



ENTRi
EUROPE'S NEW TRAINING INITIATIVE FOR CIVILIAN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

COURSE CONCEPT*
for the SPECIALISATION COURSE on:

**NEW MEDIA
TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES
IN CIVILIAN CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of new media and information technology has changed the way people communicate, organize, and spread ideas. Information is shared around the globe within seconds. The expansion of mobile networks has enabled people even in remote areas to be connected to the global heartbeat, be informed about what is happening near and far, and contribute to the supply of information. These new opportunities to engage with the world have had a huge impact on global politics. The Arab Spring demonstrated how new media can play a vital role in organizing different groups, voicing disapproval of governments, and go as far as toppling regimes. This has given new media tools the reputation of being the citizens' 'weapon' against even the strongest dictator and has caused repressive regimes to continuously explore new ways to limit access of its citizens to the internet.

Since the Arab Spring, the role of new media in shaping public opinion and influencing politics has steadily been taken more seriously by governments and by international actors. New media platforms went from something youth or IT experts dabble with or exchange private information on, to useful tools that can make an essential contribution to the way we engage with each other as individuals, institutions or states.

The interaction of today's societies has been shaped by the availability of new media and additional tools are constantly being developed to expand its applicability. Their usefulness is undeniable, although the risks of their proliferation should not be underestimated. And while new media have influenced daily interactions, they also have a huge potential for facilitating communication, information-sharing, and reaction in the time of crisis.

Peace Operations are currently lagging behind in recognizing the potential of new media tools and finding ways to integrate them into their information systems. Most experts lack familiarity with these tools and have learned their crafts before the proliferation of new media. Many do not immediately see the contribution these tools could make to their area of expertise and are very skeptical about the security of new media or are not aware of the different platforms that are available. Additionally, the security systems in place in peace operations often do not allow for mission members to access new media tools and specifically block sites that could be useful sources of information.

However, the UN and other civilian crisis management operations have taken steps to catch up and explore ways new media tools can enrich their work in crisis areas. Since the summer of 2014, an *Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping* was initiated, that is in charge of finding ways new technology can render peace operations more effective. The International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations published a report in 2014 *Designing Mandates and Capabilities for Future Peace Operations*, which highlighted the need to integrate new media and information technology into the different areas of responsibility of missions. In order to provide some guidance to its mission members, the OSCE published the *Social Media Guidebook* in 2013.

Steps are being taken by international organizations to determine how and when new media tools and information technology can make a valuable contribution to crisis management. Thus, it is increasingly important that experts deployed to peace operations are aware of the potentials of these tools and feel comfortable to use them. Also, they need to be keenly aware of the challenges and security threats that come with an increased usage of new media tools and know what measures to take to keep those at a minimum.

Thus, the Swiss ICT4Peace Foundation and the German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF) jointly developed a course that would introduce experts working in peace operations to various new media tools and enable them to apply these tools in their area of expertise.

II TARGET GROUP

The target group of this training is civilian, police, and military experts working in crisis areas, especially in peace operations (EU, UN, OSCE, AU) and humanitarian organizations (OCHA). Since New Media tools can

be applied in many different areas of expertise, this course does not focus on one specific group of experts. However, the topics covered are especially relevant to persons working on information management and dissemination, media and public information, or conflict analysis. All participants must have a working knowledge of the internet, email, and Microsoft Office tools.

Although open for military personnel, the tools covered focus predominately on the priorities and areas of responsibility of civilian institutions and organizations.

III OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The objective of the course is to familiarize participants with different new media tools that can contribute to increasing the effectiveness of peace operations and other organizations working in crisis areas. Participants are given ample time to apply and practice these tools under the guidance of trainers to make sure that they will be able to use them in the field.

Concrete learning objectives are as follows:

- To have a basic understanding of Crisis Information Management systems as used by peace operations as well as humanitarian organizations (OCHA)
- To be able to use new media tools to collect, analyze, present, verify and disseminate information;
- To understand the impact new and web-based social media have on civilian crisis management;
- To communicate and share information in a secure manner;
- To be aware of the added complexities that have arisen and are arising through the increased use of new media;
- To understand the nature of big and open data on the web and internet, and how this information can be useful in crisis response and mitigation;
- To represent complex information visually in a clear and effective manner using available new media tools
- To recognize how new media tools can be used to access and involve groups of society that often do not participate in the official channels and therefore enhance the inclusionary aspect of reform processes.

IV GENERAL BACKGROUND

In crisis areas, quick and informed decision-making can save lives. New web-, mobile-, and internet-based media and information dissemination platforms are constantly evolving, producing increasing amounts of content. The speed with which information is created, published and disseminated keeps increasing. This allows for a multiplicity of perspectives to surface. The challenge for experts working in civilian crisis management is finding a way to filter the information and determine what is relevant, and further, to communicate that effectively to the right people in an efficient manner.

Additionally, new tools are being developed to help experts visualize data in a clear way, so that it can be easily shared, interpreted, and understood by different users. It is therefore vital that experts working in crisis areas are aware of these tools and know how to apply them to their work.

The course gives participants ample opportunity to try out the tools that they are presented, since one of the greatest obstacles to integrating new tools in one's work is not feeling comfortable to use them independently. Therefore, hands-on and group activities have been developed, to allow participants to apply the tools in different scenarios that reflect mission-reality. Trainers are on hand to assist participants whenever needed and to adjust the tasks according to the IT-competency of the participants.

A course wiki accompanies the course and contains all the information that is shared during the course. Additional resources as well as group work can also be found on the wiki and are available to students even after the course.

For this course it is absolutely necessary ensure that all participants **simultaneously** can have access to a functioning high-speed internet connection throughout the five days.

V MODULES AND SUBJECT AREAS

The course is divided into six different modules over the five days. Participants are introduced to a new subject relevant to the course topic and then presented different tools they are able to apply in the crisis context. They then receive either an individual or group task where they are required to use the new media tools. After ample time to work on the task, trying out and applying different tools, participants present their results, share their experience and raise questions in extensive debriefing sessions with the trainers.

MODULE I - INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN CRISIS

Subject 1: Information Management Cycles

- Understanding of the Information Management Cycles developed by different organizations working in crisis areas (UN, EU, OCHA). (essential)
- Understanding of the opportunities for information sharing in crisis situations. (essential)
- Wider knowledge of the role of new media within “traditional” information management cycles. (essential)
- Awareness of the different priorities of information management of civilian, military, and police organizations. (desirable)
- Awareness of the current debate regarding new media tools and information management in peace operations. (desirable)

Subject 2: New Media in Crisis Contexts

- Awareness of the latest developments in New Media and its implication for information management in crisis. (essential)
- Understanding of the challenges of the latest developments in New Media. (essential)
- Understanding of how these new developments affect civilian crisis management. (essential)
- Awareness of the diversity of New Media tools / platforms and the different areas of expertise where they are applicable. (essential)
- Awareness of how New Media tools can be used to reach and include marginalized groups. (desirable)

MODULE II – DATA COLLECTION

Subject 3: OS-INT today: Big Data, Open Source, Radical Transparency

- Understanding of big data basics, and what constitutes big data (essential)
- Understanding of big data analysis and visualization principles (essential)
- Widened knowledge of the UN’s commissioning and use of big data (essential)
- Awareness of the challenges around verification and veracity of big data (essential)
- Awareness of different usages of big data globally in the peacebuilding or humanitarian context (desirable)

Subject 4: Collaborative Information Management in Crisis

- Awareness of new media tools available to assist with collaboration. (essential)
- Understand the challenges of using new media tools for collaboration in the crisis context. (essential)

- Develop own collaborative platform. (desirable)

MODULE III - DATA VISUALISATION

Subject 5: Data Visualisation

- Understanding of the priorities when visualising data. (essential)
- Knowledge of basic do's and don'ts when designing a visual aid in crisis settings. (essential)
- Awareness of guidelines for visualisation set by different organisations. (desirable)
- Understanding of the developmental process of turning data into a product with visualisations. (essential)
- Understanding of effect of cultural and social factors on data visualisation. (desirable)

Subject 6: Data Visualization Tools

- Awareness of different online tools to assist in creative visualization. (essential)
- Knowledge of when and how to apply each tool to visualize data most effectively. (essential)
- Understanding of the challenges and opportunities of new media tools for data visualization. (essential)
- Awareness of basic data graphing tools and their guidelines. (desirable)
- Understanding the differences between 'traditional' tools and new media tools for data visualization and their functions. (desirable)

MODULE IV – CRISIS MAPPING

Subject 7: New Cartographies & Mapping Tools

- Awareness of different new media tools available to map information. (essential)
- Understanding of the implications of including and excluding information on maps in the crisis context. (desirable)
- Understanding of creative ways to find sources for specific mapping needs. (desirable)
- Knowledge of how to create a map to fit particular needs using offline and online tools. (essential)
- Ability to create maps in a participatory manner. (essential)

MODULE V - SOURCE VERIFICATION

Subject 8: Source Verification for New Media Sources

- Understanding the challenges with source verification of new media sources. (essential)
- Strategies for efficient source verification in crisis situations. (essential)
- Wider knowledge of how to build a network of reliable sources. (desirable)
- Awareness of the latest regulations regarding New Media source verification. (desirable)

MODULE VI - DIGITAL SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Subject 9: Security in the Digital Domain

- Awareness of how to protect data on- and offline, including on mobile devices. (essential)
- Understanding of programs and techniques available for working online in a safe manner. (essential)
- Understanding of how to protect data and sources in a crisis context. (essential)
- Awareness of IT security regulations at peace operations. (desirable)