



The Future of Public Diplomacy, a USC conference

The Association of Public Diplomacy Scholars at USC has their [annual conference tomorrow, April 6, 2012](#). The conference will provide a discussion on new technologies and emerging actors in the amorphous “thing” sometimes called public diplomacy.



The Association of Public Diplomacy Scholars invites you to join the discussion, with a half day of panels and speakers from around the world. The conference will feature an opening address by Dr. Nicholas J. Cull, director of the Master’s of Public Diplomacy program at USC, and keynote speaker Ben Hammersley, the U.K. prime minister’s ambassador to East London TechCity. We will also have panelists from the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of International Information Programs, United Nations Global Pulse, Facebook, Carleton University, the South East European Film Festival, the Chinese Consulate in Los Angeles, and the Brazilian Consulate in Los Angeles.

Attendance to the conference is free, but you are requested to RSVP with the USC Association of Public Diplomacy Scholars by going to this [RSVP link](#).

The phrase “public diplomacy” is variously viewed as a concept, a bureaucracy, and/or a practice. The community craves to see the word “diplomacy” follow the word “public” and debates when the phrase does and does not appear. Is it something defined by the objective, as Betty Hanson eloquently asked this week? Is it defined by means, by the actor? Is the term “public diplomacy” itself problematic and self-limiting, suggesting an adversarial bureaucratic relationship with other agencies, a use of the softest of “soft power” to “win hearts” and be “liked”, or activities that “influence” rather than merely “inform”, or all of the above?

Unfortunately, I will not be at the conference but I look forward to the discussions and hope the students press the opportunity to engage the uniquely qualified speakers beyond the soft and fuzzy.

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