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CPD

Your Source for Public Diplomacy



2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT

**SPORTS DIPLOMACY
AND THE “L.A. MOMENT”**

**HONORING STEPHEN
SCHWARZMAN’S COMMITMENT
TO GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT**

THE CPD EXPERIENCE

Established in 2003 at the University of Southern California, the USC Center on Public Diplomacy (CPD) is a research, analysis and professional training organization dedicated to enriching the study and practice of public diplomacy in pursuit of a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Since its inception, CPD has become an ambitious and productive leader in the public diplomacy research and scholarship community and plays host to robust discussions about the future of public diplomacy.

RESEARCH

Our innovative research agenda bridges the study-practice gap and contributes to the intellectual foundations of public diplomacy scholarship.

CONVENING

Our events and conferences provide a space for the public diplomacy community to explore key topics and trends.

TRAINING

Our one-of-a-kind professional education and capacity-building programs equip practitioners with key skills needed to deploy effective and impactful public diplomacy.

AWARDS

Our annual awards celebrate exceptional public diplomacy practitioners in the public and private sectors.

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Message from the Director

Today's global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and the risk of nuclear war require collective efforts and cooperation. Public diplomacy—the act of engaging with foreign audiences—serves to unite nations in addressing these shared threats by promoting open and honest discourse, knowledge-sharing, joint research, and collaborative projects.

A decade ago, the key duty of a press officer in a foreign embassy was to brief the media. No longer. We've entered a new age of public diplomacy, where practitioners must master digital tools like social media and AI that have revolutionized how we perceive and interact with the world around us.

The rise of these transformative new technologies has also led to a surge in disinformation campaigns. Hostile actors increasingly rely on social media, fake news, and online trolls to spread falsehoods, stir discord, and undermine public trust. In response, public diplomacy has emerged as an essential tool to debunk myths, clarify truths, and promote transparency.

Moreover, while digital tools like AI and social media bring immense benefits, they also depersonalize human interactions. Again, public diplomacy offers an antidote, facilitating face-to-face dialogues, cultural programs, and educational exchanges. Through these interactions, nations can build mutual understanding and empathy, thus reducing the chances of misunderstandings and conflicts.

At the Center on Public Diplomacy, we are committed to equipping public diplomacy practitioners with the tools to navigate this complex new terrain of international relations. The Center works daily to strengthen the field of public diplomacy by conducting research, providing training, organizing events, and celebrating achievement through awards such as the Ameri Prize for Innovation in Public Diplomacy and this year's inaugural Excellence in Public Diplomacy Award.

In our new digital frontier, embracing public diplomacy will remain vital in fostering understanding, promoting cooperation, and building a brighter future for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jay Wang". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Jay Wang



Sports Diplomacy and the ‘L.A. Moment’

LIGHTING THE TORCH

Since the dawn of the Olympic Games in ancient Greece, sports have played a vital role in cultural exchange and peacebuilding between civilizations. Today, sports are a powerful vehicle for promoting mutual respect, unity, and dialogue among nations.

Sports diplomacy—the practice of using sporting events, initiatives, and exchanges to achieve international goals—is an oft-overlooked facet of global affairs, serving to build bridges, amplify soft power, and foster connections that extend beyond national boundaries.

Over the next five years, sports diplomacy scholars and practitioners will be watching one city in particular—Los Angeles—host of the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Summer Olympics. “The L.A. Moment” is upon us, but not for the first time. Los Angeles has long been a sports bellwether for the U.S., having hosted the Olympics in 1932 and 1984. The city remains a sports mecca, now boasting twelve professional teams. Moreover, Los Angeles—the undisputed entertainment capital of the world—is also home to sports media giants such as ESPN, FOX, and the NFL Studios.

Integral to Los Angeles’ sports culture, USC has a rich history of athletic excellence on the world stage. USC has produced more Olympic athletes, medalists and gold medal-winners than any other U.S. university. It is also one of the few schools in America with more women’s teams (12) than men’s programs (9). USC is home to world-class fields, centers and stadiums, including its recently renamed

Today, sports are a powerful vehicle for promoting mutual respect, unity, and dialogue among nations.

track stadium, Allyson Felix Field, and the iconic Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, which will host an opening ceremony for the 2028 Olympics.

OUT FRONT ON SPORTS DIPLOMACY

Sports diplomacy is a key area of study at the Center on Public Diplomacy. The Center recognizes the unique potential of sports to promote cross-cultural and mutual understanding, to dispel stereotypes, to expand appreciation for diversity, to cultivate leadership, and to develop capacity for athletes to build stable communities and strong civil society institutions in the U.S. and abroad.

The Center actively conducts research, provides training, and hosts events on topics such as sport-tech diplomacy, the interplay of sports and city diplomacy, and the public diplomacy significance of “mega-events” like the Olympics and World Cup. Last year, the Center published a report by author Edward Elliott that marked one of the first external analyses of U.S. sports diplomacy infrastructure. We also published a deeply researched analysis on the mechanisms and impact of the recent World Cup in Qatar, authored by CPD Visiting Scholar and U.S. Public Diplomat in Residence, Matthew Asada.

NEXT-GEN SPORTS DIPLOMACY

Sports diplomacy will always be grounded in direct face-to-face interaction and genuine human engagement. But today, our digital life interacts ever more with the physical realm. Digital technology offers an exciting opportunity for sports diplomacy to grow and expand.

A key issue in advancing contemporary sports diplomacy is how to deploy next-generation storytelling and innovation. USC faculty and students are rising to the challenge, experimenting with new forms of sports storytelling ranging from immersive VR experiences, to AI-driven media, to esports platforms.

As the boundaries between physical and virtual spaces continue to blur, the digital components of sports diplomacy will become ever more crucial in amplifying its impact. USC Annenberg and the Center on Public Diplomacy are committed to writing the next chapter of sports diplomacy, rooted in storytelling, inclusion, entrepreneurship, and innovation.



Sports Diplomacy Research Reads

CPD released three in-depth research papers on sports diplomacy as part of our signature scholarly series, **CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy**.

- U.S. Sports Diplomacy
by Edward Elliott
- Sport-Tech Diplomacy at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
by Yoav Dubinsky
- An Inter-Event Comparison of Two Historic Global Mega Events: FIFA 2022 and Expo 2020
by Matthew K. Asada

Download at
USCPublicDiplomacy.org/Perspectives

CPD provided additional sports diplomacy commentary through our website.

- Pan-Africanism and Soccer
by Deneyse Antoinette Kirkpatrick
- Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Qatar After the World Cup
by David Ellwood
- Cities and Sports Diplomacy: How Sports Unlock City Diplomacy
Panel Discussion



Recognizing Innovation in Public Diplomacy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the most powerful technologies of our era and is rapidly changing the world as we know it, including the world of public diplomacy.

Foreign service officer Alexander Hunt has led the charge to integrate AI into the U.S. Department of State's workflows, test drive AI, and advocate for its adoption across the Department. Stationed in the small, far-flung U.S. Embassy Guinea, Hunt was an early adopter of ChatGPT, using the AI tool to summarize news stories for media briefings, free up time for fieldwork, and measure public sentiment.

For creatively integrating AI into the field of public diplomacy, Hunt was awarded the 2023 Ameri Prize, which honors public diplomacy professionals who devise innovative and scalable strategies for advancing foreign policy and international cooperation. CPD joins with the U.S. Department of State to present the annual prize, which has been endowed by entrepreneur and philanthropist Goli Ameri, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

"Supporting this award is like a lifetime dream come true," Ameri says, "because I know what a tremendous impact it will have on the work of our dedicated foreign service officers and civil servants."

The intent of the prize is to strengthen and advance the field of public diplomacy and facilitate global cooperation. The 2022 Ameri Prize recipient, Alys Spensley, was recognized for her innovative work as deputy spokesperson at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, where she applied social and digital analytics to expand the State Department's social media platforms and grow users.

Radically reinventing and expanding engagement with Chinese audiences, her team's data-driven work opened a direct line of communication about U.S. values, policies, and priorities to China's one billion social media users.

The prior year's recipients were Gretchen Franke and Chad Houghton, honored for developing a groundbreaking AI-based tool to counter disinformation in Poland. As new AI-based tools streamline workflow, and digital platforms bring the world closer together, these technologies can also be used to sow international strife. Therefore, knowledge, technical ability, and innovation in public diplomacy have become essential to effective foreign policy.

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Honoring Stephen Schwarzman's Commitment to Global Engagement

As part of our mission to advance and expand the field of public diplomacy, CPD this year launched the Excellence in Public Diplomacy Award, which recognizes a business leader working to strengthen international cooperation and local prosperity by improving global communication.

Rising geopolitical risks, along with rapid technological innovation, are re-writing the rules of our economy and society. Business leaders can play an important role in building a more stable international marketplace and a more unified global community, given their capacity to bridge nations and cultures through economic activity. Often, their networks span international borders, and their ventures involve collaborations with foreign partners, requiring cross-cultural communication and understanding. By advancing the idea that prosperity can be achieved through shared goals and collaboration, such leaders embody the values of public diplomacy.

This year, we were proud to honor Stephen A. Schwarzman, Chairman, CEO, and Co-Founder of Blackstone, as our inaugural Excellence in Public Diplomacy Award recipient. Beyond his corporate success at the helm of the world's largest alternative asset manager, Schwarzman has created a new standard for global relations and philanthropic impact. He is proof that public diplomacy needn't be confined to the realm of government officials, but can be practiced by private citizens who strive to build a more harmonious global community, promote goodwill, and strengthen peace.

Throughout his career, Schwarzman has dedicated himself to tackling global problems with transformative solutions. In 2013, he founded an international scholarship program, "Schwarzman Scholars," to educate future leaders about China, deepen mutual understanding, and



foster long-lasting connections. Inspired by the Rhodes Scholarship, the program supports up to 200 scholars annually for a one-year master's in global affairs at Beijing's Tsinghua University—a top Asian university. Scholars chosen for the highly selective program live in Beijing for a year of study and cultural immersion—attending lectures, traveling across the region, and developing a deeper understanding of China.

In addition to his impactful work in China, Schwarzman also worked on behalf of the U.S. in support of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, for which he was awarded the Order of the Aztec Eagle, Mexico's highest honor for foreigners. He has made his mark abroad as a member of The Council on Foreign Relations, The Business Council, The Business Roundtable, and The International Business Council of the World Economic Forum; and he is one of few Americans to be awarded both the Légion d'Honneur and the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres at the Commandeur level in France. His accomplishments on the world stage exemplify the very best of America's civic culture of international engagement.



Event Highlights

↑ Henry Kissinger, Former United States Secretary of State, joined us for a special event. He shared insights from his new book, *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy*, and discussed the vital role of leadership in these times of uncertainty and transition.

Michael Hammer, President Biden's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, discussed key issues related to U.S. foreign policy toward Africa and the importance of engaging African nations to promote peacebuilding, democracy and rule of law in the Horn of Africa.



↑ The 3rd CPD Summit on City Diplomacy: Left to right, former L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti, former Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan, and former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo were among the city leaders, practitioners and scholars who gathered to explore the role of cities in tackling urgent global issues such as climate, trade, cybersecurity and immigration.



← Ashok Mirpuri, Singapore's Ambassador to the United States, delivered a presentation about public diplomacy in

Singapore and Southeast Asia, emphasizing key issues in the region such as global trade, foreign policy and public engagement.



↑ Ekow Eshun, writer and curator, joined us for a thought-provoking conversation about his latest exhibition, "In the Black Fantastic," showcasing contemporary artists from the African diaspora who draw on science fiction, myth, and folklore to address racial injustice and celebrate cultures of resistance and affirmation.

Visualizing Public Diplomacy: CPD Research Fellow Elisabeth King moderated a panel discussion with Corneliu Bjola, Jennifer Cassidy, Dmitry Chernobrov, and Ilan Manor, exploring current and future uses of visual communication in diplomatic messaging, including "selfie diplomacy," the use of avatars, and weaving humor into messaging.

From K-Pop to *Parasite*: CPD hosted a conversation with our U.S.-South Korea NextGen Creative fellows about how South Korea's burgeoning, dynamic creative sector and next-generation storytelling are steadily enhancing the nation's soft power.

↓ The 2022 Ameri Prize for Innovation in Public Diplomacy: Left to right, CPD Advisory Board Chair Barry

Sanders, CPD Advisory Board Member Goli Ameri, 2022 Ameri Prize recipient Alys Spensley, USC Annenberg Dean Willow Bay, CPD Director Jay Wang, and artist David van Eyssen attended the special award event.

Building Omnichannel Media Strategies for Public Diplomacy: How do we leverage the power of digital platforms and data for effective communication? Jason Wulfsohn, CEO and co-founder of AUDIENCECX, discussed the latest approaches to reaching audiences using enterprise technology platforms.

Global Mega-Events: CPD's U.S. Public Diplomat in Residence Matthew Asada and *Los Angeles Times* journalist Kevin Baxter discussed how "mega-events" such as the Olympics, World Cup, and World's Fair can be used by host and participating countries for nation-branding efforts, as moments of national celebration, and as part of their long-term planning and development.

The Information War in Ukraine: CPD hosted a panel discussion with public diplomacy scholars and practitioners, including Ukraine's Director General for Public Diplomacy and Communications, Iryna Borovets, exploring the information war between Russia and Ukraine, its impact on global public opinion and foreign policy.

Music Diplomacy for Afghanistan: CPD hosted a screening of the powerful documentary short, *Symphony of Courage*. It tells the story of the young music students of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music and the international team that worked to evacuate them after the Taliban seized control in 2021.



Research Networks

2023-25 CPD RESEARCH FELLOWS



Noé Cornago
Associate Professor, University of the Basque Country
Hegemonic Transition Through Communication? Evolving Narratives and Interplay Between Material and Ideational Elements in USA-China Diplomatic Incidents (1990-2020)



Anna Popkova
Associate Professor, Western Michigan University
Political Dissent as Non-State Public Diplomacy



Kristin Eggeling
Assistant Professor, University of Copenhagen
Diplomatic Mimes: Big Tech, Digital Regulation and Mimetic Diplomatic Practice



Alistair Somerville
Independent Researcher
The United Nations' Public Diplomacy in Donor Countries

2022 CPD DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT RECIPIENT



Minseon Ku
Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at The Ohio State University

Ku's research examines security as social construction as experienced through embodied, visual and material representations.

New CPD-SIF Fellowship

SOUTHEAST ASIA RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

In partnership with the Singapore International Foundation (SIF), the year-long non-residential fellowship supports scholars pursuing research on public diplomacy in Southeast Asia.

Dr. Zhao Alexandre Huang
Associate Professor, University of Paris Nanterre
Exploring Digital Public Diplomacy Strategy Related to the South China Sea Issue Between China and ASEAN

Dr. Kittir Prasirtsuk
Professor, Thammasat University (Thailand)
Thai Public Diplomacy: Approaches, Challenges, and Potentials

Suzie Sri Suparin S. Sudarman
Senior Lecturer, Universitas Indonesia
Transformational Diplomacy and Indonesia

CPD EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN RESEARCH FELLOWS

Dionysos Alexiou
Lecturer, University of Cyprus and University of Nicosia
Alexiou is exploring energy security and regional collaboration agreements in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Vassilis (Bill) Kappis
Deputy Director and Lecturer, University of Buckingham
Kappis is researching how small states like Cyprus can mobilize their scarce resources to achieve policy goals.



CPD Summer Institute, Class of 2023

At CPD's signature two-week summer training on the USC campus, mid-career public diplomats and international communication professionals attended sessions on climate diplomacy, video games, and AI; and enjoyed a special visit from Liz Allen, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (pictured right, in the center).



Training Highlights

For nearly two decades, CPD has been the leader in training public diplomats and international communication professionals.

CPD trainings—such as our new Mini-Courses listed below—are regularly conducted on the USC campus and the University’s new “Capital Campus” in Washington, DC.

EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

AI and Bots for Public Diplomacy

Digital Storytelling

Knowing & Crafting Your Story

Organizing to Amplify: Telling Your Story

Understanding Our Dynamic Media Landscape

Virtual Reality and Immersive Storytelling for Public Diplomacy

What Makes Content Go Viral

MONITORING AND EVALUATING PUBLIC DIPLOMACY CAMPAIGNS

PD Monitoring and Evaluation Techniques

Understanding Theory of Change for PD Impact Assessment

Survey Design and Best Practices

Digital Data and Real-Time Analytics

Understanding and Designing for PD Network Effects



GET TO KNOW CPD’S PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FACULTY

Video Games & Public Diplomacy

Dmitri Williams
Professor at USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism

Is it important for communication professionals to understand the world of video games?

I love this question. One way of thinking about it is to ask the same question of better-understood media like TV, movies, radio, or even reading: Why is it important for communication professionals to understand any of those? The answers there are obvious: Because that’s how people have their world views and values shaped and influenced.

By some accounts, gaming is a larger industry than newspapers, books, music, TV and movies combined. It’s about a \$200 billion per year medium globally, and it is consumed regularly by a majority of the world’s population. Anywhere there are screens, including phones, there are games. It’s now all ages, and nearly equally gendered. That’s a lot of impressions, filled with ideas, heroes and villains, plot lines, values, and subtext. Are the effects of games stronger or weaker than older legacy media? We don’t know for sure, but there’s a decent argument made that by actively participating rather than passively consuming, a player may think or process more heavily than compared to TV.

So, the short answer to the question is: You need to understand (and maybe want to impact) the ideas people consume, and this is where they do it. Meet them where they are.

Can you talk about the globalization of video games, and regional differences?

Games have become a fully global phenomenon, thanks largely to the ubiquity of the smartphone and the free-to-play business model.

That means we can have truly global brands and IP, though many don’t translate that well. We see culturally specific stories not going very far, while broader, more human stories can go everywhere.

There are also many translational and cultural challenges for game makers, such as progressive values in the West not being accepted in other regions, no blood being allowed in Germany, bones being taboo in China (try making a game with skeletons without bones...), and on and on. Then, consider who is making the games and whether they are even aware of these differences. The beauty of the world is its immense diversity, but it’s also a challenge for cultural producers and games are no exception.

Can you describe your research into social value in the gaming world, and discuss the implications?

My recent research focuses on a phenomenon called “Social Value,” which is a measurement of how much people influence each other. We have an algorithm that can take data from a game, or from sales data or many other sources, and then be able to say “This person caused these other people to do something, or do more of it.” That thing could be spending money, or spending time somewhere, or really anything there’s a record of. This works at any scale, from two people to two billion, and it’s very accurate.

That technology allows us to tell who the influencers are, and how much impact they have. The implications there are that if you want to affect something or someone, you are smart to focus on the people who affect others. It’s about ripples on a pond, and knowing where to throw.

In Their Own Words

CPD BEHIND THE SCENES



Andrea Weyneth

*CPD Programming & Operations Assistant,
USC Master of Public Diplomacy candidate*

My interest in public diplomacy was sparked by my experience as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. As someone who has traveled the world extensively and participated in exchange programs, I wondered what influence I could have on others and vice versa. What kind of career would enable me to continue to have those experiences? My time in Ukraine taught me that I enjoy living abroad for extended periods of time, learning new languages and cultures, and engaging in mutual exchange, which led to my aspiration to become a Foreign Service Officer.

A highlight of working at CPD has been getting to know my incredible colleagues. Each one took me under their wing to teach me a new practical skill or discuss public diplomacy concepts. Other opportunities include helping to organize the CPD Summer Institute. This is a two-week program where diplomats and practitioners from around the world gather to learn new public diplomacy strategies. During the program, I was able to connect with American diplomats who inspired me to pursue my career aspirations by joining them in the foreign service. Not to mention, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Liz Allen stopped by!

THE USC MASTER OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY (MPD) PROGRAM



Bob Banks

*Former Senior U.S. Foreign Service Officer and
Director of the USC Master of Public Diplomacy Program*

The need for people trained in connecting and communicating across diverse cultures and political systems has never been greater. Public diplomacy exists at the intersection of communication and foreign affairs, and as such, has come to be recognized as an essential tool for both governments and non-state actors. The MPD degree prepares students to use the tools of public diplomacy to address complex challenges in contemporary global affairs.

The MPD program at USC is the first such program in the world and gives students a strong professional foundation for the practice of public diplomacy. It boasts a first-class faculty, a wide range of course offerings, travel, work and internship opportunities, a talented and diverse student network, and a location in L.A. that offers exposure to an unbeatable array of creative leaders and industries. In addition, the program is co-located on campus with its partner institution, the Center on Public Diplomacy, which is the world leader in PD training, research, and publication.

MPD students typically find employment as communicators in one of four sectors: government (including state and local offices and international and regional organizations), universities (including pursuing a Ph.D.), non-profits, and the private sector. Tracking data show that nearly 100% of MPD students secure employment within the first year after graduation.

The MPD degree prepares students to use the tools of public diplomacy to address complex challenges in contemporary global affairs.

SKATEBOARD DIPLOMACY



Neftalie Williams

Alumnus of the USC Master of Public Diplomacy program, Assistant Professor of Sociology at San Diego State University, and U.S. Sports Envoy for Skateboarding

As a USC undergrad, I was lucky enough to take a class with longtime journalist Robert Scheer. We were talking about the difference between public diplomacy and propaganda. (He had personally witnessed propaganda efforts by the U.S.) He introduced me to Professor Nick Cull, who told me that public diplomacy—unlike propaganda—is a two-way exchange of ideas: encouraging people to feel like they belong to a larger group or have a shared interest. It got me thinking about a passion of mine: skateboarding. Skateboarding is very real culture, with a group identity and burgeoning global community. It occurred to me: nobody has been focusing on skateboarding as a tool of public diplomacy.

These days, I'm the U.S. Sports Envoy for Skateboarding. It involves traveling to different countries and using skateboarding for public diplomacy. My work helps people connect to the U.S. and is very much in line with the mission of the State Department and our foreign embassies: to build strong relationships in foreign lands.

I view my work as related to sports diplomacy, but distinct—because skateboarding is distinct. First and foremost, it doesn't rely on competition. Yes, you can win a skate contest, but the focus is never “who's the best” or “who's number one.” The goal is enjoying yourself, as opposed to winning. Skateboarding also has a “do-it-yourself” (DIY) ethos, where you learn alongside a community of other skaters, without a clear hierarchy. That's a wonderful, accessible framework when you're trying to engage with a population.

Moreover, skateboarding as a culture has so many aspects beyond the athletic. I've had students tell me: “I'm not a skateboarder, but I'm an artist, and I love the artwork on the bottom of skateboards.” Or, kids with an interest in music get excited about the music in skating videos. There are many ways to be a skater, even if you don't skate.

As a U.S. Envoy, I've conducted missions in the Netherlands—introducing Syrian refugees to skateboarding—as well as Cambodia, Barbados, Grenada, and Kazakhstan. I've also worked in Cuba, where we taught people to build their own skateboards, and despite longstanding icy relations between Cuba and the United States, we bonded over skating. Wherever I work, when people discover skateboarding, they get excited. They feel a part of a wider community. It's a great way for young people to start thinking of themselves as global citizens, and that's what public diplomacy is all about.

THE A.I. REVOLUTION



Emilio Ferrara

Professor of Communication and Computer Science at the USC Information Sciences Institute and the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism

Q: Are there sufficient safeguards built into AI-technologies like ChatGPT to prevent the creation of hate speech, conspiracy theories, and other illicit content?

A: ChatGPT has a large team working on safeguards, with a vested interest in keeping illicit content off the platform. That said there are by now hundreds, if not thousands, of clones of ChatGPT, and the people and organizations behind them do not always have the expertise, or the manpower, to install safeguards. Or, they might have a different level of ethics. And that's what keeps me up at night when it comes to AI. It's not “Skynet” from the Terminator, or evil AI robots conquering the world. It's malign actors getting this powerful technology to work for their own harmful and destructive purposes.

Q: With the technology evolving so rapidly, how can public diplomacy practitioners keep up?

A: Experiment with these tools. Find a use case. It doesn't have to be public diplomacy-related. What I do is sit with my kids at nighttime once a week, pull up ChatGPT, and say “let's write a story.” They enter a creative prompt and we read the story together. You don't need to understand how AI is built (leave that to the nerds like me), but it's important to figure out what it can do. Because we still don't know exactly what it can do, or exactly how it works. We essentially built a machine, gave it a massive amount of human knowledge, and now we're slowly discovering its capabilities. We didn't train it to be a mathematician or musician, and yet it's solving problems even our smartest mathematicians couldn't solve, and it's writing beautiful music. By learning AI's capabilities, we can find productive, beneficial uses—like writing children's stories—and we can be on the lookout for harmful uses.

Message from the Chair



Barry A. Sanders
Advisory Board Chair

USC Center on Public Diplomacy continues to thrive and innovate amid a complex world of disruption in media, AI-powered automation, and urgent global challenges. It is of ever-increasing importance and value.

To address the significant shifts in public diplomacy talent needs, CPD is expanding its professional education curriculum by highlighting AI and next-generation storytelling platforms, as well as integrating the latest social science research on disinformation, video games, and audience analysis. CPD is at the cutting edge.

Under Jay Wang's leadership it has developed a new research and practice area on sports diplomacy while reinforcing its thought leadership through analysis on topics ranging from climate diplomacy

to global mega-events. With two new research fellowship programs—Southeast Asia and Eastern Mediterranean—the Center's global footprint continues to grow.

This year we inaugurate an annual Award for Excellence in Public Diplomacy to a private citizen to accompany our established and respected annual Ameri Prize for Innovation in Public Diplomacy by a State Department official. In pairing these awards, we emphasize the dual nature of public diplomacy which relies on the activities of both government and the private sector. We will celebrate this initiative with a gala dinner that should launch a new era for CPD.

We are on a path forward to reach new audiences, achieving greater involvement, action, and impact. I am honored to play a role in these developments alongside my distinguished fellow board members.

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Thank you!