

# [Internet & Democracy Blog](#)

- [The Internet and Democracy Project](#)
- [I&D Tools Database](#)

## • About Us



This is the team blog for the Internet & Democracy Project, a research initiative at the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

## • Recent Posts

- [A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Tweets](#)
- [Twitter sees strong growth in Russia](#)
- [US Set to Relax Internet Restrictions Towards Iran, Syria and Cuba](#)
- [50 Million Tweets a Day](#)
- [Mobile Subscriber Growth in Africa](#)

## • I&D Publications

- [Mapping the Arabic Blogosphere: Politics, Culture, and Dissent](#)
- [Three Case Studies from Switzerland: Smartvote, Electronic Voting, and Political Communication](#)
- [Mapping Iran's Online Public: Politics and Culture in the Persian Blogosphere](#)
- [Madison and the Smart Mob: The Promise and Limitations of the Internet for Democracy](#)
- [Digitally Networked Technology in Kenya's 2007-2008 Post-Election Crisis](#)
- [Role of the Internet in Burma's Saffron Revolution](#)
- [The Citizen Journalism Web Site "OhmyNews" and the 2002 Korean Presidential Election](#)
- [The Role of Digital Networked Technologies During the Ukrainian Orange Revolution](#)

## • H2O Playlists

- [Tech Tools](#)
- [Theoretical Democracy Sources](#)
- [Internet and Democracy Sources](#)
- [Sources from "Madison and the Smart Mob"](#)

## Soft Power: Loved, Feared and Online

July 30th, 2009 — Scott Hartley

In a July 29 "Tweet," Jared Cohen of the U.S. State Department Policy Planning staff shared an article entitled "[The Next Diplomatic Cable](#)," echoing recent statements of Secretary of State Clinton. On May 18, in her Barnard College commencement speech, Clinton highlighted the diplomatic potential of social networking. In a July 15 talk at the Council of Foreign Relations, Clinton stated that she is working at the State Department "to ensure that our government is using the most innovative technologies not only to speak and listen across borders, not only to keep technologies up and going, but to widen opportunities, especially for those who are too often left on the margins."

But as press circulates about such "21st Century State-Craft," "Digital Diplomacy," and "Calls to Mouse," digital intransigence at Main State exposes a contradictory reality. Despite employee requests to use FireFox, a free product, State Department [officials dubiously cited "expense questions"](#) as a reason to remain with Internet Explorer.

The State Department is no doubt making technological inroads by partnering with groups such as [Howcast](#) to expand the digital landscape, providing advice on “[How to Protest Without Violence](#),” and “[How to Launch a Human Rights Blog](#).” And greater online presence will surely increase diplomatic transparency. However, there are still those who doubt the value and traction of “Facebook activism.” On July 2 a Washington Post article argued that, despite normative windfalls from group solidarity, the facility of virtuous clicks online might erode real-world action. And if Soft Power assertion is an objective of “21st Century State-Craft,” one might ask, to what extent will *official* State Department status updates, Tweets, and micro-broadcasts substantively change the perceptions of today’s “digital natives?” Harvard Kennedy School Professor [Joseph Nye](#) articulates “Values, Culture, Policies and Institutions” as the “primary currencies” of Soft Power, but how much does effective Soft Power rely on nonchalance, rather than aggressive posturing in the form of “Digg” links? As Egyptians supporting Arsenal, watching the English Premier League on Al Jazeera, or [Somali citizens searching on Bollywood icons](#) such as Shahrukh Khan might attest, truly effective Soft Power might rely on more passive, and less “In Your Screen” tactics.

While greater use of the Internet to devise “21st Century State-Craft” is undoubtedly important, blogs, Tweets, and Diggs won’t likely bring Foggy Bottom to the top of all Internet results. Then again, perhaps coordinated on- and off-line diplomacy will mitigate the duality underscored by Machiavelli: “It would be best to be both loved and feared. But since the two rarely come together, anyone compelled to choose will find greater security in being feared than in being loved.” Perhaps “21st Century State-Craft” can, in 140 characters or less, craft a response.



The *[Soft Power: Loved, Feared and Online](#)* by [Internet & Democracy Blog](#), unless otherwise expressly stated, is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License](#).

Posted in [Current Events](#). Comments Off

Comments are closed.

« [Iranians Attempt to Mourn Neda; Mousavi Turned Back](#)

[Rhetoric of fear and telecom regulation in Russia](#) »

Theme: Garland by [Steven Wittens](#) and Stefan Nagtegaal.

## • **Subscribe to the I&D Blog!**



[Click Here](#)

## • **I&D Delicious Feed**

- [Cashing in on Internet censorship - CNN.com](#)
- [Блоги \(сетевые дневники\) российских правозащитников | Права человека в России](#)
- [20 самых популярных чиновников-блогеров. О чем они пишут? Какие делают ошибки? На что жалуются? Кто из них создает посты сам? | Forbes Russia](#)
- [Findings - People Share News Online That Inspires Awe, Researchers Find - NYTimes.com](#)
- [James Fallows](#)

## • **Blogroll**

- [Andrew Sullivan](#)
- [Citizen Media Law Project](#)
- [DigiActive](#)
- [Digital Natives](#)
- [Ethan Zuckerman](#)
- [FP Passport](#)
- [George Packer](#)
- [Global Voices](#)
- [GV Iran](#)
- [GV Russia](#)
- [Harvard's Berkman Center](#)
- [John Palfrey](#)
- [Marc Lynch](#)
- [Net.Effect](#)
- [Open Net Initiative](#)

- [Progressive Realist](#)
- [Rebecca MacKinnon](#)
- [Steve Coll](#)
- [TechPresident](#)
- [The Cable](#)

## • [Tech Tools Feed](#)

- [Defcon hackers target cell phone security](#)
- [BlackBerry deemed a security threat by UAE](#)
- [Iran: Campaign to Free Jailed Photo-Blogger Hamed Saber](#)
- [SMS slingshot: Digital Text Messages on Urban Facades](#)
- [Italy: a bill to censor the Internet](#)

## • Archives

- [April 2010](#)
- [March 2010](#)
- [February 2010](#)
- [January 2010](#)
- [December 2009](#)
- [November 2009](#)
- [October 2009](#)
- [September 2009](#)
- [August 2009](#)
- [July 2009](#)
- [June 2009](#)
- [May 2009](#)
- [April 2009](#)
- [March 2009](#)
- [February 2009](#)
- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)
- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
- [July 2008](#)
- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [January 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)