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r u rdy i rdy? THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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r u rdy i rdy? THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

By Lieutenant-Commander N.E. Setchell

At the Battle of Trafalgar 21 October 1805, British Admiral Lord Nelson signalled to his ships using a limited amount of flags and halyards upon which to raise them. In addition to victory he also gained notoriety for his messages to subordinates.[1] Today's navies still require brevity and accuracy in their messaging, whether it is internal communications, communications within the navy itself, or communications outside of the navy. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) is certainly no exception. Technological improvements have equipped ships with internal and external communications suites, complete with the ability to achieve full time connectivity for networks required for warfighting and communications ashore. Access to these technologies is so ubiquitous that it is now the basis of operations, but personnel deployed on both routine exercises and extended operations also depend on it as a lifeline ashore to remain in touch with friends and family.

Despite this technology, the RCN readily admits difficulties in communicating strategic messaging about its existence, operations, and sailors. A draft version of *The RCN's Communications Strategy 2012-2016: A Conversation With Canadians*, describes these challenges as "maritime blindness."[2] The *Communications Strategy* summarizes the difficulties as follows, "… it's fair to say that Canadians as a whole neither have an understanding of the nation's comprehensive relationship with the sea, nor a sense of how the work of their Navy touches profoundly on their daily lives."[3] The document further describes the RCN's difficulties

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[1]D. Howarth, "England Expects, Nelson Confides," Lapham's Quarterly, http://www.laphamsquarterly.org/voices-in-time/england-expects-nelson-confides.php (accessed July 12, 2012, 2012).

[2]Department of National Defence, "The RCN's Communications Strategy 2012-2016: A Conversation with Canadians Draft Version 4.0" Royal Canadian Navy, Director of Maritime Strategic Communications, Ottawa, ON, 2012) (accessed 9 July 2012)., 2.

[3]*Ibid*, 3.

by saying, "Most Canadians find it hard to visualize life at sea for the professional sailor, and they are unaware how seapower serves the national interest."[4] The RCN has been trying to revitalize national interest with significant events in the past few years.

As a regular part of deployments around the world, the RCN carries out port visits for strategic diplomatic engagements. This practice is also an annual event within Canada with the *Great Lakes Deployment* as a part of the Canadian Forces *Operation Connection*. By sailing to the Great Lakes Basin, the RCN reaches a high concentration of Canadians who reside in key political and economic centres in Central Canada .

> It provides an opportunity for Canadians in cities along the way to tour a naval vessel, speak with sailors, and learn about the important role the navy plays both in protecting our sovereignty and in providing security and humanitarian assistance around the world.[5]

The RCN will continue to carry out engagements within Canada and around the world in order to build its reputation both at home and abroad.

With its 100th anniversary in 2010, the RCN enjoyed a significant period of self-reflection. Celebrations and publications marked the centennial of Canada's naval service, giving reflection on the RCN's past, present, and future. Of note, the RCN, then titled Maritime Command, saw the return of the "Executive Curl" to its uniforms. This symbolic gesture moved the RCN further away from the unification of uniforms in the 1970.[6]

2011 was, arguably, a more significant year for the RCN's future. On 15 August, 2011 the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS) announced the official renaming of "Maritime

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[4]*Ibid*, 4.

[5]Department of National Defence, "Royal Canadian Navy Operations & Exercises, Background Summaries: Recent Operations Overview," http://www.navy.forces.gc.ca/cms/4/4-a_eng.asp?id=460 (accessed August 8, 2012).

[6]Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 343., 267.

Command" to the "Royal Canadian Navy," as a part of renaming the three environmental commands.[7] The announcement ensures the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) has a distinct corporate brand among Government of Canada institutions. This brand will be important as the RCN begins a capital re-vitalization project at a cost of $35 billion dollars. In October 2011, the Ministry of Public Works and Government Services announced a shipbuilding project to include 28 large ships for the RCN and the Canadian Coast Guard.[8] For the RCN, this will mean fifteen new Canadian Surface Combatants, six to eight Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships, and at least two Joint Support Ships. During this process, should the RCN expect a tremendous opportunity to engage with Canadians about the necessity of Canada's Navy and the costs of living in a maritime nation?

With a proud past, new uniforms, a new (old) name, and $35 billion worth of new ships, shouldn't the RCN be enjoying its celebrity within Canada, a maritime nation? Renowned Canadian historian, Marc Milner, in the second edition of *Canada's Navy: the First Century*, concisely describes the situation. "Sadly, because of the nature of the country, few Canadians ever see their navy and few know about it."[9] He also adds that, "Fewer still, perhaps would describe Canada as a great maritime state, much less a seapower in the traditional sense."[10] It should not be difficult considering that Canada has the longest coastline of any nation in the world, a large Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and strong economic ties to ocean commerce

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[7] Department of National Defence, *Restoring the Historic Name of the Royal Canadian Navy MARGEN 035-11 CMS 041-11 DTG: 151418Z AUG 11*, 2011)

[8]Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "New Ships for Navy, Coast Guard," http://www.cbc.ca/news/interactives/shipbuilding/ (accessed October 29, 2011)..

[9]Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century*, Second ed. (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 391., xiv.

[10]Milner, xiv.

and trade.[11] As it has been since the RCN's inception in 1910, however, Canadians have not traditionally considered themselves a maritime nation.

With ships on the east and west coasts, and a headquarters in Ottawa, the RCN faces significant challenges in strategic communications to the rest of Canada. Thus far, the RCN has relied on traditional media to share its stories, but newspapers, radio and television can provide limited coverage of events in which the RCN is involved.

This communication problem affects not only strategic communications, but also deployed sailors on a daily basis. In years past, sending and receiving mail at sea or in port was the only method of communicating with friends and family. Satellite communications improved the situation somewhat, but it was not until after the year 2000 that sailors had individual email accounts that allowed for more private and consistent contact ashore.[12] While this nearly constant connection improves the quality of life of sailors and their families, it can provide an unwanted conduit to pass sensitive information either inadvertently or on purpose.

The introduction of Web 2.0 technologies, also known as social media, have compounded this issue. While there are regulations in place for the handling of sensitive information within the CF and RCN, there is limited guidance on the appropriate use of social media. This combination presents personal and operational dangers, but its essentially limitless potential as a means of communication cannot be ignored. Never before have sailors at sea and ashore had the means to reach so many people so quickly. Since RCN sailors are already using social media, could the RCN be capitalizing on the ability of sailors to share their stories with fellow

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[11] Department of National Defence, "Royal Canadian Navy in Depth. Fact File: Canada as a Maritime Nation," http://www.navy.forces.gc.ca/cms/10/10-a_eng.asp?id=294 (accessed September 25, 2011).

[12]This is based on personal experience of the author.

Canadians? What is required to turn social media into a weapon in the campaign against maritime blindness?

Whether it is news of ongoing domestic or international operations, or sharing news of accomplishments of its personnel, the RCN could very easily leverage the advantages that social media offers. By being able to post strong visual images of ships and sailors at sea, the RCN can readily reach the Canadians who are far from the coasts. This type of outreach will continue to be important as new ships enter the fleet and the Canadian public demands to know how this massive project is a benefit to them.

This paper will discuss the potential of the Royal Canadian Navy to engage in social media outreach. While there are some impediments to carrying out such a large undertaking, these can be addressed quickly. For instance, some Government of Canada guidelines are simply too restrictive to permit official Royal Canadian Navy social media interactions. While these guidelines have prohibited the creation of some site for RCN interaction with the public, unofficial social media sites have filled that void. It is obvious that the RCN needs to manage its own online image in order to appeal to those who are interested and to gain the interest of more Canadians and people around the world. The RCN can reduce maritime blindness and gain the awareness of a maritime nation that it rightly deserves.

This paper will describe the phenomenon of social media, the Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces Policies, and the policies of other like-minded Navies. The main argument will detail why it is not only essential, but natural for the RCN to lead within the Canadian Forces in social media engagements. Finally, this paper will outline a recommended plan for the RCN to initiate social media engagements, draft direction for personal use of social

media by members of the RCN, as well as newspaper articles on engaging in social media for publishing in the *Crowsnest, Lookout,* and *Trident*.

Overall, the Royal Canadian Navy needs to engage the public online and leverage the opportunity to "go viral."[13]

THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Everywhere the world is opening up and it's a good thing. Why is this happening? The technology revolution is opening the world.[14]
Don Tapscott

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the phenomenon of Web 2.0[15] technologies. For definition purposes, the Government of Canada Treasury Board, in its *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0* released 18 November 2011, defines Web 2.0 as follows:

> Web 2.0 refers to Internet-based tools and services that allow for participatory multi-way information sharing, dialogue, and user-generated content. This can include social media, which allow participants with distinct social/user profiles to create, share and interact with user-generated content, including text, images, video and audio (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Linked-In, blogs) as well as collaborative technologies that allow multiple users to collaboratively create content (e.g. Wikis, Google Docs).[16]

This definition is inclusive, recognizing by name some of the most popular Web 2.0 sites, but it also leaves enough ambiguity for new social media and collaborative sites. This type of flexibility is important in the guidelines for Web 2.0, as the technologies improve and change so quickly.

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[13]Urban Dictionary, ""Go Viral" Definition," http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=go+viral (accessed May 12, 2012).

[14]*Don Tapscott: Four Principles for the Open World,* TED Talks, directed by D. Tapscott TED Talks, 2012), http://www.ted.com/talks/don_tapscott_four_principles_for_the_open_world_1.html (accessed 6 July 2012).

[15]The terms "Web 2.0" and "social media" are essentially interchangeable. The Government of Canada uses the term Web 2.0. For simplicity purposes, this paper will use the term "social media."

[16]*Guideline for External use of Web 2.0,* (2011): , http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?section=text&id=24835 (accessed 20 November 2011).

Social media applications are as diverse as they are ubiquitous. They range from the

virtual pinboard site, Pinterest, which allows users to group and share pictures, to a Crime

Stoppers Application that "… [I]ncludes interactive features that enable citizens to alert police,

in real time, about a crime or potential crime through photos, video footage, e-mails, text as well

as a button that autodials Crime Stoppers' … number."[17] The use of these applications by

Canadians is evidenced in the *Ipsos Canadian Inter@ctive Reid Report 2012 Fact Guide*. In

2012, they estimate that "86% of Canadians have Internet access from any location and 80%

have access from home…." [18] This report continues with statistics that prove Canadians are

active online; 92% reported using a computer for obtaining news, and 62% used a computer for

social networking. In order to remain relevant, organizations must be able to communicate

through the Internet, through both traditional websites and interactive social media.

The most ubiquitous social networking site is Facebook, and the statistics of its

worldwide use are staggering. For example, as of March 2012, it boasted 901 million monthly

active users and 526 million daily active users. At the same time, there were more than 125

billion friend connections on Facebook.[19] While the services provided by Facebook are free,

critics argue that Facebook violates privacy rights. In advance of an Initial Public Offering for

Facebook, the Associated Press and American television network CNBC published a poll in May

2012 that showed that 59% of respondents had, "…[L]ittle or no faith in the company to protect

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[17]Toronto Police Service, "Crime Stoppers App Reaches 5000 Downloads," http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=6190 (accessed July 4, 2012).

[18]Ipsos Reid, *The Ipsos Canadian inter@ctive Reid Report 2012 Fact Guide the Definitive Resource on Canadians and the Internet* (Canada: Ipsos Reid,[2012]), http://www.refworks.com/refworks2/default.aspx?r=references; MainLayout::init (accessed 9 July 2012)., 2.

[19]Facebook, "Facebook Newsroom: Key Facts," http://newsroom.fb.com/content/default.aspx?NewsAreaId=22 (accessed July 8, 2012).

their privacy."[20] Despite having this reputation, it has an extraordinary user group. Personal and

commercial use of Facebook and other social media sites is now a social norm, and the potential

of these sites has not yet been reached.

With so many people using the internet for such vast activities, there are incredible

stories of success as well as failures. For instance, communications expert, Mia Pearson, reports

that corporate giants Coca-Cola and Nike are using clever ways to market their products by

telling their stories online. She reports that Coca-Cola has over 41 million fans on Facebook,

raising brand awareness for the beverage company.

She also credits Nike with creating advertising videos that are meant to inspire as much

as place their products in the viewers' homes.[21] Pearson outlines four principles that are guiding

the online success of these companies as follows:

Get real people involved. Regardless of the product that is being marketed, she insists that

people must play the starring role. "It makes the stories more compelling and more likely to be

shared."

Let the Brand Go. In other words, allow people to interpret the brand you are marketing.

"Allow and encourage new interpretations of the brand to expand your creative input beyond one

team of advertisers to harness the creativity of thousands of fans and ambassadors." If the RCN

does not tell the stories of its people, it will be very difficult for Canadians to feel a strong

connection to its Navy.

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[20]Associated Press and Consumer News and Business Channel, "Facebook IPO Poll,"
http://www.cnbc.com/id/47391504/page/9/ (accessed August 20, 2012).

[21]M. Pearson, "Coke, Nike Succeed with New Style of Brand Story-Telling Online," The Globe and Mail,
http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-marketing/advertising/coke-nike-succeed-
with-new-style-of-brand-story-telling-online/article2398735/ (accessed May 20, 2012).

Don't focus on the Product. "This type of storytelling is about brands, their personalities and driving an emotional connection, not the product." From the point of view of the RCN, this point is crucial. The online RCN story should not necessarily the daily routine of a ship at sea, but rather the effects that it has on the world around it.

Keep the Objectives in Mind. "Keep your efforts organized under themes designed to support business objectives and constantly curate and edit content to ensure only the best is being shared."[22]   For the RCN, this last point is consistent with the strategic messaging meant to deepen its awareness throughout Canada and battle Maritime Blindness.

Many news articles regarding social media also focus on the negative consequences that can result from its use. For instance, the Toronto Star reported in May 2012 that, "More than four in 10 companies worldwide now say that misuse of social networks is an issue, according to a compilation of data from human resources software maker TribeHR." This misuse is either increasing, or people are being monitored more closely. "In 2011, 42 per cent of companies said they had to take disciplinary action, compared with 24 per cent in 2009."[23] In order to protect themselves, many organizations have employees sign non-disclosure contracts.

In professional sports teams, where the employees are essentially the product, it is common practice to limit when and what their athletes can discuss either in person or online. For instance, Major League Baseball stipulates "…[T]hat players, uniformed personnel and clubhouse staff cannot use cell phones or other devices on the bench, in the bullpen or on the field after batting practice has started. Cell phone use in the clubhouse is prohibited 30 minutes

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[22]*Ibid.*

[23]T. Hsu, "When Social Media Gets You Fired," Toronto Star, http://www.thestar.com/business/article/1181346--when-social-media-gets-you-fired (accessed May 20, 2012).

before game time."[24] Once the game is over, players can engage their online following, but can

also face fines if they post something derogatory about officiating, or the organization itself.

The National Hockey League has a similar policy, cognizant that it must still allow

players to connect with fans.

> …[T]here is a total "blackout period" on the use of social media on game days,
> which for players begins two hours prior to opening face-off and is not lifted
> until players have finished their post-game media obligations. The suggested
> blackout period for hockey operations staff is longer, beginning at 11 a.m. on
> game days.[25]

Because athletes can reach so many people so quickly, sports teams are wary of revealing

any vulnerability that might hurt the organization or provide an advantage to their

opponents. Trying to balance corporate security and personal availability might seem too

be too complicated, but teams realize that the payoff is simply worth allowing their players

to interact with their fans, and this practice needs to be regulated.

Social media is also changing the roles of prominent people, especially athletes. As a

result of the sometimes myriad of followers, athletes can easily become reporters. In the June 2

shooting at the Toronto Eaton Centre, Toronto Blue Jay Brett Lawrie reported the event on

Twitter, before traditional news outlets reported it. "Lawrie, who has over 125,000 followers on

Twitter, also tweeted a picture of the scene outside the mall that was featured prominently on

news websites."[26] The power of social media cannot be understated when a professional athlete

can reach a large number of people with news faster than any other medium.

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[24]M. Burns Ortiz, "Examining Sports Leagues' Social Media Policies," ESPN,
http://espn.go.com/espn/page2/story/_/id/7026246/examining-sports-leagues-social-media-policies-offenders
(accessed September 27, 2011).

[25]National Hockey League Official Webpage, "NHL Institutes New Social Media Policy," National Hockey
League, http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=588534#&navid=nhl-search (accessed September 27, 2011).

While personal use can have negative impact on an individual, corporations must also be careful that their online brand is not unwittingly tarnished by an online campaign. Beleaguered Canadian technology firm, Research In Motion, under fire for poor performance, tried on 11 July 2012 to garner support from its users. It tweeted "Fill in the blank: Blackberry helps me _____"[27] Fans and critics responded, but the veracity of the complaints against Blackberry made this attempt at a positive public affair attempt newsworthy.[28] While an incident such as this is seen as a failure, it may not be a fatal blow to a company.

While companies can sustain damages from poorly guided social media interactions, social media has been proven as a formidable foe to ruling regimes. In a video produced for TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design), Canadian futurist, Don Tapscott, argues that social media is causing the world to be more open. In his words, "The open world is bringing empowerment and freedom." On the role of social media in the 2011 "Arab Springs," Tapscott remarks, "The debate about the role of social media and social change has been settled. … The new media didn't cause the revolution; it was caused by injustice."[29] In this case, social media was a catalyst that enabled people to join their grievances together and take action. Al Jazeera online reporter, D. Parvaz, reports that, "This might well be the first time that people living under autocratic rule have managed to document their struggles and movement on almost the most

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[26]G. Strong, "**Eaton Centre Shooting: Brett Lawrie, Blue Jays Third Baseman, Describes Scene of 'Instant Panic'** ," Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/06/03/eaton-centre-shooting-brett-lawrie_n_1566166.html (accessed June 3, 2012).

[27]Research In Motion, "Twitter Feed," Research In Motion, https://twitter.com/BlackBerry/status/223106889230188545 (accessed July 12, 2012).

[28]S. Rodriguez, "BlackBerry Tweet Backfires on Research in Motion," LA Times, http://www.latimes.com/business/technology/la-fi-tn-blackberry-rim-tweet-backfires-20120711,0,2022210.story (accessed July 12, 2012).

[29]Tapscott, *Don Tapscott: Four Principles for the Open World*.

micro level imaginable, leaving a long digital trail…." [30] It is doubtful that we have yet seen the

final effects of social media, but it is safe to assume that the impact of this technology will only

increase.

Given the evidence of the power of social media to effect change from the personal level

to toppling regimes, it is difficult to deny that social media has already left an indelible print on

our society. Despite potential security risks, sports teams and companies alike are proving that,

so long as there are guidelines for its proper use, social media can reap tremendous rewards.

CANADA'S ALLIES AND THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Canada's closest Allies, the United States Navy (USN), United Kingdom's Royal Navy

(RN), and Royal Australian Navy (RAN) have very successful and proactive social media

policies and practices. They are not only embracing social media campaigns, but are also

enabling their sailors to engage in responsible online practices by providing guidance on what is

appropriate to share.

The United States Navy (USN) published its *Navy Command Social Media Handbook* in

Fall 2010. It is thirty pages in length and succinctly details social media use for personal,

professional, and crisis communications. In the section titled, "*Guidelines for Sailors and Navy*

Personnel," it is clear that the USN sees excellent potential for its personnel to share online.

> With fewer Americans having served themselves in the military, it is important
> for our service members to share their stories of service with the American
> people. Not surprisingly, this makes every blogging, tweeting, or Facebooking
> Sailor an ambassador for your command and the Navy. Educating our Sailors
> and personnel about how to maintain the integrity of this ambassadorship is
> important.[31]

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[30]D. Parvaz, "The Arab Spring, Chronicled Tweet by Tweet," Al Jazeera,
http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/11/2011113123416203161.html (accessed March 22, 2012).

[31]United States Navy Office of Information, "Navy Command Social Media Handbook," United States
Navy Office of Information, http://www.cnrc.navy.mil/pao/socialnetwrk/soc_med_hnd_bk.pdf (accessed November
4, 2011)., 4.

The section is divided into ten points with a focus on Operational Security (OPSEC) and appropriate online activities.

While the USN has recognized the need to promote itself through its sailors and social media technologies, it is obvious that they are well aware of its potential downfalls; the first point in the "Guidelines for Sailors & Navy Personnel" section is regarding Operational Security, or OPSEC. The key points of that section are: "Protect Your Families; Understand Profile Security Settings, and; Keep Classified and Sensitive Information Safe."[32] These guidelines are straightforward and include actual details of why OPSEC is important, such as, "…[A]s enemies have noted publically that they monitor social media sites for information on families as well as troops and equipment."[33] This section of the handbook affords USN personnel the encouragement to use social media, but also reminds them that there can be dangers associated with it.

The USN *Social Media Handbook* continues with information on Professional Standards/Conduct for Command Leadership, from "Online Relationships With Subordinates" to "Political Discourse."[34] In giving specific directions for these areas, USN Social Media users will know their limits and be aware of some of the consequences of exceeding them.

Following the section on Professional Standards, the USN *Social Media Handbook* includes information on "Guidelines and Requirements for Command Social Media," which is intended for Commands that are subordinate to the Secretary of the Navy. In addition to considerations for a Command social media, there is a checklist for establishing a presence

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[32]*Ibid*, 5.

[33]*Ibid*, 5.

[34]*Ibid,* 7.

within these guidelines as well as a checklist for Operations Security. These are useful tools that

will ensure a uniformity of social media presence in such a large organization.

A key section of instructions in the USN *Social Media Handbook* reviews considerations

for Crisis Communication. The handbook reiterates that, in times of crisis, social media

technology is especially well suited for communication, "… [D]ue to its speed, reach, and direct

access."[35] These very characteristics that have made social media popular are the same ones that

organizations will require in crises. By already having established an online presence, should a

crisis occur, the USN will have the methods by which it can communicate to people and receive

critical information.

Overall, the USN *Social Media Handbook* provides all levels of personnel with easily

understood guidance on social media interactions. By encouraging personnel to tell their stories

and explaining the personal and professional risks of social media, the *Handbook* provides both

inspiration and warning for responsible online activities. As well, the USN acknowledges the

potential role of social media in times of a crisis. This policy enables the maximum benefits that

social media can offer.

It is important to note that as late as 2007, the American military had strict policies

against military bloggers (milbloggers). American Army Major Crispin Burke is both a

helicopter pilot and prolific milblogger and explains:

> But the military's draconian measures backfired. During a town-hall-style
> meeting with President George W. Bush in 2006, a military spouse spoke of
> the negative news coverage of the war in Iraq. Her husband, a military
> broadcast journalist, had produced hours of video of reconstruction work, none
> of which had seen the light of day in the mainstream media. President Bush
> suggested that blogs might host images of troops helping to rebuild the war-

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[35]*Ibid.*, 13.

torn nation, perhaps unaware that the Pentagon's ham-fisted social media policies were snuffing out the diligent efforts of American troops.[36]

After recognizing the power of social media and its ability to have a positive influence within America, some generals, "…[c]ircumvented the military's social media red tape, and encouraged soldiers to blog. Soon, the Defense Department began to embrace social media, as the Pentagon hosted blogger roundtables, and senior military officers became prolific bloggers in their own right."[37] While it took a few years to effect change, the largest military in the world now embraces social media, and each service provides a social media handbook.

Unlike its USN counterparts, Canada's other close ally, the United Kingdom's Royal Navy, does not have environmental-specific doctrine for social media use; the direction comes in the form of the United Kingdom (UK) Ministry of Defence (MOD) *Online Engagement Guidelines.* This directive was produced in order to, "… [E]nable Service and MOD personnel to make full use of online presences while protecting their own, Service, and Departmental interests, and to enable Commanders and communicators to harness this to communicate Defence."[38] The document is an excellent example of straightforward and easily understood directives for social media use. It includes a summary, two pages of details, and three annexes for *Sponsored Online Presences, Guidance for Service and MOD Personnel When online,* and *Guidance on Maintaining Security Online*.

[36]C. J. Burke, "**as Social Media Expands, Military Bloggers Find More Outlets**," *New York Times*February 28, 2012, 2012, http://atwar.blogs nytimes.com/2012/02/28/as-social-media-expands-military-bloggers-find-more-outlets/ (accessed March 1, 2012).

[37]*Ibid*.

[38]United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, "Online Engagement Guidelines," http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D2AC8314-3B15-4DEB-A769-6C85AF4BDA80/0/20090805UMODOnlineEngagementGuidelinesVersion10.pdf (accessed November 4, 2011)., 2.

This direct and detailed document gives clear directions to MOD personnel regarding limitations on what they should or should not put online for both official and personal social media sites. The document also emphasizes that, "Service and MOD civilian personnel are encouraged to talk about what they do, but within certain limits to protect security, reputation and privacy." In the summary on the first page, it explicitly lays out that personnel, " …[D]o not need to seek clearance when talking online about <u>factual, unclassified, uncontroversial non-operational matters</u> …."[39] It continues that personnel:

> …[S]hould seek authorization from their chain of command before publishing any wider information relating to their work which:
> Relates to operations or deployments; Offers opinions on wider Defence and Armed Forces activity, or on third parties without their permission; or Attempts to speak, or could be interpreted as speaking, on behalf of your Service or the MOD; or, Relates to controversial, sensitive or political matters.[40]

These guidelines begin by giving service members sufficient latitude to publishing online, but are very clear that there are limits to their participation.

Annex A of the *Online Engagement Guidelines* details the approvals required to establish an official online presence. "In essence, a sponsored presence is a means for Service or MOD personnel to engage with the public at a personal and informal level but with the official blessing of their service or MOD."[41] An annex further clarifies what those with an online sponsored presence may or may not discuss. It ends with two points, "If ever in doubt over whether to publish something, always consult your Chain of Command/Line Management, and; Enjoy yourself – You have a great story to tell, and are the best person to tell it."[42] This type of

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[39]*Ibid*, 1 (underlining in original).

[40]*Ibid*, 1.

[41]*Ibid*, Annex A, 1.

encouragement implies a level of trust in the UK MOD personnel, but also reminds them that there are limits to what they should discuss.

Annexes B and C provide more guidance for online activities and are written to be understood by users from all ranks. They remind users to protect themselves and their families by protecting personal information. "Information such as this may also enable hostile intelligence agencies or terrorists to target you or your family."[43] Adding to these security concerns, this Annex also lists information on, "Protecting your friends' and colleagues' information."[44] It reiterates the same safety concerns for personal use, but reminds users not to disclose personal information, or publish photos in which people are identified without their consent.

Overall, the UK MOD guidelines are easily understood. They recognize that MOD personnel will not only be engaging online, but are an important part of telling the story of the UK Armed Forces. They also give clear directions for actions to avoid and how to maintain personal and operational security.

Like The Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Australian Navy also has roots in the Royal Navy. While there are many similarities between the two navies, the RAN's social media policy and practices are significantly further progressed than the RCN's. The RAN's policies are based on the 2011 Australian Defence Force's "Review of Social Media and Defence." This comprehensive document is over 200 pages long and covers a multitude of subjects, such as

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[42]*Ibid*, Annex A Appendix I

[43]*Ibid*, Annex C, 1.

[44]*Ibid*, Annex C, 2.

Trends, Legal Obligations, Management, Morale, Marketing, and *Crisis Management Strategy.*

The foreward of the document explains:

> This review examines the challenges for Defence of social media as they exist now and how they might evolve in the future. It examines the perceptions and attitudes of Defence personnel and the Australian community at large. It assesses international best practice, so that we might learn from others and so that Australia can be at the forefront of social media use by defence organisations. Finally, it suggests a plan to help support Defence to meet its obligations and make the best use of social media and the opportunities they can offer.[45]

The *Review* is exhaustive and considers the policies of New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. The Australian Defence Force (ADF) is taking a very active posture on social media use. This approach is likely as a result of some scandalous activity involving ADF personnel and their use of social media.[46]

The summaries of the examinations of social media policies both within the ADF and its allies succinctly define the problems that are faced with this new and nearly ubiquitous technology. The Executive Summaries are grouped into the following headings: *Social Media – a revolution for all society; Defence culture and social media; The Defence brands; Social media policy and guidelines; Education and social media,* and*; Operations and social media.* While the summaries are extensive, they provide tremendous insight into the positive and negative aspects of social media engagement and an introspective look into ADF regulations.

In the summary, *Social media – a revolution for all society*, the *Review* points out that social media use has already changed the way in which our society communicates. This change

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[45]George Patterson, *Review of Social Media and Defence* Australian Government Department of Defence,[2011]), http://www.defence.gov.au/pathwaytochange/docs/socialmedia/index htm (accessed 21 March 2012)., vii.

[46]Australian Broadcasting Corporation, "Australian Defence Force Academy Sex Scandal Trial Set," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, http://www.abc net.au/news/2012-02-28/adfa-sex-scandal-trial-date-set/3857144 (accessed August 20, 2012).

is widespread, and affects the ADF, but also acknowledges that those within the ADF

community are skeptical of engaging in social media. It notes that, "…Defence personnel in

Australia have a peculiar position in society because of the work they do and because of the

Australian community's high regard for them."[47] It also acknowledges that the tenets of

openness and transparency in social media clash with traditional Defence traditions of security

and confidentiality. By acknowledging this tension, the *Review* addresses what could be the

greatest enemy of advancing social media within a military context, which is the fear of

breaching security.

The *Review* continues its summary by discussing this conflict between social media and

the ADF. "The advent of social media is the first point in Defence's history when all worlds

collide: brands, organisations, command, members, friends, families, the public, the traditional

media and enemies."[48] While the ongoing friction between transparency and security figures

largely in the *Review*, there is a focus on the advantages of social media. "Communication in

this form allows information to be shared across many platforms and with significant audiences

in a more direct and 'human' way."[49] In this statement, the ADF acknowledges that there is

much to be gained from allowing Defence personnel the opportunity to tell their stories firsthand.

The *Review* also acknowledges that misuses of social media are not widespread, but are a

result of reliance on common sense, as opposed to formal training.

> The evidence shows that social media are not the cause of misbehaviour, but
> simply the conduit for the behaviour. Those who have misbehaved might well
> have done so using other forms of expression if social media had not been
> available. To mitigate risks, Defence leadership needs to establish a clear

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[47]Patterson, *Review of Social Media and Defence*, ix.

[48]*Ibid*., x.

[49]*Ibid*., xi.

strategic direction for the use of social media and provide appropriate education to reinforce sound behaviour.[50]

This statement establishes the need for both regulation and education regarding social media. The *Review* continues with an analysis of the ADF-wide implementation of social media policies, noting that each service manages their own social media. Without overarching ADF governance, the *Review* suggests that social media interactions are inconsistent and lack a focus. It also suggests that this void presents a tremendous opportunity for the ADF to establish a focus for its social media use and promote itself.

The *Review* notes that the ADF enjoys a solid reputation within the nation. "The Navy, Army, and Air Force are some of the most liked, even loved, brands in Australia."[51] With respect and popularity on its side, the ADF is well positioned to take advantage of using social media to tell its story. Failing to accomplish this task, the *Review* offers that, in the absence of official ADF pages or groups, someone has already established an online presence to meet the demand. While it is admirable for the Australian Defence Force to enjoy such public support, it could be dangerous to have unauthorized fan pages that run the risk of sharing inaccurate information. The same logic applies to using social media for recruiting. While the ADF has a specific overall recruiting webpage, the *Review* noted that each of the services was also providing recruiting information on their respective social media pages.

With so much information now available online, it can be difficult to monitor which sites are official and have the best information. In order to keep track of the official ADF social media presences, the *Review* suggests a centralized registry in the form of a database. While that

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[50]*Ibid*., xii.

[51]*Ibid*., xiii.

process could rectify some of the inconsistencies, official forum for social media still require updating and monitoring in order to remain current.

This issue of maintaining and moderating social media content is addressed in the *Review*, which points out that, "Defence will need to define its commitment to the 'always on' aspect of social media."[52] Having specially trained communication personnel exclusively updating social media would require a significant, but necessary, investment in personnel. "The continuity and consistency of official social media control is vulnerable because it relies on the commitment of the individuals and their availability."[53] This friction between the transparency of social media and the work that is required to maintain an online presence is one more difficulty that organizations must overcome. By managing online interactions with trained personnel, this friction would be reduced by consistent messaging from a professionally managed team. The issue of establishing and maintaining content is covered in the ADF *Review* section on "The Defence brands" with two discussions on *Content strategy* and *Crisis management.*

Essentially, in order to manage the Defence social media presence, it suggests that Defence establish what their goals of online engagement are, establish an executive committee, and consult with each service to direct a complementary strategy. In the case of managing a social media crisis, the *Review* indicates that it would be best handled by public relations teams; it also mentions that having a content strategy and official policies on social media use could mitigate the negative impact of a crisis. A clear strategy, coupled with a professional

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[52]*Ibid*, xv.

[53]*Ibid*, xv.

implementation team, would be the most effective method of engaging in social media for both strategic and crisis purposes.

The next section, "Social media policy and guidelines" discusses some of the deficiencies of ADF policies. These include a lack of a working definition of social media, a relevant and flexible policy for engagement, and inconsistencies within the ADF for enforcement of social media policies. While these deficiencies are specific to the ADF and their policies, they highlight the need for organizations to come to terms with how their members interact with social media. Overall, the section reiterates the need for appropriate and consistent policies to establish guidelines for online interactions.

Following the section on the need to establish such guidelines, the ADF *Review* changes its focus to "Education and social media." It begins by acknowledging that, "To date, social media education in Defence has relied heavily on the exercise of 'common sense' and 'professional judgement.'"[54] As these terms are very subjective, the *Review* suggests that the ADF should consider not only reviewing its social media training packages, but also tailoring specific training for targeted audiences, depending on requirements, rank, and positions within the ADF. This system would attempt to provide the right training for personnel who might have a different or more complex online presence.

Training is particularly important for personnel who are deployed, especially if they are using social media to stay in touch with their families. In discussing Operational Security (OPSEC), the *Review* notes that deployed personnel have additional restrictions for social media engagement. It also points out that OPSEC involves not just the member deployed, but the holistic view that families also have a role to play. "Family members and the wider community

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[54]*Ibid*, xvii.

also have the potential to put Defence members and themselves inadvertently at risk through the use of social media."[55] The section concludes by discussing who provides training and how personnel should react in the forum of social media in the event of a crisis, regardless of whether the crisis is online.

The final section in the ADF *Review* involves "Operations and social media." Once more, it discusses the balance of maximizing social media's potential while minimizing the risks that can be associated with social media. Essentially, this relationship will be an ongoing endeavour as the ADF continues its journey in social media engagement. The difficulty will lie in quantifying the popularity and effectiveness of social media use in the ADF.

> Currently, Defence cannot effectively measure its social media successes and failures. By investing in measuring and monitoring technologies, the organisation [sic] will be able to benchmark its performance in social media against organisational [sic] objectives and key performance indicators.[56]

This final section in the Executive Summary describes the issues that have plagued the proliferation of social media use by the military. There is a friction created when transparency, openness, and the interest of the general public are pitted against the need for operational security and the military culture. This friction will not necessarily be resolved soon, but measures of success could sway senior military personnel of the need to engage online.

From a Royal Australian Navy (RAN) perspective, they have taken a proactive stance on social media use. Their Facebook page includes a "user's guide" for RAN personnel, based on the ADF regulations. There is a Youtube video as well as a two page PDF that is comprehensive and easily understood. There are specific warnings that relate to what should and should not be published and warnings that personal and/or career repercussions could result from carelessness.

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[55]*Ibid*, xix.

[56]*Ibid*, xxi.

With a thorough study of the factors that affect Australian Defence Force social media interactions the ADF, and consequently RAN, have excellent personnel-centred policies. While the study points out that online engagement is not without risk, there is greater risk in not having an official online presence or clear rules of engagement for personnel. Like the USN and UK MOD, the RAN is capitalizing on this technology and encouraging its use.

Overall, the RCN's three closest Allies, the USN, RN, and RAN have comprehensive social media policies that encourage their personnel to engage online and tell their stories. The USN and UK have clear warnings that enemies use social media to glean information, and the RAN gives navy-specific details that should not be shared. All three services encourage their personnel to tell their stories, but caution their personnel of the risks to themselves, their reputations, their families, as well as to the security of operations.

The UK, US, and Australia recognize the obvious need for security, but they also point out the tremendous opportunity for engagement at the human level. Social media offers an unfettered means for each member of its defence force to engage the public, whether it is friends, family, or unknown online users. This engagement is happening right now with RCN personnel, and without guidance or regulation that is suitable for every sailor in the RCN, there is a much better chance that someone will "run aground."

CANADIAN POLICY

This paper will now focus on the regulations and guidelines for social media engagement in the RCN. It will begin with an analysis of the Government of Canada guidelines, in the form of the Treasury Board *"Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0"*, the *DND/CF Guidelines for the External Use of Social Media Platforms or Services*, and RCN direction on social media interactions.

The Government of Canada, through the Treasury Board, released a "*Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0*", herein referred to as the "*Guideline*" in November 2011. Its purpose is to, "…[P]rovide specific guidance to Government of Canada departments on the use of externally facing Web 2.0 tools and services."[57] The guideline is also intended to, "Develop clear accountability for the coordination of departmental Web 2.0 initiatives;" as well as, "Develop guidance for personnel on the use of Web 2.0 that addresses expected behaviours, benefits, risks and consequences for all types of potential use…."[58] The *Guideline* does not give specific direction to individuals, but is intended to establish a framework for departments of the Government of Canada to establish policies of their own.

The *Guideline* outlines six common benefits of social media use: Recruitment; Risk and emergency communications; Services to the Public; Stakeholder outreach and education; As a collaborative tool, and; Consultation.[59] The use of social media within the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces could easily leverage all common benefits to its advantage. The *Guideline* also lists six areas of risk to using social media. They are listed in table below:

Table 1 – Treasury Board Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0 Social Media Risk Areas

Difficulty reconciling existing constitutional, statutory, regulatory and policy obligations with the technological constraints and usage patterns of these tools and services (e.g. reconciling Official Languages requirements with a Web 2.0 tool that has per-message characters limits)
Potential misuse of Government of Canada content that is shared through Web 2.0 tools and services, particularly when subject to the terms of third-party Web 2.0 service providers (e.g. profile information being reused by a third party for advertising)

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[57]Government of Canada, *Guideline for External use of Web 2.0*

[58]*Ibid.*

[59]*Ibid.*

Negative perceptions resulting from Web 2.0 initiatives associated with the Government of Canada, including users posting offensive or abusive comments, attempts to engage in dialogue about political decisions or direction, on-line vandalism, and inability to fulfill reasonable expectations of timely two-way communication
Misinterpretation of online activity and/or comments as the official position of the Government of Canada rather than that of an individual
Challenges in protecting the privacy of both personnel and the public who are interacting through Web 2.0 tools and services
Extensive and legally binding terms of service that can, if not sufficiently understood and respected, present legal risks for the Government of Canada and individuals

Source: *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0*

While this list of risks is extensive and realistic, it should not be prohibitive for the RCN to establish an official online presence. The RCN could easily overcome these six risk areas.

For the first risk area, reconciling obligations and technological restraints, the RCN could ensure that official accounts list their social media updates in both English and French. This practice of translating updates is already carried out by His Excellency the Governor General of Canada, David Johnston (@GGDavidJohnston), as well as Vice Admiral Paul Maddison (@Comd_RCN), Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy, on Twitter. Photos and videos provide an excellent method of sharing the RCN's stories and require less translation than a traditional newspaper article. Without providing the social media messaging in both official languages, the RCN would not only be violating legislation regarding official languages, but it would potentially alienate followers, which is contrary to the goals of engaging an audience with social media. In short, it makes sense to appeal to as many followers as possible.

The second risk, the potential misuse of Government of Canada content that is shared through Web 2.0 tools, is simply a risk that must be assumed. The Canadian Forces and RCN already have traditional webpages for sharing information, which could be used by third party services. Additionally, there are more than twelve unofficial Facebook groups established for

the RCN; their content is not controlled or moderated and poses a greater threat than establishing an official social media presence. Creating an official presence will lessen this risk.

The same logic applies to the third threat, negative perceptions resulting from Web 2.0 initiatives associated with the Government of Canada. Having only unofficial social media accounts makes this threat greater, since there is no control over the content of these pages. As well, the CF and RCN are in a position to benefit from the positive perceptions that Canadians have of them. *The RCN's Communications Strategy 2012-2016: A Conversation with Canadians*, specifically states that, "Canadians hold resoundingly positive views of the Canadian Forces. They hold the Canadian Forces to be an essential national institution. They desire to see positive stories about the Canadian Forces."[60] This statement was proven in July 2012 when the story of a sailor from HMCS REGINA became popular. Before leaving on a six month deployment, he wrote his wife a note for every day he planned to be away. She posted the content of these notes on the online sharing site, Reddit.com.[61] The content of this site is determined by user inputs and this story went viral. With more than 26 million views and over 2000 comments, this story displays the human side of the Royal Canadian Navy. The threat of negative perceptions is easily negated by official accounts that feature stories of the personalities that make up the RCN.

The fourth risk is of, "Misinterpretation of online activity and/or comments as the official position of the Government of Canada rather than that of an individual."[62] This threat can be

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[60]Department of National Defence, *The RCN's Communications Strategy 2012-2016: A Conversation with Canadians Draft Version 4.0*, 3.

[61]A. Woo, "Soldier's Love Letters an Internet Sensation," *The Globe and Mail*July 17, 2012, 2012, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/soldiers-love-letters-an-internet-sensation/article4424488/ (accessed July 18, 2012).

lessened with appropriate training and education of RCN personnel, as well as clearly defined regulations for online engagement. For the RCN, this should include formal training for those units/formations/commands that have official social media accounts as well as guidelines for personal use. Without this training, there is an increased risk that something untoward could happen online. Should something happen, the embarrassment would then be compounded by the fact that there are no formal policies or training in social media, particularly when compared to our Allies. This risk could never be completely mitigated, considering factors for human error.

With the same logic, the RCN would also tackle the fifth risk, "…[P]rotecting the privacy of both personnel and the public who are interacting through Web 2.0 tools and services."[63] Without social media guidelines and training, RCN personnel run the risk of jeopardizing not only their own privacy, but also both Personal Security (PERSEC) and Operational Security (OPSEC). Through improved governance that would include clear regulations, an education programme, and monitoring, this risk would be lessened. Since RCN personnel depend on having some sort of security clearance for the conduct of their work, it should be clear that improper social media engagement would jeopardize their reliability. It is safe to assume that the majority of personnel would choose their livelihood, the safety of themselves, their families, and the RCN's OPSEC if they were aware of these risks.

The final risk outlined in the *Guideline* is, "Extensive and legally binding terms of service that can, if not sufficiently understood and respected, present legal risks for the Government of Canada and individuals."[64] This risk is best handled by establishing governance

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[62]Government of Canada, *Guideline for External use of Web 2.0*

[63]*Ibid.*

[64]*Ibid.*

for a social media presence at the highest level. These rules would then carry on with straightforward guidelines and a training plan that is intended for all rank levels.

Overall, these risks can be lessened through regulation and education. Without these key parts in a social media plan, RCN personnel likely have a greater chance of violating these risks and becoming a liability. In the event of an incident, the CF and RCN would certainly face scrutiny for not having a modern strategy and framework for social media engagement.

Following the *Background* section, the *Guideline* discusses *Key Considerations for Web 2.0 Initiatives*. These considerations are grouped into *Governance and Oversight; Planning and Design; Rules of Engagement,* and*; Evaluation Management*.[65] These areas are intended to be the, "…'[L]ife-cycle' of a Web 2.0 initiative."[66] The *Governance and Oversight* section begins with the direction that Departments appoint "…[A] senior official accountable and responsible for the coordination of all Web 2.0 activities as well as an appropriate governance structure."[67] The *Guideline* also encourages the appointee to consult with their own departmental experts in areas such as information management, communications, official languages, security, and legal service. In addition to being a collaborative departmental endeavour, these initiatives "…[S]hould be clear, succinct, and well communicated so that all departmental personnel are aware of their responsibilities and how decisions are made."[68] This direction applies to the Department of National Defence policy, which will be discussed later in this paper.

Further in this section, there is a paragraph that explains what a department must do if they request a, "…[M]odification under the Federal Identity Program (FIP) for a unique

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[65]*Ibid*.

[66]*Ibid*.

[67]*Ibid*.

[68]*Ibid*.

departmental or program identifier."[69] In such cases, the department should engage a Treasury

Board Secretariat analyst early in the process. This process could be vital to an RCN social

media plan within a DND social media plan in order to overcome any perceived barriers

involving the Federal Identity Plan for communications via social media. If the RCN's needs for

strategic communication could not be met within the guidelines, identifying them and seeking a

justifiable modification would be the best course of action. This paragraph could be key to the

success of any strategic communications plan the RCN might have. This plan would have to be

clearly delineated as prescribed in the next subsection of the *Guideline*.

In the subsection, *Planning and Design,* the *Guideline* places a high priority on having a

specific and detailed plan for each social media initiative. These plans must include target

audiences, authorities and responsibilities, risk assessments, training plans, and timelines for

implementation. As well, there is a comprehensive list of policies that must be followed that

includes: Accessibility; Communications; Federal Identity Program; Information Management;

Official Languages; Privacy and Access to Information; Procurement and Contracting, and;

Security. There is an additional paragraph that details Legal Review. The key legal issues areas

are as follows:

> Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Canadian Human Rights Act;
> The Values and Ethics Code for Public Service; Privacy and Access to
> Information; Official Languages; Intellectual Property (including copyright);
> Procurement, Crown Liability, and; Governing Law.[70]

In addition to these lists of policies and legal issues, the section on *Planning and Design*

also covers Rules of Engagement for the moderation of public interactions. Departments

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[69]*Ibid.*

[70]*Ibid.*

are reminded to develop a means for moderation criteria of potentially inflammatory

subjects, response time expectations, and consequences for violation of those rules.

Lastly, in the subsection *Planning and Design*, the *Guideline* recommends that

departments evaluate their use of social media. The measures of effectiveness should

include whether or not the expected outcomes are achieved, if the target audience is

reached, that there is compliance with policies and procedures, and that there are methods

in place to "…[I]mprove the initiative, including updating personnel and managers'

training needs."[71] In the RCN, this type of monitoring would likely require an ongoing and

significant oversight, with an associated personnel commitment of either a Public Affairs

or Strategic Communications background. While this personnel requirement might not

immediately be viable, if the RCN desires the benefits of social media, it should be made a

priority.

Overall, with this exhaustive list of regulations and policies in the planning and

design of social media initiatives, it is hard to imagine that social media interactions are

practicable or even encouraged. It is not until the fifth section that the document

acknowledges that Government of Canada employees will be using social media.

Establishing Guidance for Personnel, begins by recommending that departments provide

their personnel with guidance on their use of social media. Of significance, it reminds

departments that, "This guidance should be based on the principle that personnel are

trusted in their use of Web 2.0 tools and services just as they are trusted in every other

aspect of their work."[72] This is the first mention in the document that employees should be

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[71]*Ibid*.

[72]*Ibid*.

trusted with using social media, though it does not explicitly encourage social media interactions.

This section defines the types of use of social media by Government of Canada employees as follows:

Table 2 - Treasury Board Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0 Social Media Uses

Official Use	Use of an official departmental Web 2.0 account for departmental communication purposes, including as a spokesperson for the department or within the scope of an individual's duties in the course of their employment.
Professional Networking Use	Use of an individual's personal Web 2.0 account for non-official communication purposes that are related to their employment, including participating in professional associations, knowledge sharing and career development.
Personal Use	Use of an individual's personal Web 2.0 account for purposes unrelated to their employment.

Source: *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0*

This section continues with even more regulations and instructions on establishing and maintaining a social media presence. The key points of this section include compliance with Government of Canada policies, such as the "Communications Policy of the Government of Canada" for official use, and the "Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service" for professional networking and personal use. The section ends with four reminders, "Public servants owe a duty of loyalty to the Government of Canada; Do no harm to the reputation of your employer; Maintain integrity and impartiality, and; Uphold the tradition of political neutrality of the Public Service."[73] These reminders are important, particularly for the protection of the credibility of the Government of Canada. Overall, the section on *Establishing Guidance for Personnel* provides a healthy dose of rules, but little encouragement to engage in social

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[73]*Ibid*.

media. Its placement near the end of the GoC *Guidance* belies its importance. In the case of

similar guidance to personnel of the Royal Canadian Navy, it would also have to include

warnings of Personal and Operational Security, and should be placed at the forefront of the

document.

The last three sections of the GoC *Guideline* provide information on *Additional Guidance*

Sources, Related Legislation and Policy Instruments, and *Definitions*. The list of *Related*

Legislation and Policy is certainly comprehensive, including ten acts of legislation and twenty-

one policy instruments. Fortunately, the practical application of these thirty-one rules follows in

the *Guideline*'s annexes, which measure over 6000 words and comprise half of the *Guideline*

itself.[74] These annexes are intended to augment the *Guideline*, giving practical measures for

compliance with policies.

Nearly one quarter of the annexes is dedicated to compliance with Official Language

Policies. The sheer amount of guidance in this one area is a testament not only to the amount of

oversight in this area, but also the amount of work that is required to fulfil Official Language

requirements. The first "tip" in this area is to establish two separate accounts, one in each

official language:

> For most Web 2.0 tools and services, a single-language version (two accounts)
> is the recommended best practice. Departments should take measures to ensure,
> as much as possible, that users of both accounts have an equally profitable
> experience.
> All content (text, audio, video, etc.) should be posted simultaneously in both
> official languages through the respective departmental accounts.[75]

The process of establishing and updating two separate accounts contradicts the speed and

efficiency that are the hallmarks of social media. In the case of the Royal Canadian Navy's

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[74]*Ibid.*

[75]*Ibid.*

social media interactions, the best course of action would be to have one account with either bilingual "posts" or one "post" in each official language. From a purely practical standpoint, posting while at sea, where bandwidth is limited, would be overly cumbersome.

Overall, the Treasury Board's *Guideline* offers a comprehensive look at the regulations surrounding the use of social media by Government of Canada employees. It serves as little more than an aggregate source for all references and legislation that govern social media interaction. The *Guideline'*s focus remains on the official use of social media by departments, and the methods by which they should establish maintain a presence. It outlines the benefits and risks of social media, but does not acknowledge that these benefits and risks vary widely with each department. As well, the *Guideline* does not explicitly encourage social media interactions for official, professional networking, or personal use. On its release, it was panned by critics[76] for being too long and offering little to end users. The onus, then, falls to Departments to individualize the processes and governance of their social media presence.

Following the release of Government of Canada Treasury Board's *Guideline*, the Department of National Defence, through the Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs, issued *DND/CF Guidelines for the External Use of Social Media Platforms or Services*. It states its purpose is to, "…[P]rovide specific direction for all Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces (DND/CF) communications using externally facing Web 2.0 platforms such as, but not limited to, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn."[77] The document is twenty pages long and closely mirrors the format of the GoC *Guideline.*

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[76] Blevis, "Treasury Board guidelines-by-committee overcomplicate social media", Digital Public Affairs, Decenber 1, 2011, http://markblevis.com/treasury-board-guidelines-by-committee-overcomplicate-social-media/ .

[77]*Ibid*.

The first two sections are titled, "Purpose" and "Authority" and attempt to establish the document's legitimacy. They are straightforward at first, but quickly use jargon that may not be readily understood by those for whom it is intended. The term "L1" is used three times without definition in "Authority." In fact, the term is nearly ubiquitous in the remainder of the document, although it is never defined.[78] Without clearly defining the scope of its legitimacy, the document loses relevance with its intended audience.

In its third, "Background," section, it lists the risks and benefits of Web 2.0 use, similar to the GoC *Guideline*. The Benefits of Use are the same and the Risks of Use are nearly identical, except for the omission of the last risk, "Extensive and legally binding terms of service that can, if not sufficiently understood and respected, present legal risks for the Government of Canada and individuals." No reason is given for this omission, despite this risk being pertinent to DND/CF. The DND/CF Guidelines have also added six sound "Principles of Participation." These principles are: Be Professional; Be Transparent; Be Inclusive; Be Respectful; Be Accountable, and; Do No Harm. These tenets are applicable to both personal and professional use of social media and should be given higher visibility, potentially forming the backbone of a DND/CF social media policy.

The fourth section of the DND/CF *Guidelines* is titled, "Planning and Design." Its six subsections are nearly entirely intended for L1s, providing a comprehensive list of the regulations that govern official Government of Canada social media interactions. While compliance with this exhaustive list of regulations is mandatory, the combination of policies could be stifling the RCN's attempts at strategic outreach through social media interactions.

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[78] The definition of the term L1, or Level 1, is not readily available. It is defined in Expenditure Management: Sections 32, 33, 34 of the Financial Administration Act (FAA), September 2010 as, "The incumbent of a position that is classified at the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) level (civilian) or Environmental Chief of Staff level (military) responsible to DM [Deputy Minister] or CDS [Chief of Defence Staff] for a specific portfolio."

The fourth section ends with "Guidance for Personnel" and another list of requirements for social media interactions:

> All information, statements or comments posted to any DND/CF Web 2.0
> account must:
> a) Respect values and ethics of the DND/CF and of the Public Service of
> Canada;
> b) Be politically neutral;
> c) Protect personal information;
> d) Respect security standards in place;
> e) Respect intellectual property (including copyright) considerations;
> f) Respect Official Languages guidelines;
> g) Refer public and media enquiries to the MLO;
> h) Use the appropriate Government of Canada or DND/CF symbols[79]

This final section of the DND/CF *Guidelines* has, potentially, the most to offer official or personal users on their social media conduct; however, these most relevant points are in the last sub-section after pages of regulations that are relevant to L1s.

The DND/CF *Guidelines* end with this same tone in four annexes: L1 Social Media Account Request Form; Official Languages; Mandatory Disclaimer, and; CANFORGEN 136/06 CDS 050/06 011318Z SEP 06: GUIDANCE ON BLOGS AND OTHER INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS – CF OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES. Once more, there is an overreliance on jargon and references to several other regulations. There is no overt encouragement for personnel to engage online and share their stories.

While this document has tremendous potential, some of the language used in it precludes a solid understanding by the majority of personnel within DND/CF. By using undefined terms, such as L1, and placing the guidelines for social media use at the end of the document, it does not place an importance on every day personal social media use. Additionally, despite having lists of regulations to follow, there is no encouragement for DND/CF personnel to engage in

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[79]*Ibid.*

social media in order to tell their stories. As with the three social media policies of Canada's closest allies, the focus should be the need for personnel to tell their stories and be responsible while online, particularly with operationally sensitive information.

Subsequent to the release of the DND/CF *Guidelines*, the Commander of the RCN published a message to the RCN titled "*New Social Media Initiatives Within the RCN*." The focus of the message is the use of Twitter, particularly its downfalls and the necessity to comply with both the Treasury Board and DND/CF Guidelines.

> While there are many benefits associated with using Twitter as a communications medium, RCN personnel are reminded that it is a public forum and that they are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. As such, RCN personnel are required to follow CF policies regarding operational security and avoiding inappropriate comments as outlined in refs [references] B, C, and D [respectively CANFORGEN 038/08 – Operational Security, CANFORGEN 136/06 – Guidance on Blogs and other internet communications – CF Operations and Activities, and QR and O 19.36 – Disclosure of opinion][80]

Given the specificity of this message to Twitter, and the focus on conduct of RCN personnel while using it, this message reads as a knee jerk reaction to someone exercising poor judgement online.

The message continues with a reminder to those who operate Twitter accounts for official use:

> Additionally, all official ship, unit and NRD [Naval Reserve Division] Twitter accounts within the RCN must comply with established DND/CF policies regarding social media platforms and services as outlined at ref[erence] E [DND/CF Guidelines for the External use of Social Media platforms or Services]. All Twitter account administrators must fill out the L1 Social Media Account Request Form located in Annex 1 of ref[erence] E and submit it to DNPA [Director Naval Public Affairs] for approval.[81]

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[80]Department of National Defence, *New Social Media Initiatives within the RCN* (Canada: MARGEN 009/12 RCN 007/12 DTG: 211946Z FEB 12, 2012).

[81]*Ibid*.

This paragraph is confusing as it states that units must fill out a form that is intended for an L1, which is again not defined. This message does not overtly encourage the use of social media to tell the story of the RCN and its personnel, nor does it cover any other platforms, especially Facebook.

Like its allies, the RCN requires a comprehensive and relevant policy on social media that applies to official, professional networking, and personal users. The RCN should encourage its personnel to tell their stories as social media could be an incredible weapon in the fight against Maritime Blindness. In order for the RCN to benefit from these types of social media interactions, RCN personnel need to be aware of the risks to themselves, their families, and operations in general when sharing online. With the 31 policies that are mentioned in the Treasury Board *Guidelines,* the additional DND/CF regulations, particularly regarding Personal, Operational, and Communications Security, and RCN specific issues such as policies as to what information is considered classified and concerns over bandwidth use at sea, it would be entirely appropriate for the RCN to establish its own social media policy within its communications strategy.

The responsibility for communications in the Royal Canadian Navy falls between the Director of Naval Public Affairs and the Director of Maritime Strategic Communications (DMSC). DMSC has produced a draft document, "*The RCN's Communications Strategy 2012 – 2016: A Conversation with Canadians.*" This 22 page document is intended to give strategic guidance to leaders in the RCN at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels and provide a framework for sailors at all levels to discuss the RCN. The Introduction describes the necessity of strong communications in the RCN:

> As the custodians of our national institution, we have a fundamental obligation to ensure that Canadians are aware of what we do and are confident that we do it well and that our policy-makers fully understand the options a navy provides them in defencing the nation's interests.[82]

Overall, Canadians have a right to know why the RCN exists, and the RCN has an obligation to share its story to bolster an understanding of Canada as a maritime nation. The *Strategy* then continues with discussions of The Strategic Environment and The Contemporary Communications Environment. Table 3 of the document describes RCN Communications in the Information Age. It expressly recognizes that the societal domain as a whole has evolved to include increased amounts of information as well as new media.

From a social media standpoint, there are two key Implications for RCN Communications. The first is, "It's not enough to have the right message."[83] While this point is important, without RCN specific guidelines for interactions, RCN personnel will not even likely have ready access to the RCN's intended strategic messaging in order to have the right message. The second implication is, "We must have more messengers, connecting more often and in more places."[84]

These implications could be very easily mitigated if the RCN provided guidance to its personnel for social media engagement; moreover, it should encourage its sailors to tell their stories. There would be tremendous potential for engaging many Canadians with the right message. Without the right message to its personnel, however, the RCN is failing to adapt to new technology in what it describes as the *Contemporary Communications Environment*.

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[82]Department of National Defence, *The RCN's Communications Strategy 2012-2016: A Conversation with Canadians Draft Version 4.0*, 1.

[83]*Ibid*, 2.

[84]*Ibid*, 2.

The main effort of the RCN's communications is outlined in the next section, titled Maritime Blindness. Maritime Blindness is described by saying, "…[I]t's fair to say that Canadians as a whole neither have an understanding of the nation's comprehensive relationship with the sea, nor a sense of how the work of their Navy touches profoundly on their daily lives."[85] In order to battle this Maritime Blindness with Canadians, the *Strategy* emphasizes that the RCN must communicate the importance of, "…[I]ncreasing awareness of the Navy and improving their understanding of the crucial role seapower plays in our security and prosperity."[86] If battling Maritime Blindness is the most important communications effort that the RCN has, it should be prepared to use the best assets in its arsenal. In the foreward of the *Strategy*, the Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy, Vice Admiral Paul Maddison, stresses that RCN sailors, "…[R]emain our most priceless communications asset. It is through their stories of accomplishment and dedication that this plan will succeed."[87] Unfortunately, by not having an RCN specific guideline for social media engagements for personal and professional use, this asset will remain underutilized. The RCN's failure to adapt to match the potential of sailors as communicators with the ubiquity of social media will result in a lessened effort in the battle against Maritime Blindness.

The sections that follow Maritime Blindness include Higher Communications Intent, Commander's Guidance, and A Strategic Opportunity for the RCN. The Higher Communications Intent is a summary of the *Canada First Defence Strategy*, which outlines six core missions for the Canadian Forces; *Defence Planning Directive 2011*, and; the Government

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[85] *Ibid*, 3.

[86] *Ibid*, 3.

[87] *Ibid*, i.

of Canada's Communications Policy, as amplified by ADM(PA) in DAOD 2008. These

documents form the basis of CF strategic intent and communications policy. They are reflected

in the next section, the Commander RCN's *Commander's Guidance*.

This *Commander's Guidance* was issued by the Commander RCN in November 2011

and includes his three guiding communications principles:

> To continue to communicate with coherence using the themes PURPOSE,
> PLATFORMS, PEOPLE, and PRIDE.
> To integrate outreach and engagement efforts at the local, regional and national
> levels for cumulative and lasting strategic effect; and
> To continue to celebrate the RCN as an important and cherished national
> institution, highlighting our rich history, heritage and culture to showcase the
> modern RCN as a vital part of a joint and integrated CF.[88]

These three principles are very well suited to social media platforms. For instance, for the first

principle, a Facebook page with Purpose, Platforms, People, and Pride as headings could include

photos, videos, and the stories of the personnel involved. For the second principle, outreach

could quickly be achieved through the use of networked Twitter accounts, which would act as a

force multiplier in disseminating RCN news and events from across the country. Both social

media platforms would be very effective in highlighting the RCN's history, heritage, and culture.

In particular, the ease with which the RCN could reach young social media users is particularly

impressive. Overall, these three communications principles are practically suited for social

media interactions. In fact, in today's world, it would be the height of folly not to use social

media for these points of strategic communication.

On the subject of *A Strategic Opportunity for the RCN*, the *Strategy* reiterates the fact that

the RCN is certainly in a position to increase its overall visibility and raise awareness of its

purpose across Canada. The *Strategy* was created to leverage the opportunities that exist to

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[88]*Ibid.*, 4.

promote the RCN and battle Maritime Blindness. This final section also acts as a lead-in for

Part Two – Campaign Plan, which details how the *Strategy* is to unfold.

In *Part Two – Campaign Plan*, there are four lines of operation, two of which are Main

Effort, and two of which are Supporting Effort. The Main Effort lines of operation are,

"Enhance Credibility through Effective Media Operations," and "Expand the RCN's

Constituency of Support." Throughout the three pages of explanations that follow, there is only

one mention of social media, under the heading of *Enhance Navy's presence on the Internet and*

social media. As a part of the plan, "…[S]ocial media will be better leveraged to reach new and

especially younger audiences among the recruiting demographic."[89] Despite nearly three pages

that discuss outreach and media engagement, it is mindboggling that the only mention of social

media involves younger audiences in the recruiting demographic.

In the Supporting Effort, the two lines of operation are, "Maintain Unity of Voice and

Effort," and, "Enable our Sailors as Communicators."[90] In this entire section, social media

appears to be sidelined, garnering only one mention as a means by which already established

RCN print media could be disseminated. As a minimum, there should be mention of RCN

guidance for social media use in "Maintain Unity of Voice and Effort," and encouraging

personnel to use social media to tell their stories in, "Enable our Sailors as Communicators."

These two lines of operation will not be effective unless they involve a strong social media

effort.

Perhaps the most glaring omission of social media, though, is in the second line of

operation, "Enable our Sailors as Communicators." It mentions a plan to, "Mobilize NAVRES'

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[89]*Ibid*, 9.

[90]*Ibid*, 6.

[The Naval Reserve's] strategic communications function." With Toronto and HMCS YORK serving as a "test bed,"[91] the aim is to raise awareness within urban centres and capitalize on programmes that already exist by leveraging the presence of Naval personnel who are inland in Canada. The effects of the synergistic nature of networked Twitter accounts could be astounding, particularly as it would allow Naval Reservists to broadcast their naval activities within their communities outside of the Naval Reserve. The potential for exposure within Canada is nothing short of impressive and would only require each Naval Reserve Division to have a Twitter account. The secondary effect of this could be that Naval Reserve Divisions follow each other's accounts and gain a greater sense of camaraderie. With very little effort, Canada's Naval Reserve could create huge communications effects.

The final part of the "*RCN's Communications Strategy 2012-2016*" is titled, "*Part Three – Executing the Plan.*" In it, there is no mention of the benefits or risks of social media or how it could play a pivotal role in nearly every aspect of the *Communications Strategy*. Given the ubiquity of social media and its ever-increasing uses, failing to make it an essential part of a communications plan seems foolhardy.

Overall, the *Communications Strategy* has the type of messaging that is very well suited for social media. Unfortunately, it barely acknowledges the near-ubiquity of this technology and has only a marginal role for social media to play. Despite the increased presence of social media within the navies of Canada's peers, the RCN appears incapable of adapting from traditional means of communications to the reality of today.

Without a comprehensive social media strategy and policy, is there any way to predict the outcome of the RCN's *Communications Strategy*? In their book, *Military Misfortunes,* Cohen &

[91]*Ibid*, 11.

Gooch explain a means of analyzing failures in command decision making. They assert that a military catastrophe occurs as a result of multiple failures at many levels. "There are three basic kinds of failures: failure to learn, failure to anticipate, and failure to adapt."[92] Suffering from one of these failures is often recoverable and is referred to as a "simple failure."[93] Recovering from a combination of two failures, or an aggregate failure, is unlikely, but possible. Finally, they show that a "[C]atastrophic failure occurs when a military organization experiences all three kinds of failure simultaneously or consecutively."[94] Massive failure, then, cannot be pinned to one specific event or person, but results from a collective series of failures.

In the case of the RCN and its social media strategy, it is standing into danger of an aggregate failure. The RCN has failed to learn from its closest Allies and their use of social media and it has failed to anticipate that its sailors already carry out social media engagements without proper guidelines. Unless the RCN adapts its current and draft communications strategy to the advantages and disadvantages of social media, it could suffer a catastrophic failure.

While it is not in a traditional battle, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) is fighting against maritime blindness. In the draft document, *The RCN's Communications Strategy 2012-2016: A Conversation with Canadians*, the important aspects of this battle are as follows:

> …[t]here is considerable opportunity for the RCN to communicate proactively
> in support of the DND / CF's strategic communications priorities … while both
> increasing their awareness of the Navy and improving their understanding of
> the crucial role seapower plays in our security and prosperity.[95]

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[92] E. A. Cohen and J. Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (United States of America: The Free Press, A Diviaion of Macmillan Inc., 1990), 26.

[93] *Ibid.*, 25.

[94] *Ibid.*, 26.

[95] *Ibid.*. 3.

The utility of social media in battling maritime blindness cannot be ignored. The tables below show the numbers of personal interactions in Facebook and Twitter that the United States Navy, UK RN, UK RN Recruitment, RAN have.

Table 3 – A Comparison of Four Navies' Social Media Following

Account	Facebook Likes	Twitter followers
United States Navy	694 432	74 243
United Kingdom Royal Navy	162 795	12 027
Royal Navy Recruitment	55 489	640
Royal Australian Navy	17 231	3720
Royal Canadian Navy Facebook Group (Unofficial)	1562	670 – 0 tweets
Royal Canadian Navy Facebook Page 1 (Unofficial)	1383	
Royal Canadian Navy Facebook Page 2 (Unofficial)	248	
Royal Canadian Navy Facebook Page 3 (Unofficial)	206	

Source: Internet search 7 August 2012

It is worth noting that the three countries have only English as the official language, whereas Canada has both English and French. This fact, though, cannot be blamed for the large discrepancies in social media policies and practices. From this table, it is clear that the RCN falls behind its closest ally Navies. Additionally, the ad hoc pages that have been created in the void of engagement stand as a liability, as their content is not moderated. The RCN has failed to learn from its peers about the success of a social media presence.

The United States Navy, the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, the Royal Australian Navy, and the Australian Defence Force all identified both the best and most dangerous aspects of social media. While it is a tremendous enabler for their personnel to tell their story, it can be a huge liability for personal and operational security. This liability

for RCN personnel is increased, however, due to a lack of specific and relevant governance.

A 2011 Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) Report, *Friending Enemies and Influencing People: Identifying and Examining Issues in the Use of Social Media for Influence Activities*, prepared by Neil O'Reilly of the Royal Military College of Canada in June 2011 recognizes that the CF policies and practices are lacking. His paper was published prior to both the Treasury Board and DND/CF Guidelines and focuses on the use of social media in the context of Influence Activities.[96] He succinctly acknowledges the problems created by not having a social media presence. "…[A]s far as social media/social networking is concerned, if you are not there, you are not part of the conversation, and have absolutely no influence over the discourse whatsoever."[97] The greatest strategic risk, then, is a lack of official social media presence.

In determining the root cause of the void of CF social media presence, O'Reilly also argues that it is not the numerous layers of regulation.

> …[W]hile certain policy, legal, and doctrinal issues do exist, none appear to be severe enough to seriously hinder the use of such tools by the CF for a variety of purposes. In fact, the greatest hindrance may be acceptance of the fact that the use of such tools requires relinquishing control of a message to a certain degree.[98]

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[96] O'Reilly defines Influence Activities according to the Canadian Forces Land Operations Manual definition, "An activity designed to affect the character or behavior of a person or a group as a first order effect."

[97] N. O'Reilly, *Friending Enemies and Influencing People: Identifying and Examining Issues in the use of Social Media for CF Influence Activities* (Canada: Defence Research and Development,[2011]), http://cradpdf.drdc-rddc.gc.ca/PDFS/unc110/p535050_A1b.pdf (accessed 28 February 2012)., 17.

[98]*Ibid*, iii.

If, in fact, the issues of compliance with regulations can be overcome, as O'Reilly

suggests, is the RCN well suited to embrace the technology and encourage its personnel to

engage in social media?

A 2005 study of *Command Styles in the Canadian Navy*, commissioned by DRDC

(Toronto) was published, "…[T]o describe and analyze naval command styles in general

and Canadian naval command styles in particular as part of a larger project investigating

automated command advisory systems."[99] This seminal study focuses on command styles

within the culture of the Royal Canadian Navy and how the adaptation of technology as a

warfare enabler has progressed.

One focus of the study is on Network Centric Warfare (NCW). "There is still some

confusion as to what the concept actually entails, but it appears to advocate a fully

integrated information network with all platforms being nodes in the network."[100]

Essentially, friendly forces contribute to a common operating picture and provide

commanders with the information provided to make sound decisions. This concept is

similar to social media as participants can easily gain and disseminate information across a

network. Logically, then, if the study determined that the Royal Canadian Naval culture is

well suited to NCW, it should be equally suited to social media interactions.

In the section discussing "The Navy's Cultural and Technological Natures," the

study draws the conclusion that the Royal Canadian Navy is, indeed, adept at embracing

technology:

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[99]A. English and others, *Command Styles in the Canadian Navy*Defence R&D Canada; KMG
Associates,[2005]), http://pubs.drdc-
rddc.gc.ca/BASIS/pcandid/www/engpub/DDW?W%3DTITLE++INC+%27NAVY%27%26M%3D19%26K%3D52
4426%26U%3D1 (accessed 10 January 2012)., i.

[100]*Ibid.*, 26.

> In general, despite its conservative nature, the Canadian Navy has a surprising ability to adjust to technological possibilities, to the extent that [it] is known as a world leader in designing ship's systems, as well as in developing the complementary training equipment.[101]

By extension, the RCN should be able to lead in social media policy and practices.

Despite knowing that the RCN culture embraces technology, the RCN has failed to anticipate the extent to which its sailors engage in social media. Combined with falling behind its Allies in learning social media best practices, the RCN is suffering an aggregate failure communications by the Cohen & Gooch framework. Unless the RCN reverses these two trends and adapts its current and draft communications strategy to the advantages and disadvantages of social media, this strategy could suffer a catastrophic failure.

In an effort to understand the issues surrounding the lack of social media presence of the RCN, the author contacted Commander H. Genest, the Director of Navy Public Affairs with some specific questions on social media platforms and policies. When asked about the creation of an RCN Facebook page, and the existence of such pages, he replied,

> The RCN does not encourage nor support the use of Facebook as the platform is not compliant with TB [Treasury Board] rules on web accessibility. However, we do recognize that several RCN units make extensive use of Facebook to communicate with families and friends especially when deployed overseas. The usage of Facebook is only acceptable when the full content is also accessible on another compliant platform (website).[102]

Commander Genest also indicated that creating and maintaining a social media presence is labour intensive, and that the amount of personnel required for "sustained and active monitoring"[103] is prohibitive at this time. Whether it is a matter of adherence to policy, or a lack of personnel to execute a social media plan that preclude the RCN from having a

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[101]*Ibid*, 127.

[102]H. Genest, *Email Conversation*, ed. N. E. Setchell (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: , 28 August 2012)..

[103] *Ibid*.

stronger social media policy and presence, both situations would have to be resolved in order to move forward.

While the Treasury Board rules are nearly prohibitively stringent on social media use, as previously noted, there is a caveat for which the RCN, through DND/CF, should apply. In Section 4, *Key Considerations for Web 2.0 Initiatives*, under the subject of *Governance and Oversight*, departments whose communications initiatives require a modification under the Federal Identity Plan can submit a request to the Treasury Board.

Instead of accepting that the Treasury Board *Guideline* is too stringent to allow particular social media interactions, the RCN should establish a credible plan that will engage people online, and request modifications from the Treasury Board *Guideline*. This request should highlight the fact that Canada's closest allies have strong social media presences as well as the liabilities caused by a lack of an official social media presence. In raising awareness of these issues, the RCN has very little to lose, but could gain an incredible tool in the fight against maritime blindness. RCN personnel are accustomed to communicating with the use of technology and could leverage the significant professional and personal advantages that social media offer.

Overall, it is clear that social media has changed the world in which we live. For better or for worse, the technology is here to stay, and will continue to evolve. The ability to connect online and share information easily will enable an endless number of opportunities for people to connect. These connections, however, are not without their risks. In areas where security is a concern, tight controls, trust, and training must be the cornerstones of the attitude towards social media engagement.

In the naval context, Canada's closest allies, the United States Navy (USN), United Kingdom's (UK) Royal Navy (RN) and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), have overcome these issues and have far surpassed Canada in their social media engagements. The USN has offered its sailors practical materials for personal and professional use. Under the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD), the RN also has practical advice for personnel engaging in social media. Both countries are careful to warn that enemies will actively search out sensitive information online. Likewise, the RAN gives specific instances of information that should not be shared online. All three policies focus on protecting oneself, family, fellow serving members, and operations. Their official social media pages are full of photos and stories depicting the efforts of their sailors.

The Royal Canadian Navy's social media presence is drastically different than that of its peers. The RCN is either hamstrung by a lack of personnel to create a social media presence, or the guidelines under which it must operate. Whatever the barriers are, they should be sufficient to raise alarms with senior personnel who can initiate a change of course prior to standing into danger.

Recommended Guidance from Commander RCN for Personal Use of Social Media

As the Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy, I am infinitely proud of our sailors. You unfailingly rise to every challenge that is presented to you and bring a great deal of respect to both the Canadian Forces and Canada as a whole. No matter where RCN personnel deploy in the world, whether inside Canada or abroad, you are incredible ambassadors. People everywhere want to hear your stories of life at sea and it will become increasingly important that you share them with your fellow Canadians. The RCN is already undergoing an intensive period of modernization and change. These efforts will provide an excellent opportunity to engage with Canadians and remind them of the role the RCN plays in Canada's security. We must continue to prove that Canada, as a maritime nation, needs a strong Navy that can deploy throughout the world as required. When we share our stories with our fellow Canadians, they can gain an understanding of Canada as a maritime nation.

All sailors in the RCN have a responsibility to represent the values of the RCN and CF regardless of whether we are at work. We must remember to keep this in mind, especially while engaging in social media. While there are numerous regulations for internet use, including social media, I would like you to consider the following guidelines:

1.   Protect yourself, your family, your fellow sailors, CF members, and our Allies in your online activities. It is known that some organizations frequent social media sites in order to glean information.
2.   You can never assume anonymity or privacy online. Do not post information regarding port visits, operational deficiencies, trouble at work, names of others or anything else that might reveal unwanted information.
3.   There is never a guarantee that you will have access to social media, or even email, while deployed. From time to time, and for various reasons, your access may be limited.

Discussing these issues with your family and friends will alleviate some anxiety while you are away and help them to avoid the disclosure of sensitive or inappropriate information.

You have an important story to tell – and you are the best person to tell it.

A Sailor's Guide to Personal Social Media Use

In the Royal Canadian Navy, we are not strangers to technology. Over the years, we have come to rely on it for communications from sea to home, or across Canada and around the world. With the advent of emails and social media, such as Facebook or Twitter, it's never been easier to connect with friends and family. Your experiences are worth sharing and you have an important story to tell as a member of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Overall, Canadians spend a lot of time online. A 2012 study indicated that over 80% of Canadians have access to the Internet. At work, 100% of personnel in the Royal Canadian Navy have access to the Internet. Chances are also very good that you have an online social media account of some kind. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, or something even newer, as a member of the Canadian Forces, you might be surprised at some of the rules that might apply to your online activities.

Canadians enjoy an outstanding level of Freedom of Speech and it is something we should be proud of and should celebrate. But, as members of the Canadian Forces, we are also bound by several regulations, including the Queen's Regulations and Orders (QR&Os). Regardless of whether you are on a base, at sea, or at home, the QR&Os apply to all members of the CF. And, while the QR&Os do not specifically mention online activities or social media, these rules are, nonetheless, applicable. From time to time, you may feel that a QR&O conflicts with your rights as a Canadian citizen under the Freedom of Speech Act. You must keep in mind that these rules exist for your own safety, that of your family, and to protect the security of CF operations as well as those of our allies.

In the RCN, we have become accustomed to using either email or Facebook to keep in touch with loved ones while deployed. This practice is a welcome change to the "old days" of snail mail deliveries or sporadic satellite phone calls. New technologies allow sailors at sea to stay in touch with friends and family while either a few or few thousand miles away. We should remember, though, that this capability is a privilege, and not a right. There will be times that our access to bandwidth is limited or, for security reasons, Command will strictly control Internet and email access.

It is important to remind friends and family not to expect near real-time access to you while you are deployed. As well, you should be careful with what information you send home in email or post on social media sites. Once you release information online, you have no control over where it ends up next. Your own credibility and the safety of your fellow sailors and family could be at stake.

Here is a short list of some of the many regulations that apply to you in the conduct of online activities. The *Security of Information Act* is a national law that applies to both Canadian Forces members and civilians. It involves, among other things, the unlawful sharing of operational information. For instance, if you send an email home from sea and give away information that should not be shared, you have committed an offence. If the person to whom you sent the email further shares it, either by word of mouth, written, or electronic means, they would also be violating this law.

In general, the following topics are considered information that should not be shared over an unclassified network. Information regarding times and places of upcoming port visits; ship's mechanical deficiencies; information regarding significant incidents, such as casualties, fires, floods, or disciplinary issues, and; other operational information that would be considered

sensitive. For example, it is safer to wait until after you have left a port to post details about your visit there.

For reasons of discipline, security, personal safety, and the safety of your family, here are some QR&Os that might change the way you interact online:

QR&O 19.10 is labelled, "COMBINATIONS FORBIDDEN." While not immediately obvious from the title, this QR&O could have a huge implication to your online activity. It states that

> *No officer or non-commissioned member shall without authority:*
> 1. *combine with other members for the purpose of bringing about alterations in existing regulations for the Canadian Forces;*
> 2. *sign with other members memorials, petitions or applications relating to the Canadian Forces; or*
> 3. *obtain or solicit signatures for memorials, petitions or applications relating to the Canadian Forces*

This regulation, although it does not specifically discuss Web 2.0 activities, would prevent a CF member from joining an online group whose goal is to bring about change within the CF. Prior to the RCN officially re-adopting the Executive Curl and the title "Royal Canadian Navy," there were many Facebook groups that tried to harness interest. In order to avoid violating this regulation, CF Members have to be very careful not to join an unofficial group or unwittingly re-publish events and opinions.

QR&O 19.13, "REBUKE IN PRESENCE OF JUNIOR," and QR&O 19.14 "IMPROPER COMMENTS" seem like common sense items for everyday life, but should also be considered for your online activities. Given today's technology, you should never consider your online presence to be private or anonymous. It is, therefore, necessary to refrain from scolding or telling off a subordinate to avoid violating QR&O 19.13. The same logic applies to QR&O 19.14, for passing criticism of a superior.

The second part of QR&O 19.14 is worthy of quoting in full:

> *No officer or non-commissioned member shall do or say anything that:*
> *if seen or heard by any member of the public, might reflect discredit on the Canadian Forces or on any of its members; or*
> *if seen by, heard by or reported to those under him, might discourage them or render them dissatisfied with their condition or the duties on which they are employed.*

Some other QR&Os discuss relations with the media. They were created prior to Web 2.0/Social Media technologies existed, but are still relevant today. For instance, QR&O 19.36 "DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION OR OPINION," forbids someone who does not have permission to:

> - *publish in any form whatever or communicate directly or indirectly or otherwise disclose to an unauthorized person official information or the contents of an unpublished or classified official document or the contents thereof;*
> - *use that information or document for a private purpose;*
> - *publish in any form whatever any military information or the member's views on any military subject to unauthorized persons;*

- *deliver publicly, or record for public delivery, either directly or through the medium of radio or television, a lecture, discourse or answers to questions relating to a military subject;*
- *prepare a paper or write a script on any military subject for delivery or transmission to the public;*
- *publish the member's opinions on any military question that is under consideration by superior authorities;*
- *take part in public in a discussion relating to orders, regulations or instructions issued by the member's superiors;*
- *disclose to an unauthorized person, without the authority of the department, agency or other body concerned, any information acquired in an official capacity while seconded, attached or loaned to that department, agency or other body;*
- *furnish to any person, not otherwise authorized to receive them, official reports, correspondence or other documents, or copies thereof; or*
- *publish in writing or deliver any lecture, address or broadcast in any dealing with a subject of a controversial nature affecting other departments of the public service or pertaining to public policy.*
- *(3) This article does not apply to a writing, lecture, address or broadcast confined exclusively to members of the Canadian Forces.*

While it is lengthy, this QR&O is worth remembering when something controversial happens, or you find yourself being "egged on" for opinions by people online who know you have an affiliation or professional expertise with the CF.

The final QR&O that might surprise you is 19.44 "POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND CANDIDATURE FOR OFFICE." It states that "*No member of the Regular Force shall:*

- *take an active part in the affairs of a political organization or party;*
- *make a political speech to electors, or announce himself or allow himself to be announced as a candidate, or prospective candidate, for election to the Parliament of Canada or a provincial legislature; or*
- *except with the permission of the Chief of the Defence Staff, accept an office in a municipal corporation or other local government body or allow himself to be nominated for election to such office.*

In conclusion, you may find regulations we follow at work apply to our online activities. In order to protect yourself, your family, your fellow workers, and the operations of the Canadian Forces, you should be aware that these regulations exist for our collective safety and protect the hard work that we do.

You could have a lot to lose under National Defence Security Clearance policies, if you have an indiscretion with respect to classified or designated matters or a lack of security awareness. Commanding Officers have the discretion to issue a "Change of Circumstances Report" and your security clearance could be in jeopardy until an investigation is complete. Recklessness online could result in the loss or suspension of your security clearance and threaten your livelihood. Quite plainly, if you have doubt about whether or not you should post

something, you can't get in trouble if you don't post it. Keeping these things in mind while you tell your story will keep you and your friends, family, and shipmates safe. They want to hear your stories and you are the best one to tell them.

RCN SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The following is a proposal for a social media engagement plan to augment *The RCN's Communications Strategy 2012-2016: A Conversation with Canadians*. A great deal of this *Conversation* can take place through social media. The most practical site for this engagement is Twitter. The proposal will take place in four phases and will result in a graduated implementation of a communications plan whose goal is to engage Canadians. As a secondary effect, it will establish a network for RCN units to share their stories and exchange ideas.

The overarching message of this campaign is that RCN personnel have a great story to tell and Canadians deserve to hear it. Using the already established themes of PURPOSE, PLATFORMS, PEOPLE, and PRIDE, social media will enable a nearly instantaneous projection of the RCN's Strategic Messaging.

Phase 1

Governance In Place For Engagements

In Phase 1, Commander RCN, through DNSC and DNPA, will establish guidelines for official RCN online engagement. They must be easily understood and written in accordance with current Government of Canada and DND/CF policies. These plans and guidelines will be accompanied by newspaper articles and other strategic messaging in order to clarify expectations. Once again, the goal is to engage Canadians and share stories of the RCN and its personnel. DNPA will also establish a method for tracking and periodicity for reporting followers and trends to the Commander RCN.

Phase 2

NRDs And Reserve Networks On Twitter

1.   All Naval Reserve Divisions (NRD) and the Naval Reserve Headquarters (NAVRESHQ) will establish official Twitter accounts. They will post a story or picture weekly, with a focus on operations, community engagements, training, or other accomplishments.
2.   The NRDs and NAVRESHQ will follow each other on Twitter and "retweet" each others' stories and photos.
3.   The RCN's Honorary Captains will be encouraged to follow an NRD account.

The effects of establishing these networks on an unclassified network will allow Naval Reservists to connect easily with other Naval Reservists as well as their non-CF contacts. Where possible, have Honorary Captains (RCN) participate and share their experiences and leverage their already established networks

Phase 3

Ships, Units, Schools, Formations

Drawing from the experiences from Phase 2, ships, units, schools, and formations will join the network. As a minimum, they will post a story or picture weekly. Once more, the focus will be on operations, community engagements, training, or other accomplishments.

Phase 4

Monitor And Evaluate

DNSC and DNPA will monitor the effectiveness of these Twitter campaigns and establish any further changes to the networks. This Twitter campaign could easily form the basis of an official RCN Facebook page by providing material that is of interest to Canadians.

Overall, this plan addresses the four Lines of Operation in the *The RCN's Communications Strategy 2012-2016: A Conversation with Canadians*. It will have tremendous networking effect within the RCN and also maximize opportunities for Canadians to engage with the RCN.

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