlton bombings in July 2009.[6] The State Department refers to Indonesia as a "linchpin of regional security," where its interests include enlisting Indonesia's partnership to combat terrorism and solidifying the country's development as a democracy in the region.[7] Some analysts also see further development of U.S.-Indonesia relations through a proposed "Comprehensive Partnership" as an opportunity to for the U.S. to maintain balance against the influences of China, India, and Japan in the region.[8] This combination of perceived mutual benefits to strengthened bilateral relations and Indonesians' affection for President Obama has created very favorable circumstances for establishing a new level of dialogue between the U.S. government representatives at Embassy Jakarta and the Indonesian public.

Indonesia's Information and Media Landscape

To understand the success of Embassy Jakarta's Facebook outreach, it's important to place Facebook and Internet use within the larger context of Indonesia's media landscape, which has undergone significant changes since the end of the Suharto dictatorship in 1998. The

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[4] Joe Cochrane, "Obama's Snub? No Problem," *The Diplomat,* 23 March 2010. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://the-diplomat.com/2010/03/23/obama%e2%80%99s-snub-no-problem/.

[5] At the same time, there is an underlying frustration among some Indonesians that this is the primary reason for interest from the U.S., which downplays the secular nature of their government and exaggerates the potential to alleviate U.S. problems in the Middle East. See "Indonesia's place in the global jungle," *The Economist*, 31 March 2010. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15816626.

[6] Norimitsu Onishi, "Indonesia Bombings Signal Militants' Resistance," *The New York Times,* 17 July 2009. (Accessed 31 Mar. 2010) http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/18/world/asia/18indo.html?_r=3.

[7] U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Indonesia: U.S.-Indonesian Relations," *State.gov*, 21 Jan. 2010 . (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2748.htm#relations.

[8] Lex Rieffel, "President Obama's Visit to Indonesia: Putting the Country on the Map," *The Brookings Institution*, 10 March 2010. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0310_obama_indonesia_rieffel.aspx

evolution of the media environment has included growth in the traditional media outlets of print, television, and radio. Television is dominant, a mix of private networks and the publicly owned TVRI (Televisi Republik Indonesi), while radio outlets are also extremely common and particularly important in rural areas. [9] Despite what Freedom House calls a "vibrant and independent media environment," Indonesia's press is characterized as only "partly free" due to strict defamation laws, broadcast licensing requirements, and attacks on journalists.[10] Although government interference with the press still occurs, the online environment has avoided some of these limitations.

Indonesia's diverse traditional media environment provides a backdrop for Indonesians' appetite for mobile and online technologies. Early 2010 reports estimate Indonesia's mobile subscribers have surpassed 150 million, bringing market penetration to 65 percent.[11] This contrasts sharply with Internet penetration estimates among the general population in Indonesia. Depending on the definition of "Internet user," the number of Indonesians accessing the Internet ranges from 26 – 30 million, with penetration rates estimated at 11-12.5 percent.[12] At the same time, an estimated 30 million users makes Indonesia 13th on the list of countries with the most Internet users, and its current low level of penetration combined with recent mobile trends suggests significant potential for future growth.[13] The growing participation in the online sphere will likely make online communication increasingly important in Indonesia's information environment.

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[9] BBC World Service, Voice of America, and Radio Australia also broadcast programs in Indonesian, showing the diversity of sources available. "Freedom of Expression and the Media in Indonesia," (A series of baseline studies on seven Southeast Asian Countries). London/Jakarta: Article 19, December 2005: 30-33. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://www.article19.org/pdfs/publications/indonesia-baseline-study.pdf; "Freedom of the Press 2009: Indonesia," *Freedom House, 2009Edition.* (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2009.

[10] "Freedom of the Press 2009: Indonesia"

[11] Paul Budde, "Indonesia's telecoms potential remains huge," *BuddeBlog,* 1 April 2010. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://www.buddeblog.com.au/indonesias-telecoms-potential-remains-huge/.

[12] CIA World Factbook estimated Indonesia's internet users to be 30 million as of 2008, Internet World Stats lists 30 million as of September 2009, and BuddeBlog lists Indonesia's internet users as 26 million as of early 2010.

[13] "Top 20 Countries with the Highest Number of Internet Users," Internet World States, September 30, 2009. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010). http://www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm; Stephen Kaufman, "Indonesian Internet Penetration Expected to Skyrocket," *America.gov*, 24 March 2010. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2010/March/20100323153622esnamfuak0.8532373.html.

U.S. efforts to engage with Indonesians have increasingly involved the online sphere and the blogging community. The Embassy sponsored Pesta Blogger, the largest annual national gathering of bloggers in Indonesia, in 2008 and 2009 in recognition of "Indonesian bloggers' efforts to use technology to provide access to information, and as a critical means of free expression in a democratic society like Indonesia."[14] Leading Indonesian blogger Enda Nasution recently expressed his view that Indonesia is "on the brink of a major electronic revolution," in part driven by the online connection capabilities of most new mobile phones available in Indonesia.[15] Some analysts say that Indonesians still view the online sphere as a space for free expression, independent from state interference, which has allowed the blogosphere to flourish.[16] Embassy Jakarta's awareness of Indonesians' growing participation in the online environment prepared it to take advantage of the next phase: the explosion in popularity of social media.

Facebook's Boom in Indonesia

Facebook is experiencing a surge in popularity among Indonesian users, driven by the spread of mobile Internet devices, which presents both opportunities and challenges for engagement. As of late April 2010, Indonesia boasted more than 23 million Facebook users, the third-largest community of users overall and the fastest growth rate out of all countries (10.1%).[17] InsideFacebook, a Facebook statistics aggregator, also noted the great potential for future growth in Indonesia, given the Facebook penetration (currently at 9.2%) is still quite low.[18] Facebook is currently the most-visited website in Indonesia, surpassing both Google.com and Google Indonesia (Google.co.in).[19] The popularity of "smartphone" mobile devices have

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[14] U.S. Embassy Jakarta, "U.S. Embassy Sponsors Pesta Blogger 2009," 14 July 2009. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://jakarta.usembassy.gov/press_rel/July09/PB09.html.

[15] Nasution quoted in Kaufman.

[16] Nadine Freischlad quoted in Kaufman.

[17] Eric Eldon, "Facebook Sees Solid Growth around The World In March 2010," I*nsideFacebook.com*, 6 April 2010. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://www.insidefacebook.com/2010/04/06/facebook-sees-solid-growth-around-the-world-in-march-2010/; "Facebook Statistics: Countries on Facebook," *Facebakers.com*, (Accessed 25 Apr. 2010) http://www.facebakers.com/countries-with-facebook/

[18] Eldon.

[19] "Top Sites in Indonesia," *Alexa.com* (Accessed 19 Apr. 2010) http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/ID.

likely contributed to the growth of Facebook as well.[20] Although less than 10% of Indonesia's population uses Facebook, its growth rate and potential for future expansion make it increasingly important to examine how Indonesians utilize Facebook as a communication tool, and whether their online activities carry over to the offline world.

Much like their counterparts all over the world, Indonesians engage in a variety of activities via Facebook, including connecting with friends and sharing information online. As it has grown more popular in Indonesia, Facebook has also become a powerful advocacy tool. Public outrage over the arrest of two anti-graft commission members in November 2009 prompted more than a million people to join the "Movement of 1,000,000 Facebookers Supporting Chandra Hamzah & Bibit Samad Riyanto" in protest.[21] After the public outcry, Indonesia's President SusiloYudhoyono intervened and the charges were dropped.[22] Some analysts believe that Indonesians are using Facebook to voice opinions that had previously gone unheard and that "the intensity of chatter on Facebook and Twitter reveals the influence they are gaining," motivating the traditional mainstream media to pay attention to major issues in the online environment.[23] Facebook's ultimate influence on political activism and dialogue in Indonesia remains to be seen, but an interesting precedent has been set.

Facebook has not gained prominence in Indonesia's information environment without generating concerns. In May 2009, a group of imams developed guidelines for using Facebook, forbidding its use for "gossiping and spreading lies," but also recognizing its utility for youth to connect with each other.[24] At the same time, recent incidents in Indonesia have shown not all

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[20]Anthony Deutsch, "BlackBerry fever sweeps Indonesian market," 14 April 2010. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/50e4ec34-475e-11df-b253-00144feab49a.html.

[21] "Indonesia's Antigraft Facebook 'Movement' Reaches One Million," *The Jakarta Globe*, 7 November 2009. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/indonesias-antigraft-facebook-movement-reaches-one-million/340227; Sarah Schonhardt, "Facebook people power," *Asia Times Online*, 7 November 2009. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010). http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/KK07Ae02.html.

[22] Norimitu Onishi, "Indonesia Officials Resign in Graft Scandal" *The New York Times,* 5 November 2009. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/06/world/asia/06indo.html?_r=1.

[23] See Deutsch and Karism Raslan, "Democracy at Work," *The Jakarta Globe,* 4 November 2009. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/opinion/karim-raslan-democracy-at-work/339634.

[24] Indra Harsaputra, "Indonesian Imams OK Facebook – But No Flirting!" *Associated Press*, 22 May 2009. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IranscopeSciTech/message/1262.

Facebook use yields benefits.[25] New proposed regulations for online speech also carry heavier penalties than previous laws governing offline speech, which has sparked controversy about what limits there should be on online expression as more Indonesians enter the environment.[26]

Although it does not yet have the broad reach of traditional media platforms like TV and some express concerns about the risks of its use, Facebook's high profile in Indonesia's media landscape clearly establishes its relevance as a communication tool. Indonesians' willingness to share their views via Facebook and the influence these opinions have demonstrated in the offline environment suggest Facebook could significantly impact Indonesia's political arena. These factors make Facebook an increasingly attractive tool available for Embassy Jakarta's public diplomacy efforts toward Indonesian audiences.

Embassy Jakarta's Public Diplomacy and Facebook

Embassy Jakarta has skillfully incorporated Facebook into its public diplomacy efforts by using it within integrated media campaigns that relate to "offline" events and recognizing the audience Facebook allows it to reach. Its approach shows it understands Facebook may not directly facilitate dialogue on U.S. foreign policy goals, but engagement with its audience can still encourage discussion and cultivate an online community.

Integrating Facebook into Public Diplomacy Efforts

Rather than using Facebook to replace existing activities, Facebook outreach supports Embassy Jakarta's larger public diplomacy efforts through informal but direct online interaction. According to Darren Krape, a Senior Analyst in the State Department's Office of Innovative Engagement, Facebook is used as part of a broader approach to achieving U.S. public diplomacy

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[25] Recent stories of young Indonesians being targeted by human traffickers via Facebook have heightened concerns about the tool's potential to be utilized for devious purposes. Others have also been prosecuted for actions undertaken on Facebook, including a teen girl sentenced to serve 75 days in prison for defamation which included calling her rival names.
See Nurfika Osman, "Parents Need to be Wary of Facebook's Dangers," *The Jakarta Globe*, 9 February 2010. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/parents-need-to-be-wary-of-facebooks-dangers/357546; Kafil Yamin, "When Adding a Friend on Facebook Can be Risky," *InterPress*, 17 February 2010. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50363; Amar Toor, "Indonesian Teen Sentenced to Jail on Facebook Defamation Chargers," *Switched*, 18 February 2010. (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://www.switched.com/2010/02/18/indonesian-teen-sentenced-to-jail-on-facebook-defamation-charges/.
[26] Norimitsu Onishi, "Debate on Internet's Limits Grows in Indonesia," *The New York Times,* 19 April 2010. (Acessed 24 Apr. 2010) http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/20/world/asia/20indonet.html.

goals in Indonesia, such as providing information about the United States and educating the population about American culture, but is generally not used to disseminate information about complex policy issues.[27] Facebook's design enables direct engagement with online users; however, this functionality is useful only if users are interested in a topic. To handle such concerns, Tristram Perry, a Public Diplomacy Officer for Embassy Jakarta, says that instead of forcing a policy discussion, they "seek to re-establish the U.S. cultural brand and show a more down-to-earth side of the Embassy and USG that appeals to our audience."[28] This emphasis on using Facebook for more informal communication (rather than simply re-posting press releases) clearly demonstrates that Embassy Jakarta understands Facebook's strengths and limitations as a communication tool.

With this in mind, Embassy Jakarta seeks to use Facebook as a "force multiplier" for other programs through integrated media campaigns instead of generating entirely new content for Facebook.[29] One example is the "Amerikaku" documentary about Indonesian high-school students who participated in the Youth Education and Study (YES) exchange program in the U.S. Their experience was filmed as a six-part series that showcased authentic American high-school life and then aired on the youth-focused cable network O-Channel, followed by a national airing on the public network TVRI.[30] Clips of the show were posted on the Embassy's Facebook and YouTube pages, with users asked to participate in quizzes and provide comments, adding an "extra level" to the program.[31]

Embassy Jakarta has also chosen to use Facebook as a way to generate excitement about President Obama's visit to Indonesia, with contests and incentives used to attract users to the Embassy's Facebook page. Embassy Jakarta favored its online fans with an early announcement of Obama's visit, posting the notice on Facebook several hours before the distribution of the

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[27] Darren Krape, Telephone Interview, 16 April 2010 (Senior Analyst, U.S. Department of State Office of Innovative Engagement).

[28] Perry qtd. in Crampton.

[29] Tristram Perry, Telephone Interview, 19 April 2010 (Public Diplomacy Officer, U.S. Embassy Jakarta – Indonesia).

[30] U.S. Embassy Jakarta, "Student TV Series "Amerikaku" to Premiere on O-Channel on Sunday, January 10 at 10:30 WIB," 7 January 2010. (Accessed 24 Apr. 2010) http://jakarta.usembassy.gov/press_rel/Jan10/amerikaku_tv.html. See also: http://www.youtube.com/pasjakartaindonesia#p/u/4/WbR0kuf-vrQ.

[31] Perry (telephone interview).

official press release. The announcement generated over 1000 interactions, including "likes" and comments from fans inviting President Obama to visit their homes, asking what type of Indonesian food he would eat, and wondering where he would travel.[32] The State Department also launched a Facebook application focused on Obama's visit, inviting users to welcome Obama back to Indonesia by suggesting what foods he should try and which color *batik* (a colorful traditional cloth) he should wear. To attract more interest in the visit, the Embassy sponsored a "biggest fan" of the Embassy contest, where Facebook fans were eligible to win prizes, including gadgets donated by popular American brands Microsoft and Starbucks, books about the United States, and U.S. Embassy logo items.[33] Using incentives to attract more fans has been very effective in yielding results. When the contest was first announced, the Embassy's fan page had approximately 30,000 fans. One month later, when the Embassy announced a second "Golden Ticket" contest offering trips to the U.S., the fan count had doubled to more than 60,000.[34]

By making Facebook an integral part of the strategy to promote President Obama's visit, Embassy Jakarta was able to generate significant interest in a real-world event through direct online engagement with users. While Facebook is not a venue for serious policy discussion, Embassy Jakarta has strategically used Facebook to informally but directly connect with an audience about its existing public diplomacy efforts. These interactions are building a community that is oriented around both online and offline opportunities to engage in dialogue about the United States.

Understanding the Potential Facebook Audience

Bill May, Director of the State Department's Office of Innovative Engagement, says one of the key challenges for public diplomacy is determining "where your audience really lives."[35]

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[32] U.S. Embassy Jakarta, "President Obama and Family to Visit Indonesia in March," 2 February 2010 (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://jakarta.usembassy.gov/press_rel/Jan10/obama_visit.html.

[33] U.S. Embassy Jakarta, "U.S. Embassy Looks for Top Facebook Fans Before Obama Visit," 12 February 2010, (Accessed 18 Apr. 2010) http://jakarta.usembassy.gov/press_rel/Feb10/fb_contest_pr.html; Krape (telephone interview).

[34] U.S. Embassy Jakarta, "U.S. Embassy Awarding U.S. Trips with Facebook Fan Page Competition," 12 March 2010. (Accessed 24 Apr. 2010) http://jakarta.usembassy.gov/press_rel/Mar10/goldenticket.html.

Embassy Jakarta has shaped its approach to using Facebook in its public diplomacy efforts with its knowledge about the growing number of Indonesians now "living" on Facebook. At the same time, Facebook not only allows Embassy Jakarta to reach out to Indonesians across an extremely large country, but also potentially beyond its borders.

Integrating social media tools into public diplomacy efforts often creates the opportunity to reach new segments of the population. Using Facebook is one way Embassy Jakarta is "trying to find a way to connect to new audiences; in this case, urban and suburban 18-34 year-olds who do not get news and information from traditional news sources."[36] Facebook outreach directed to Indonesian audiences almost certainly reaches this demographic; according to online Facebook statistics aggregator CheckFacebook.com, the profile of Indonesia's Facebook users is predominantly young (65% are 18-34) and slightly more male than female (roughly 60% to 40%). Users also tend to be middle class and from Jakarta and the surrounding area.[37] While Facebook users still represent less than 10 percent of the total population, the high proportion of young Indonesians using the platform makes it a viable tool for outreach targeted at this audience.

One of the advantages Facebook offers is the ability to do in-depth audience analysis, which allows Embassy Jakarta to better understand which demographics it is reaching and how its efforts are received. The "Facebook Insight" tool allows the Embassy page administrators to view a range of information, including gender, age, and geographic location of fans, as well as who the most active fans are and which posts are "most engaging" to users.[38]   While the data available is limited to information users provide to Facebook, the ability to do complex analysis of content posted and view which segments of the audience find the content most or least engaging holds tremendous potential. This analysis tool will be valuable both for evaluating objectives for specific areas of outreach and for developing new content targeted to specific audiences, increasing the likelihood of future success.

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[35] John F. Moore, "Meeting people where they are, the State Department does it right," *Random Thoughts of a Boston-based CTO: John Moore's Blog*, 27 February 2010. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://johnfmoore.wordpress.com/2010/02/27/meeting-people-where-they-are-the-state-department-does-it-right/
[36] Perry qtd. in Crampton.

[37] Krape (telephone interview).

[38] "Facebook Insights," *Sage Internet Solutions Ltd.* 28 March 2010. (Accessed 24 Apr. 2010) http://blog.sageinternet.com/2010/miscellaneous/facebook-insights/

Another issue the Embassy and others must take into account is Facebook's capacity to bypass the physical limitations of geography to reach an audience, even unintentionally. For the Embassy, using Facebook or other online outreach efforts in *Bahasa Indonesia* can potentially overcome Indonesia's immense geography and reach hundreds of communities.[39] But these efforts almost certainly can reach beyond Indonesia's borders as well. For instance, 86 percent of Embassy Jakarta's Facebook fans list their location as Indonesia, but 20 more countries are listed for users in the other 14 percent, including the United States (9%), Canada, the Netherlands, and Singapore (all less than 1%).[40] While there is no way to know whether these external users are part of Indonesian diasporic communities or of other nationalities, at least a small portion of the audience reached via Embassy Jakarta's Facebook page lives beyond the physical borders of Indonesia. Considering U.S. goals toward Indonesia and that external users are not Embassy Jakarta's immediate target audience for its public diplomacy efforts, there is no immediate need to develop content oriented toward them. However, they should remain aware that using social media tools allows their efforts to easily transcend geographic boundaries and consider any unintended effects.

Evidence of Success and Challenges to Using Facebook

Facebook's boom in popularity, a cohesive and strategic approach to utilizing Facebook in public diplomacy efforts, and activities coordinated with Obama's visit have all contributed to the exponential growth of Embassy Jakarta's Facebook fanbase. In July 2009, Embassy Jakarta's Facebook page showed approximately 3,000 fans; as of late April 2010 the count has grown to nearly 130,000. None of the other 197 Facebook pages administered by the U.S. State Department even come close to rivaling Embassy Jakarta's success.[41] Embassy Jakarta's Facebook fan count has attracted attention from outside observers and marketing professionals alike.[42]

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[39] The adoption of Bahasa Indonesia as Indonesia's official national language provided a way of uniting the disparate ethnic and linguistic identities among the Indonesian population. See "Overview of Indonesia," *Living in Indonesia* (Accessed 28 Apr. 2010) http://www.expat.or.id/info/overview.html.

[40] Tristram Perry, Email Correspondence, 26 April 2010.

[41] Crampton.

[42] "Top 5 Uses of Wildfire Social Media Marketing Campaigns," SmashSummit, 31 March 2010 (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://smashsummit.com/top-5-uses-of-wildfire-social-media-marketing-campaigns/; "U.S. Embassy's

While most would agree that nearly 130,000 Facebook fans demonstrates evidence of success on some level, there are several areas where Embassy Jakarta effectively engages with its Facebook audience and creates potential for future interaction. The reach of the fan community, the quantity and quality of interactions with fans, and the emergence of self-regulation within the Embassy's Facebook community all highlight Facebook's contribution to the Embassy's public diplomacy efforts. At the same time, each of these accomplishments face ongoing challenges from competitors and adversaries, as well as the inherent risks and limitations associated with engaging in dialogue via Facebook. Embassy Jakarta's Facebook strategy will need to remain conscious of these issues going forward.

Reach to Facebook Users in Target Country

While Embassy Jakarta far outpaces any other U.S. post around the world in number of Facebook fans, another measure of effectiveness is the reach a fan page has among Facebook users in a given country. Since Indonesia has an estimated 23,000,000 Facebook users, 130,000 fans means roughly 0.56% of the possible Facebook users for that country are fans of the U.S. Embassy (or slightly less, since 86% of the Embassy's fans list their location as Indonesia). Even though a percentage of the Facebook fans may reside outside the target audience, Embassy Jakarta's page has a much greater penetration than pages for U.S. posts in countries with large numbers of Facebook users, such as Embassy London (See Table 1). For countries with much smaller communities of Facebook users, an Embassy's potential reach can be much higher even with a smaller overall number of fans (See Table 2). This comparison demonstrates Embassy Jakarta's relative success among Indonesia's Facebook users in comparison to other U.S. posts (assuming the vast majority of fans for each post list that country as their location).[43] However, given the differences of local context in communities of Internet users and Facebook users, establishing a meaningful target penetration for U.S. State Department Facebook pages is difficult.

Figure 1: U.S. Embassy Fan Potential Penetration in Top Facebook Using Countries

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Facebook Fans Now 100,000+," *DiploPundit*, 19 March 2010. (Accessed 8 Apr. 2010) http://diplopundit.blogspot.com/2010/03/us-embassy-jakartas-facebook-fans-top.html

[43] Because the distribution of fans by post for each user country is not publicly available, for the purposes of this comparative analysis it is assumed that a similar proportion of Facebook fans for U.S. embassies originate from users who list the target country as their location. Further analysis of this aspect should account for differences in proportion of fans from the target country.

Fans of U.S. Embassy in Countries with Most Facebook Users	Fans	Facebook Users	% Fans/Users
United Kingdom	1,168	24,675,040	0.0047%
Indonesia	129,604	23,289,560	0.5565%
Turkey	2,039	20,911,060	0.0098%
France	1,837	17,756,140	0.0103%
Italy	1,035	16,224,740	0.0064%

Source: Facebook.com, April 25, 2010

Figure 2: U.S. Embassy Potential Fan Penetration for Posts with Most Fans

U.S. Embassies with Most Facebook Fans	Fans	Facebook Users In Country	% Users that are Fans
Indonesia	129,604	23,289,560	0.5565%
Bolivia	12,679	598,420	2.1187%
Argentina	11,209	9,509,700	0.1179%
Paraguay	10,441	204,420	5.1076%
Sri Lanka	8,237	539,180	1.5277%
Philippines	6,099	12,977,680	0.0470%
Egypt	3,745	3,166,760	0.1183%
Montenegro	3,482	159,360	2.1850%
Macedonia	2,640	690,340	0.3824%

Source: Facebook.com, April 25, 2010

Facing Competitors and Adversaries on Facebook

Embassy Jakarta's use of Facebook should also be judged relative to its competitors in Indonesia, including some with a specifically anti-U.S. or anti-Obama agenda. Comparing Embassy Jakarta to organizations with similar missions and a Facebook presence, far more Indonesians are Facebook fans of the Embassy than British Council Indonesia (~5,700 fans) or the Goethe-Institut Indonesia (155 fans), although all are overshadowed by those who are fans of

Starbucks or the IndonesiaUnite activism group.[44] While both the British Council and the Goethe-Institut engage in significant educational and cultural activities offline in Indonesia, Embassy Jakarta's ability to also engage directly with a large audience via Facebook gives it an advantage its ability to increase overall awareness of its activities.

Indonesian groups that are anti-Obama or favor anti-American causes attract far less support via Facebook than Embassy Jakarta.[45] The Facebook group that formed to protest the display of a privately funded statue of a young Obama eventually attracted 57,000 online supporters, but their objection was to the placement of a foreigner's statue in a public park, not Obama himself.[46] This parallels a lack of widespread support for the anti-American agenda in Indonesia's offline world. Before Obama's visit, Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama, asked Indonesia's Muslims to reject calls to protest President Obama's visit in March.[47] While the real influence of anti-U.S. groups within Indonesia is debatable, Embassy Jakarta seems relatively well-positioned to influence a wider audience due to its more extensive network of Facebook supporters.

Quantity and Quality of Fan Interactions

Embassy Jakarta excels at choosing Facebook content relevant to its audience and responding to their interests—and the quantity and quality of interactions with fans is a clear sign of its success. Embassy Jakarta stresses the importance of creating content that promotes conversation or discussion, a guiding principle of public diplomacy. One recent post featured the

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[44] "British Council Indonesia," "Goethe-Institut Indonesia," "Starbucks Indonesia," "IndonesiaUnite" Facebook.com, Accessed 25 April 2010.

[45] The Indonesian group "1,000,000 Facebookers Tolak Obama/Kick Obama out of Indonesia," has roughly 11,000 supporters as of April 25, 2010. Perry reports that the group has not done anything to confront any of Embassy Jakarta's online activities (telephone interview). A Facebook page for Indonesian Islamic and Jihad News website Arrahmah.com has around 10,600 fans as of April 25, 2010.

[46] "Turunkan Patung Barack Obama Di Taman Menteng;" see also Will McCahill, "Under Facebook Pressure, Indonesia Considers Tearing Down Just-Erected Obama Statue," *Newser*, 25 January 2010. (Accessed 24 Apr. 2010).http://www.newser.com/story/79171/indonesia-may-tear-down-obama-statue.html

[47] Zaid Jilani, "Indonesia's Largest Muslim Group Calls for Welcoming President Obama and Condemns Hardline Protests," *ThinkProgress*, 15 March 2010 (Accessed 24 Apr. 2010) http://thinkprogress.org/2010/03/15/indonesia-muslims-welcome-obama/.

Indonesian inspirations behind the musical version of *The Lion King* with a related quiz.[48] Perry emphasizes content showcasing America creates a more powerful "cultural bridge" when it relates to the life of the audience" and two-way engagement prevents Facebook from becoming "a second website."[49][50] This approach has helped grow the Embassy's Facebook community and continue satisfying their current audience.

There is ample evidence to show Embassy Jakarta has been successful in engaging their Facebook fans. Facebook's benefits include the ability to track reactions to posted content, particularly compared to traditional media formats where it's only possible to know the potential number of eyes an article reached.[51] Fan engagement with content can be measured by reviewing the rate at which fans interact with posts, the nature of their comments, and whether a significant number "un-fan" the page after content is posted. For Embassy Jakarta, hundreds or thousands of fans comment on or "like" each post. A recent post on the *batiks* the U.S. Embassy staff wear on Fridays received more than 2,000 likes and 700 comments[52] Krape points out that not only is it valuable to see the overall number of fan comments, but also to watch the development in their content, evolving from whether or not they enjoy a post to larger conversations focused more on policy and culture.[53] This suggests the current interactions are creating a foundation for potential discussion of more complex issues in the future.

The Embassy's Facebook team also takes the important step of soliciting feedback from fans about the type of content they would like to see, and in some cases has received unexpected responses, such as requests for more U.S. history.[54] Facebook's tools also help gauge when content lacks appeal to their Facebook fans. "Losing 200 people is a good sign that we put

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[48] See "[Quiz] The Lion King: Terinspirasi oleh Keberhasilan Teater Seni Indonesia" Facebook.com, 6 April 2010. (Accessed 21 Apr. 2010)

[49] Perry (telephone interview).

[50] Perry (telephone interview).
[51] Perry (telephone interview).

[52] See "U.S. Embassy - Jakarta, Indonesia" Facebook.com, 25 April 2010.

[53] Krape (telephone interview).

[54] Krape reports that they have found a significant interest in U.S. history among their Facebook fans, and subsequently try to post content about U.S. presidents and American artifacts, often with photos and a short description (telephone interview).

something up they didn't like," Krape explains.[55] The same holds true for managing the frequency of posts, which can drive away users if they are constantly overwhelmed by new content.[56] Adjusting content according to fan response has been essential to helping Embassy Jakarta keep its fans engaged. Perry adds, "We are constantly on the lookout for unique or custom content and try to track what works and what doesn't."[57] Embassy Jakarta's responsiveness to their users in developing content has helped them make adjustments to increase the quality of future interactions and increased their ability to constructively engage with their Facebook community.

Potential Limitations and Risks of Engagement

Engagement with Facebook fans has the potential to be negative as well as positive, but thus far Embassy Jakarta has not experienced significant difficulties even when challenges have arisen. When President Obama decided to postpone his visit to Indonesia to focus on healthcare reform in the United States, it seemed very possible that the Embassy would be broadly criticized by its Facebook community, given the level of fan excitement and the advertised contests. But when the news was posted to the Facebook page, commenters demonstrated remarkable understanding and only about 5 percent were estimated to be negative.[58] Perry adds that once the announcement was official, they were able to distribute the information quickly via Facebook, Twitter, and the embassy website to dispel any false rumors for the postponement of the visit.[59] The mild response the Embassy received via Facebook seems consistent with Indonesian reaction to the cancellation reported in traditional media.[60] In this situation, the Facebook fans' interaction with the Embassy could have taken on very unpleasant tone, but the ability to quickly

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[55] Krape (telephone interview).

[56] Krape (telephone interview) and Perry (telephone interview).

[57] Perry qtd. in Crampton.

[58] Krape credits two factors with helping to mitigate backlash from the postponement: Obama personally expressing his disappointment with the postponement on the RCTI network and the expectation that he would plan to visit in June with his family (telephone interview).

[59] Perry (telephone interview).

[60] Cochrane.

share the information directly with the public helped mitigate negative reaction both on Facebook and in the real world. Interacting with fans on Facebook will continue to pose risks, but also enables timely responses that directly reach users.

Overall Community Self-Regulation

The development of Embassy Jakarta's Facebook fans as a community with a shared interest in the United States, rather than simply a collection of individuals, provides further evidence of successful engagement. Krape reports that once the number of the Embassy's fans reached around 60,000-70,000, the community became "self-policing" and fans would participate in moderating the conversation on a specific topic.[61] Fan contributions include correcting misinformation and keeping other fans on topic, demonstrating they value the time spent visiting the Embassy's page and the information they receive. The transformation of the Embassy's Facebook fans into a self-regulating group shows the overall level of investment in the community. Embassy Jakarta has facilitated this high-quality interaction between fans around topics of mutual interest, which has helped create a forum where more complex issues might be discussed in the future.

Potential Challenges from the Fan Community

Even with a maturing Facebook community, there is an inherent risk that users could post comments that may be detrimental to the community or the organization hosting the page. Embassy Jakarta's fans are permitted to comment freely on posted items. Asked whether the Embassy faces challenges from those who seek to manipulate this freedom and post negative opinions, Perry says occasionally they get people who post "unpleasant things," but only those who violate the terms of service (most frequently looking to sell products or spam other users) are warned and then blocked from commenting.[62] But Perry emphasizes that if someone expresses a strong or critical opinion about the U.S., the Embassy staff responds, and sometimes other fans will also.[63] In this sense, even when users with opposing views participate in a

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[61] Krape (telephone interview).

[62] Perry (telephone interview).

[63] Perry qtd. in Crampton.

conversation happening on the Embassy page, it creates a dialogue about the issue and the page allows the Embassy to participate in a conversation that would otherwise still be happening in the online space, even without their participation. In Perry's view, "The real strength of using social media for public diplomacy is the discussion happening on both sides," which gives those critical of the U.S. a chance to engage directly with its representatives. [64] At the same time, Facebook is not currently an arena where Embassy Jakarta holds serious discussions on the most controversial American policies, which might attract more negative input from visitors to the page. While Embassy Jakarta's decision to allow users to freely express their views creates the opportunity for adversarial influences to enter the conversation, their approach intelligently reflects a higher priority on the dialogue and discussion ultimately needed to create understanding.

Conclusions and Lessons

Embassy Jakarta's effective integration of Facebook into its public diplomacy efforts has generated visible engagement with its audience and developed a community that will endure beyond President Obama's visit. While the unique circumstances of President Obama's popularity and social media's rapid expansion in Indonesia have been significant factors, Embassy Jakarta has succeeded thus far because its understands Facebook's potential as a tool for public diplomacy and has used its limitations to guide its decision-making. Its ability to manage the risks inherent in using Facebook without significant setbacks is a further sign of its success, although evaluating the sustainability of the community after President Obama's visit occurs will be another important measure.

The key lessons from Embassy Jakarta's experience are:

- Social media best contributes to public diplomacy efforts by expanding the reach of existing activities through direct informal communication and creating potential for further dialogue;
- Identifying the right tools to reach target audiences is critical for social media outreach, as is recognizing its online nature expands its reach beyond intended audiences;

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[64] Perry qtd. in Crampton.

- Strategic approaches to social media outreach should be shaped by local context, including developing content to encourage interaction from the community and capitalizing on trends in the target media environment;
- The risks of generating harmful engagement from social media outreach should be acknowledged, but allowing for more interaction improves audience investment and can create an advantage over competitors among target audiences;
- Effectiveness of social media efforts should be based on evidence of engagement with target audiences and the development of a foundation for long-term engagement.

Social media's greatest contribution to public diplomacy occurs when it creates potential for continued engagement and dialogue. Krape wisely notes that although Obama's visit to Indonesia was postponed, the efforts to develop the Facebook community were not rendered useless by the cancellation.[65] Through careful management and responsiveness to users' interests, a network that developed primarily because of a single event has the potential to become a sustainable community holding an evolving conversation. Strategies for using social media as part of public diplomacy efforts should focus on creating engagement that will encourage interaction and foster interest in long-term dialogue.

Social media tools will likely remain part of U.S. public diplomacy efforts for the foreseeable future, but their effective use requires understanding of their role in the information environment and their ability to facilitate dialogue. Using sustainable engagement as a measure of effectiveness for social media outreach is one way to improve practitioners and policymakers' understanding about its contributions to public diplomacy. Greater appreciation of social media's ability to create engagement and strengthen potential for future understanding is critical to motivating federal lawmakers to give social media and public diplomacy efforts more financial support.

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[65] Krape (telephone interview).