



PAYF Public Digiplomacy Workshop

The Rise of Digiplomacy, Stratcom and Storytelling

Concept Note

From 'Once Upon a Time' and 'Happily Ever After' of a fairy tale to the realm of action sequences we see and experience on digital social networking platforms – From captivating us in a moment to triggering a response in no time – this is the power of social media right now!

To build the understanding regarding the narration of our indigenous tales and to make sense of what *Singer* and *Brookings* refer to as, “how a new kind of communication became a new kind of war” in their “*Like War: The Weaponization of Social Media*”, Pak Afghan Youth Forum (PAYF) in collaboration with *Institute of Regional Studies* (IRS) is organizing a **Public Digiplomacy Workshop, “Of Discourses & Narratives: Digiplomacy, Stratcom & Storytelling”** as part of PAYF’s youth outreach program on **February 6th, 2023, from 0930 – 1630hrs**. The purpose is to enhance digital interaction among the youth belonging to different ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds through social media.

Besides, social media networks have become central to public diplomacy globally, leading to the emergence of ‘*digiplomacy*’ enabling not only the diplomats and the governments to communicate with one another, but also providing a channel for public engagement – connecting people from diverse backgrounds with each other within and outside the country.

In addition, with the increasing use of internet and an unlimited access to digital media, there is a growing trend among the youth to rely on social media as a news source. Moreover, citizen journalism, open-source intelligence (OSINT) personnel, and *the first-to-report* syndrome has made it complex to distinguish news vs fake news, and information vs dis/misinformation. In consequence, fake news amplification and dis/misinformation have emerged as the biggest challenges for the country that are influencing the way our stories are being shaped.

Hence, based on the way digital media in general and social media in particular is contributing to shape the environment of conflict within the society in particular, and the world in general, by exploiting the ‘*economy of attention and virality*’, the workshop will serve as a catalyst to comprehend the usage and manipulation of sentiments, authenticity, and public vulnerability risk factors in a certain social setting. This is important because, historically, it is the communication that has evolved and transformed the patterns of global society, hence of war, peace and politics.

As *Lisa Cron* writes in her book, “*Wired for Story*”, “*breakthroughs in neuroscience reveal that our brain is hardwired to respond to story,*” and “*The pleasure we derive from a tale well told is nature’s way of seducing us into paying attention to it,*” therefore in a world where we are all at war in the battlefield of information – whether we like it or not – what matters is how we narrate the story of our journey; of struggle, nation building, and passion. Keeping this in view, the proposed initiative is aimed at providing a glimpse of what’s going on, the impact it causes and how to prepare for what comes next!