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Conference Paper

Leveraging AI in Diplomacy: Enhancing Foreign Policy, National Interest and Digital Diplomacy

ITS 33rd European Conference 2025: "Digital innovation and transformation in uncertain times", Edinburgh, UK, 29th June – 1st July 2025

Provided in Cooperation with:

International Telecommunications Society (ITS)

Suggested Citation: Mamakou, Irene; Markantoni, Athina; Kargas, Antonios D. (2025) : Leveraging AI in Diplomacy: Enhancing Foreign Policy, National Interest and Digital Diplomacy, ITS 33rd European Conference 2025: "Digital innovation and transformation in uncertain times", Edinburgh, UK, 29th June – 1st July 2025, International Telecommunications Society (ITS), Calgary

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/331291>

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Leveraging AI in Diplomacy: Enhancing Foreign Policy, National Interest and Digital Diplomacy

Irene Mamakou¹ *, Athina Markantoni² and Antonios Kargas³,

Abstract:

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the landscape of diplomacy, fundamentally altering how states conduct foreign relations, public engagement, and policy decision-making. This article investigates the integration of AI into diplomatic practices at operational, tactical, and strategic levels, with a focus on how AI can enhance administrative efficiency, support public diplomacy, and enhance foreign policy. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines an extensive literature review with original survey data from 39 diplomats to address three core research questions: diplomats' perceptions of AI integration, the main barriers and facilitators to AI adoption, and the training needs required for effective AI use. The findings reveal that while diplomats demonstrate strong foundational digital skills and are increasingly adopting AI tools for communication and information management, the uptake of advanced applications such as predictive analytics and cybersecurity remains limited. Key barriers include insufficient training, resource constraints, and ethical and legal concerns, while facilitators involve the perceived benefits of AI for efficiency and strategic engagement. The study highlights a substantial demand for targeted training and institutional support to bridge existing gaps. Ultimately, the research underscores that successful and responsible AI adoption in diplomacy requires ongoing investment in digital competencies, robust governance frameworks, and the development of ethical standards, ensuring that technological advancements translate into more effective, adaptive, and transparent diplomatic practice.

Keywords: *AI in diplomacy, AI in foreign policy, Digital diplomacy and national interests, AI in international relations, AI in crisis management and negotiation, AI and public diplomacy, diplomatic training, barriers in digital diplomacy*

1 Introduction

The integration of AI into diplomacy is transforming how states conduct foreign relations, engage with global audiences, and make strategic decisions. The role of AI in diplomatic practices is becoming more relevant than ever. From real-time data analysis to supporting intercultural dialogue, diplomatic practitioners through leveraging AI can gain faster and more reliable insights into global political and economic conditions and public sentiments in different areas, craft diplomatic scenarios, enhance their diplomatic and negotiation capabilities, and respond more effectively to international challenges. As such, the use of AI in diplomacy can serve as a beacon for global cooperation and security (Meleouni & Efthymiou, 2023).

AI serves as a strategic enabler, equipping diplomats, foreign ministries and multilateral organisations with advanced powerful tools such as data analytics, policy and economic forecasting, strategic foresight, cybersecurity, crisis management and conflict resolution tools as well as language translation and multilingual communication tools. These tools are redefining diplomatic practice by enhancing intelligence gathering, strengthening both bilateral and multilateral communication channels and streamlining operational processes (Meleouni & Efthymiou, 2023)

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Diplomatic services around the world are beginning to adopt and adapt (Bjola & Manor, 2022) such tools to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, scalability and reach of foreign policy decision-making and negotiations (Kalemis, 2024) , foster communication and engagement with foreign audiences, speed up routine diplomatic practice and optimise diplomatic initiatives to support national interests, while at the same time safeguarding cybersecurity and promoting multilateralism and global co-operation grounded in shared international values (Mostafaei et al., 2025). Amid growing geopolitical instability and the accelerated, often unregulated advancement of AI technologies, the integration of AI in diplomacy is likely to expand, calling for ongoing evaluation and adaptation of best practices to ensure ethical and effective use.

The literature reveals a dynamic and evolving field, and this study contributes to the literature on AI integration in diplomatic practices. By exploring the latest advancements and the practical applications of AI, this paper provides an overview of artificial intelligence (AI) applications in diplomacy seeking to demonstrate the potential benefits, limitations, challenges and implications of integrating AI in diplomatic practices.

In the framework of this open discussion about the use of AI in diplomacy, our research question is formed as such: *How can Artificial Intelligence (AI) be utilized to enhance diplomatic practices, improve foreign policy decision-making, and support national interests in the realm of digital diplomacy?*

The rest of this article proceeds as follows. In section 2, the methodological framework, which is a mixed methods approach, is described. Section 3 presents the literature review and further breaks down the research question into sub-topics. Section 4 displays the descriptive statistics of the survey (diplomat questionnaire). Section 5 discusses the results analysing the level of AI integration in the diplomatic processes, the benefits and the challenges/barriers for the underutilization. Section 6 summarizes the results and gives some suggestions.

2 Methodology

This section outlines the mixed-methods approach combining qualitative insights and quantitative data that are used in this research paper to explore AI's role in diplomacy, foreign policy, and global cooperation and identify best practices. The research includes a literature review and a survey collecting data from diplomats about the adoption of AI in diplomacy.

2.1 Literature Review

Relevant literature is reviewed and analysed to explore the intersection of AI and diplomacy through locating existing academic research, reports, and case studies about AI in diplomacy, foreign policy, and national security. A comprehensive review of literature draws on a range of recent and relevant sources from academic journals, government reports, key books, articles, policy briefs and other credible sources to understand the current state of AI applications in diplomacy is conducted. The review is organised in 3 sections, namely Operational, Tactical & Strategic level. This will help identify advancements and any gaps in knowledge and theoretical frameworks.

2.2 Survey

The questionnaire component of this study employs a mixed-methods design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from diplomats and foreign policy professionals to gather firsthand insights from practitioners on AI adoption, perceived benefits, challenges, and training needs. The use of mixed methods is well-established in international relations research, as it allows for both statistical analysis and the exploration of nuanced perspectives, thereby enhancing the robustness of findings. The survey was distributed digitally via the Google Forms platform through email.

2.2.1 Structure

Regarding its structure, the questionnaire consists of 3 sections: demographics, digital and AI tools and future trends. It combines multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions with open-ended responses to explore participants' level of adoption of AI and digital tools (e.g., predictive analytics,

decision-making and negotiation tools, automated translation, etc.), workflow automation, and perceptions. Anonymity is strictly maintained to encourage candid feedback and participants are given clear, complete information about the purpose of the survey and how their data will be used.

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends in AI usage and perceived efficacy, while qualitative responses will undergo thematic coding to identify recurring ideas, topics, or patterns (e.g. common challenges). This approach seeks to assess both the extent to which AI is integrated into diplomatic workflows and the nuanced experiences of practitioners navigating technological adoption.

2.2.2 Overview of Respondent Roles in Digital Diplomacy Questionnaire

The questionnaire was circulated among a diverse group of professionals engaged in diplomacy and international affairs. These respondents represent a broad spectrum of roles within diplomatic missions, international organizations, and policy institutions, offering a multifaceted view of how digital tools and strategies are integrated into foreign policy practice.

The classification of roles was based on the United Nations diplomatic ranking system, ensuring consistency with internationally recognized categories.

The sample includes individuals serving in both traditional diplomatic ranks and specialized roles:

- High-level diplomats such as Ambassadors and Ministers Plenipotentiary (A & B), who shape and oversee national foreign policy strategies.
- Mid- to senior-level officials including Minister Counsellors, Counsellors, and Vice Consuls, who often lead mission sections and contribute to policy implementation.
- Administrative and operational staff such as Secretaries of Embassy (First, Second, Third), Attachés, and Financial Officers, who support the daily functions of diplomatic posts and manage logistics essential to external engagement.
- Specialized professionals like Legal Advisors, Press Officers, and Experts in Foreign Policy, Trade, and Culture, who offer targeted expertise crucial to effective digital engagement.
- Representatives from multilateral organizations and think tanks (e.g., staff in international institutions and Senior Policy Advisors at ELIAMEP), providing a broader perspective on collective diplomacy and policy advocacy.
- Consultants in Diplomatic Services, who often operate across multiple institutional settings and offer strategic input on modernization and digital transformation.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Officers and Stagiaires in diplomatic missions, capturing the perspectives of both career diplomats and those at the early stages of professional engagement.
- Staff in foreign policy and related thematic areas, contributing insights from sector-specific initiatives and programs.

This diverse respondent base enhances the analytical value of the research by grounding it in real-world experiences across ranks, institutions, and functional domains.

1. What is your current role/professional affiliation? (based on the UN diplomatic ranking)

39 responses

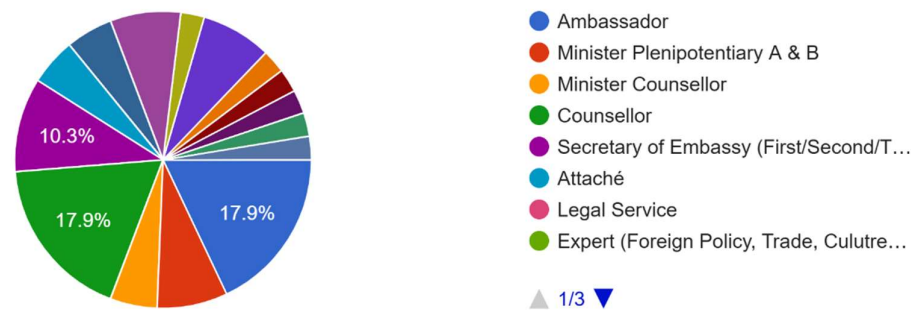


Figure 1: Distribution of respondent roles in Digital Diplomacy Survey

3 Qualitative Literature Review

In this section relevant literature is reviewed and analysed to explore the intersection of AI and diplomacy. The objective is to review existing academic research, reports, and case studies about AI in diplomacy, foreign policy, and national security. A comprehensive review of literature from academic journals, government reports, and other credible sources to understand the current state of AI applications in diplomacy is conducted. This will help identify gaps in knowledge and theoretical frameworks.

The integration of digital practices and more recently the use of AI technologies in diplomatic practices transform in a critical way the methods through which traditional diplomacy is conducted. Since the mid-2000s, a growing body of research has examined the use of digital technologies - and more recently, artificial intelligence (AI) - in various diplomatic practices (Bjola & Holmes, 2015; Bano et al., 2025; Sevin Efe, 2017; Puaschunder, 2019; Sevin & Manor, 2019; Sevin Efe & Ingenhoff Diana, 2018). These studies explore diverse themes, topics, and geographical contexts.

Scholars who previously focused on the digitalisation of diplomatic practices have increasingly turned their attention to the impact of AI and deep tech on diplomacy ((Manor, 2025; Sevin & Eken, 2024). A growing body of research highlights how digital and social media platforms, alongside AI tools, are increasingly employed by diplomatic actors to address the limitations of traditional diplomacy (Bjola & Jiang, 2015; Manor, 2019); (Bano et al., 2025; Ingenhoff et al., 2021; Snow & Cull, 2020) Maksymova et al., 2023). These technologies are not only influencing foreign policy decision-making and negotiation processes, including crisis management, (Andrew Moore, 2023; Stanzel, 2022), but are also reshaping operational and administrative diplomatic routines ((UNICEF, 2023; UNICEF Office for Innovation, 2024). A growing number of studies also emphasise the critical role of digital and AI tools in public diplomacy, demonstrating how social media and data-driven monitoring methods, enhance communication (Martino & Ford, 2020), information exchange, and public engagement (Bjola & Manor, 2024; Manor & Bjola, 2021); (Sevin & Eken, 2024). These tools also support diplomats and foreign policy officials to strategically manage state image and branding ((Sevin et al, 2025). Despite the growing literature, a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the specific applications of digital tools and AI, particularly GenAI, in diplomacy remains underexplored.

Although there is often no clear delineation between different practices, as it is not clear, for example to what extent public diplomacy, conducted through social media and other digital or AI tools, differs from the use of such tools for enhancing the country's or the international organisation's image, fostering national or global values and shaping public perceptions in favour of specific national or international narratives, for the purposes of this study, we have adopted the following taxonomy

based on the three most cited levels of AI integration in diplomatic practices to provide a structured analytical framework:

1. Operational Level: Administrative efficiency and automation of diplomatic functions
2. Tactical Level:
 - a. Digital and AI Public Diplomacy
 - b. National Image/branding
3. Strategic Level: Foreign Policy decision-making, Negotiations, Crisis management

This research contributes to the growing body of scholarship by offering an analytical overview of the current deployment of digital tools, AI and Generative AI (GenAI) in diplomacy. It also identifies the barriers to broader adoption, explores future directions and offers recommendations for the safe and effective integration of these technologies into various aspects of diplomatic practice. ((Vasiliiu-Feltes, 2024).

3.1 Operational Level: Administrative efficiency and automation of diplomatic functions

The first strand of research focuses on administrative effectiveness and the deployment of digital tools and alternative data analysis methods to streamline bureaucratic procedures and automate routine diplomatic functions (Manor, 2016; Kacziba et al., 2025; Metzgar, 2012). Scholars highlight various ways in which diplomats leverage digital and AI technologies to address the longstanding administrative limitations in traditional diplomacy, such as limited institutional reach, absence of bilateral ties, small number of physical embassies, and shortages in personnel and other resources (Metzgar, 2012; Manor, 2016).

The proliferation of the use of digital tools in operational diplomatic practices across Europe and beyond is increasingly evident. As our survey indicates, a growing number of countries are embracing such innovations. For example, both technologically advanced Northern European countries, like Sweden and Estonia, and comparatively less digitally mature Southern European countries, such as Greece, have started to acknowledge the value of delivering digital consular assistance and e-consular services through e-embassies. Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools, such as Deep L Pro translation tool, are already used for highly accurate translations to facilitate multilingual communication, breaking language barriers among diplomatic missions and foreign publics, and allowing for nuanced and effective communication and engagement (Grgic, 2024).

Similarly, Natural Language Generation (NLG) tools, digital and generative AI systems, such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, and others, are increasingly used to enhance administrative efficiency and automate various diplomatic routines and management processes (Sevin & Eken, 2024; Grgic, 2024). Digital and AI-empowered consular chatbots have started to be deployed across Europe and beyond to assist with routine tasks such as translations, reporting and guiding users through visa application processes, and even routine processing decisions. A prominent example is Canada's use of advanced analytics, chatbots and automations in consular services to improve the efficiency of visa processing, and the limited use of black box technologies on specific operational cases to ease workload (Government of Canada, n.d.).

Additionally, the use of AI-powered tools into routine diplomatic tasks and workflows, such as scheduling meetings, drafting reports and speeches, generating briefings or monitoring media sentiment, is gaining ground speeding up mundane processes and allowing diplomatic personnel to focus on more sophisticated tasks of their work, including strategic planning and relation-building (Grgic, 2024). A notable example is the creation of AI.State and StateChat, in the US State Department to automate more routine tasks and leveraging technologies for improved analytics. AI.State is a "central hub for all things AI" offering tools like machine translation (already piloting since April 2025) and cable summarization to support personnel transitions at embassies and free up personnel for more substantive tasks (Reuters, 2025).

3.2 Tactical Level

3.2.1 *Digital and AI Public Diplomacy*

A significant strand in the emerging literature on digital diplomacy concerns the intersection of public diplomacy and artificial intelligence (AI). Often referred to as “digital public diplomacy”, this field encompasses the use of digital tools, platforms, and AI technologies—including big data analytics and network analysis—by state and non-state actors to engage with foreign publics in ways that inform, influence, and build relationships aligned with foreign policy objectives and national interests (Manor, 2023; Duncombe, 2017, 2019b, 2019a) and others have shown that digital diplomacy enables direct real-time engagement, transparent communication and relationship-building across state and non-state actors gauging public opinion not least during crises (Fasinu et al., 2024). Sharma, (2023) underlines how different types of online content can influence the perceptions of social media users, while others analyse examples of effective digital communication campaigns to demonstrate the potential of social media in framing global perceptions (Sevin & Ingenhoff, 2018; Ingenhoff et al., 2021). Bjola and Pamment’s work goes even further to discuss “digital containment” in diplomatic crises, where social media management becomes crucial to diplomatic success (Bjola & Pamment, 2016).

Studies recognise how digital and AI tools are transforming both the tactics and scope of public diplomacy, reshaping how diplomats manage information, monitor narratives, and engage with foreign publics outlining different areas of application (Bano et al., 2025; Blaser Virginia, 2023; Corneliu Bjola Lu Jiang Lu Jiang, 2015; Duncombe, 2019b; Liyam Smith, 2024; Manor, 2023; Riordan, 2016; Sevin & Manor, 2019). Some of the above works refer to the speed and accessibility of information and information gathering using generative AI tools and generative AI to scour the local media. Algorithms structure visibility and access to information in ways that profoundly impact public opinion and diplomatic reach, altering political communication and (König & Wenzelburger, 2020)ng (König & Wenzelburger, 2020). These systems, particularly content filtering and personalization algorithms, shape who sees what information, when, and how, thus influencing the effectiveness of diplomatic messaging. A prominent example of such use is the launch, in March 2025, of an AI-driven communications command center (“war room”) by the Israeli MFA to monitor global media, including news outlets and social platforms. Its effectiveness is outstanding flagging around 4,000 pieces related to Israel daily. This enables rapid, informed responses to emerging narratives (Nava Freiberg, 2025).

Further, scholars focus on sentiment analysis and the use of machine learning, Natural Language Processing (NLP), text analysis, statistics and data visualization to develop and deploy content to feed social platforms but also to identify the “emotional attitude” of a text, i.e. the public emotional reactions to digital content (Rodríguez-Ibáñez et al., 2023; Selvam et al., 2024). AI tools, particularly GenAI tools, help tailor diplomatic messaging that resonates with global audiences and serves as an aggregator of global public opinion analysis and public diplomacy effectiveness (Selvam et al., 2024; Bjola & Manor, 2024, Manor, 2025). In this context, Bano & Zowghi ((2025; 2023) explain how GenAI is used to gauge public opinion and produce emotionally resonant content that supports narrative framing and public diplomacy goals. These tools, by producing impactful images, videos, and interactive content, help make complex diplomatic issues more accessible and understandable to the broader public, thereby increasing the reach and effectiveness of diplomatic messaging (Manor, 2023).

However, much of the literature treats sentiment analysis as a neutral tool, overlooking some inherent critical challenges such as how algorithmic design, platform affordances, and linguistic nuances can distort interpretative outcomes. Bernal (2015) argues that while these tools offer insights into public mood and opinion, there are not always neutral or objective. Algorithmic bias, platform design, and linguistic ambiguity can distort interpretation, and in some cases, these tools are weaponised to counter official narratives or mobilize opposition. Scholars underline the inherent issues of technological biases, arguing that, on certain occasions, misinformation spread is done unintentionally by GenAI tools, as hallucinations, fabricated outputs by GenAI models, remain a significant issue, with recent research showing hallucination rates between 3% and Understanding AI Hallucinations Facts And Fiction | Rev, n.d.; When AI Gets It Wrong: Addressing AI Hallucinations and Bias - MIT Sloan Teaching & Learning Technologies, n.d.)g & Learning Technologies, n.d.). This

can inadvertently spread misinformation or mislead the public, particularly when dealing with politically sensitive content. Linguistic diversity, sarcasm, slang, and cultural nuance present additional challenges for AI systems and can complicate the correct interpretation of posts ((Lynnyk et al., 2024; Karamouzas et al., 2022), often requiring human oversight and diplomatic expertise.

Overall, this growing body of literature underscores how digital and AI tools are reshaping the terrain of public diplomacy, amplifying its reach, redefining its actors, and introducing new strategic, ethical, and epistemological challenges. The use of AI and digital tools enhances capabilities for influence and engagement but also demands greater critical reflection on issues of trust, transparency, and accountability in the conduct of diplomacy, and particularly public diplomacy, in the digital age. As Powers & Kounalakis (2017) point out, what has changed is the contentious digital environment in which public diplomacy is now practiced.

3.2.b National Image/Branding

A related strand of public diplomacy practices is that of diplomatic efforts to shape national image in foreign audiences to increase their influence and reach (Rojas-Méndez & Khoshnevis, 2023). A substantial body of research has examined how digitalisation is reshaping diplomacy by enabling states to manage their national image, and promote "nation branding," (Bjola & Manor, 2024; Manor, 2016; Bjola & Jiang, 2015; Bano & Zowghi, 2023; Sevin, 2025; Huang & Wang, 2020; Snow & Cull, 2020). Scholars have underscored that social media and AI empowered tools are of critical importance in generating compelling visuals and tailored messages by monitoring public perceptions and personalising campaigns. (Wolff, 2014; Browning, 2015; Mashiah, 2023, 2024a, 2024b; Hok, 2025).

More and more nations have started to acknowledge and use digital and AI-driven tools for image management (Mashiah, 2023). A rising number of studies focus on the growing use of big data and predictive analytics by both diplomats and foreign policy practitioners for insights on public opinion sentiment and political developments to enhance nation branding (Bjola & Jiang, 2015; Manor, 2023; Bjola & Manor, 2024). As Cull ((2013, p.126) suggests, from early on the US administration has acknowledged "the value of technology in projecting its national image and influence overseas".

Fast forward to the AI era, AI-empowered tools like DALL-E or Midjourney, that create engaging visuals, are slowly being integrated by diplomatic missions of different countries such as Ukraine, Estonia, Turkey and others for tailored diplomatic branding. Midjourney tools are also used to align with a nation's brand identity. However, using AI tools for nation branding can also have disruptive effects, as it can be used by states to generate distorted images and fake news (EUvsDisinfo, 2025; Churanova, 2024).

3.3 Strategic Level: Foreign Policy decision-making, Negotiations, Crisis management

Another strand of the literature focuses on the rapid evolution and widespread adoption of digital tools and AI technologies in shaping foreign policy decision-making and diplomatic negotiations, particularly during crises (Moore, 2023; Blaser, 2023; Kramár et al., 2022; Pasupuleti, 2025a; Pokhriyal & Koebe, 2023a; Stanzel, 2022; Walker, 2023). These studies explore diverse themes highlighting how digital and AI tools enhance informed foreign policy decision-making, support negotiation processes, and facilitate crisis management.

In the realm of foreign policy decision-making and negotiations, applications of AI have shown remarkable promise in several areas (Höne & Kurbalija, 2018). In foreign policy decision-making, AI and predictive analytics, with its unparalleled ability to process vast amounts of information quickly and, for the most part, reliably is used extensively, from scanning treaties and regulations, to analysing large datasets, conducting sentiment analysis, and monitoring economic indicators (Stanzel, 2022). Building on Bjola & Kornprobst's ((Corneliu Bjola & Markus Kornprobst, 2018) concept of "augmented diplomatic decision-making", they argue that AI facilitates diplomats'

effectiveness in drawing on various sources of understanding, which together augment their decision-making capacity and decision quality.

In a similar vein, a growing body of literature examines the emerging capabilities of digital and AI tools in enhancing strategic planning, analysis and prediction acknowledging the strategic importance of data-informed diplomacy (Alfahim, 2022; Moore, 2023; Meleouni & Efthymiou, 2023).

Kissinger et al (2019) agree that real-time data analytics and digital intelligence gathering reshape how diplomats gather, process, and assess and analyse information for strategic purposes, as well as how they respond to international developments, enhancing transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness in diplomatic practices (Matvyeyeva, 2024) . It is widely acknowledged in the literature that by leveraging deep insights into historical trade patterns, cultural and political compatibility, emotional cues, strategic narratives, and real-time monitoring of geopolitical developments, AI tools provide diplomats with more comprehensive and strategic analytical frameworks that enhance informed foreign policy decision-making. (Meleouni & Efthymiou, 2023) Herrera, 2024).

Stanzel & Voelsen (2022), underline AI's growing role in cultural understanding, arguing that such different historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts not only enhance understanding but also have an impact on them. In this way, AI has the potential to make an indispensable contribution to the preparation and conduct of diplomatic negotiations. Various scholars underline the role of AI tools to help identify subtle shifts in negotiating positions and detect potential areas of agreement. Pasupuleti ((2025b) argues that the use of AI-powered Natural Language Processing (NLP) and predictive analytics to analyse vast data sources and interpret diplomatic communications is transforming the landscape of multilateral negotiations. These technologies enhance the strategic value of diplomatic preparations by enabling real-time multilingual analysis, effective pattern recognition, scenario simulations⁴, and the automation of diplomatic communication in complex diplomatic situations and negotiation settings. For instance, during the 2019 trade negotiations between major powers, diplomats reportedly used AI tools to detect nuanced changes in negotiating positions of the different parties by analysing thousands of public statements and policy documents (Grgic, 2024). Also, during recent climate negotiations, AI systems identified latent patterns of agreement among opposing nations, enabling breakthrough compromises (Grgic, 2024).

Some studies showcase examples of the use of machine learning tools and AI for providing emergency consular aid, and coordination of collective diplomatic responses in multilateral fora (Aiken et al., 2022; Bjola, 2017; Manor & Bjola, 2021). A telling example is how UNICEF leverages an AI-powered platform to analyse real-time data to assess the needs of populations and deploy its resources more effectively (UNICEF, 2023). Similarly, the EU has implemented AI-driven resource allocation systems to optimise its diplomatic presence and aid distribution based on complex analyses of regional needs and political priorities (Grgic, 2024).

Advances in deep tech, such as quantum computing, the Internet of Things, and distributed ledger technologies, are also opening new avenues for diplomatic practices and peacemaking (Moore, 2023). Some go even further in forecasting futuristic scenaria suggesting that diplomacy may soon involve not only human actors but also their digital representations, potentially transforming how international engagement is conducted. McMahon (2024), for example, in an insightful article discusses the future use of AI in high stake negotiations, envisioning high-stakes diplomatic scenarios where negotiators interact with AI avatars of foreign counterparts—trained on their public statements, writings, and digital footprints, to simulate probable responses and counter-responses. “The nature of international relations may soon have to account not only for the people in the room, but the digital representations of world leaders, their representatives and all the functionaries involved in decision making.” (McMahon, 2024).

AI is increasingly reshaping the strategic dimension of diplomacy by enhancing foresight, situational awareness, and security monitoring. Beyond its established applications in intelligence gathering, sentiment analysis, and agreement tracking, AI-driven predictive analytics and machine learning

⁴ AI-enabled scenario planning tools capable of modelling complex international dynamics across multiple dimensions facilitates the simulation of unlimited possible diplomatic outcomes.

models are being leveraged to forecast geopolitical tensions and support conflict resolution. In other words, AI-enhanced tools not only shape negotiation processes but also enable and potentially disrupt international cooperation (Andrew Moore, 2023; Meleouni & Efthymiou, 2023).

While most of the above studies emphasise the benefits of the use of AI empowered tools on diplomatic practices, such as operational efficiency, data driven decision-making, enhancement of negotiations capacity and crises management of AI in projecting national foreign policy narratives to foreign audiences they often agree that data driven diplomacy is by no means unproblematic.

Equally, it involves significant challenges. A notable one refers to the lack of necessary infrastructure, including appropriate facilities, platforms, and software, but also knowledge and digital and AI skills required to support sustained and meaningful digital/AI engagement. Other prominent barriers include reduced human agency in decision-making, bias, ethical dilemmas and cybersecurity concerns, as well as information overload, accountability, coordination failures, inefficiencies of AI tools in data management and potential miscommunication (Bubashait, 2025; Grgic, 2024; Pokhriyal & Koebe, 2023b; Bano & Zowghi, 2023). However, an extended discussion on barrier and challenges is not part of this paper.

With all these in mind, it becomes clear that the true impact of AI on foreign policy decision-making and negotiation outcomes, beyond process efficiency, remains difficult to quantify (McMahon, 2024).

Overall, while most of these technologies offer clear gains in efficiency, their use is still limited (Sevin & Eken, 2024), and the literature has yet to sufficiently address their broader implications for accountability, inclusivity, empathy and trust in diplomatic service delivery but also the related unresolved or emerging technical issues.

In sum, the reviewed literature reveals a dynamic and evolving field. All the above contributions set the groundwork for future research on how AI is shaping global politics and transforming diplomatic practices setting the pace for policy innovation, particularly in areas such as foreign policy decision making, diplomatic communication, engagement, and strategic influence.

Despite the impressive scope of current research, it becomes evident from the literature review that the full potential of AI in diplomacy remains underutilized. While literature is rich in conceptual and theoretical analysis, there is a notable lack of empirical studies (empirical evidence gap) on how diplomats themselves perceive, use, and assess the integration of AI in their daily practices across operational, tactical, and strategic levels. Our survey is ideally positioned to fill this gap by providing direct insights from the field (section 4), which can be systematically linked to our research question as outlined above.

Considering the research gap, the following research objectives were also further developed:

- *RQ1: How do diplomats perceive the integration of AI tools in their daily diplomatic practices (operational, tactical, and strategic)?*
- *RQ2: What are the main barriers and facilitators to AI adoption in diplomatic services, as identified by practicing diplomats? and*
- *RQ3 What kind of support/training do diplomats need to receive in order to be equipped to exploit AI in the best possible way?*

4 Questionnaire Results

This section presents and analyzes the statistical data and accompanying graphs derived from the responses of 39 diplomats to the questionnaire. Through this analysis, the section addresses the research questions by highlighting key trends and patterns in digital competency and AI adoption within diplomatic practice.

First, an analysis of respondents' self-assessed digital competency reveals distinct patterns across a range of digital tools and technologies. Respondents rated their proficiency on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all competent) to 5 (extremely competent).

Participants reported the highest levels of competence (ratings of 4 and 5) in foundational digital skills, including general computer use, smartphones, office software (e.g., Word, Excel, PowerPoint),

and web search engines. These findings indicate a strong level of digital literacy in essential tools that are commonly utilized in professional and diplomatic contexts.

Moderate self-assessed proficiency was observed in the use of AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT), data sources (e.g., Statista), and educational or training platforms (e.g., Coursera). Ratings in these categories were more varied, with a notable presence of mid-range scores, suggesting uneven familiarity and potentially less frequent use in daily professional activities. Lower competency ratings (predominantly 2 and 3) were reported for audio and image editing tools (including AR/VR applications), project management and workflow applications (e.g., MS Project), and academic research platforms (e.g., Google Scholar).

6. How frequently do you use AI tools?

39 responses

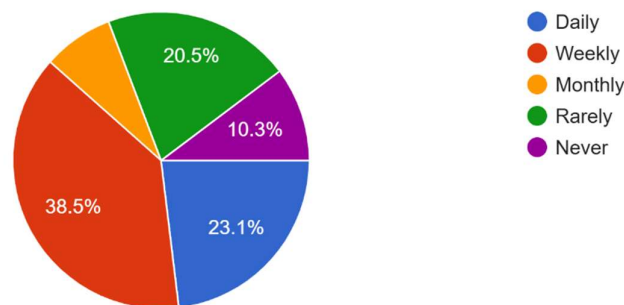


Figure 2: Frequency of Use of AI Tools

Analysis of the pie chart depicting AI tool usage among 39 respondents reveals that 39.5% utilize such tools daily, underscoring the central role AI now plays in many professional routines, particularly in tasks benefiting from automation and language processing. An additional 21.1% report weekly use, and another 21.1% use AI tools monthly. Conversely, 10.5% use AI tools rarely, and 7.9% never use them, highlighting a segment that may lack access, awareness, or perceived relevance.

For the question: "Which AI and digital tools do you currently use in your diplomatic work?", multiple selections were allowed, and the results show how different technologies are being adopted in diplomatic contexts.

The key findings are grouped by frequency of use as follows:

High Usage Tools:

- Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools were used by 27 respondents (71.1%), making them the most widely adopted. These tools likely support translation, text analysis, sentiment detection, and information extraction in diplomatic communications.
- Social media and public engagement tools were used by 26 respondents (68.4%), highlighting the importance of public diplomacy and online presence.
- Virtual collaboration and communication tools were adopted by 22 respondents (57.9%), reflecting a strong reliance on platforms for remote meetings and digital coordination.
- Natural Language Generation (NLG) tools were used by 21 respondents (55.3%), indicating the growing prevalence of AI-generated content in diplomatic work.

Moderate to Low Usage Tools:

- Conversational AI/chatbots were used by 7 respondents (18.4%), suggesting some use in public interaction or internal support.
- Predictive analytics for risk assessment were used by only 4 respondents (10.5%), indicating limited adoption for data forecasting in diplomatic strategy.

- Cybersecurity systems were reported by 3 respondents (7.9%), though this may be underreported due to security sensitivities or delegation to IT departments.

Social media monitoring tools were used by only 1 respondent (2.6%), suggesting a potential gap in sentiment analysis and trend tracking capabilities.

Other Insights:

- Four respondents (10.5%) reported not using any AI or digital tools in their diplomatic work.
- Minimal responses (one each) were recorded in the open-text “Other” category, possibly indicating unique or less common tools not listed.

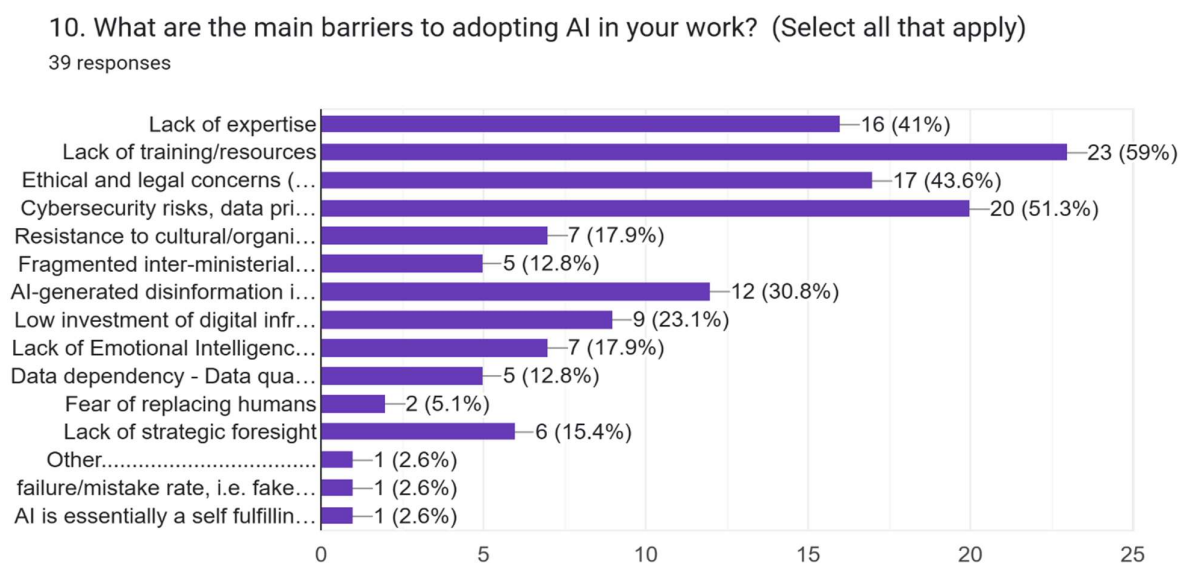


Figure 3: Barriers to adopting of AI

When it comes to challenges, the most commonly identified barrier to AI adoption is a lack of training or resources, mentioned by 22 respondents. Cybersecurity risks and data privacy issues in sensitive diplomatic contexts are also significant concerns, each cited 19 times. Other prominent barriers include bias, ethical and legal concerns (such as transparency and the lack of international regulatory consensus), and a lack of expertise. AI-generated disinformation in diplomacy is also a notable concern.

12. How do you believe AI and digital tools will impact your role as a diplomat?

39 responses

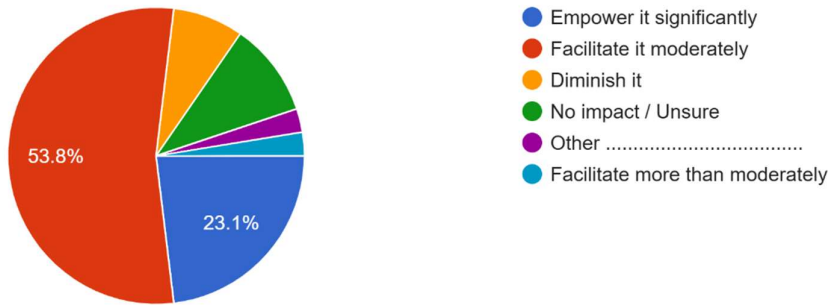


Figure 4: Impact of AI to the diplomatic role

In terms of perceived effects on their professional roles, the majority (about 58%) expect AI to facilitate their work, while 21% believe it will empower them significantly. Around 8% think AI will diminish their role, and roughly 11% anticipate no impact.

14. What types of support/training from your organisation would be most helpful when using AI tools? (Select up to 3 options)

39 responses

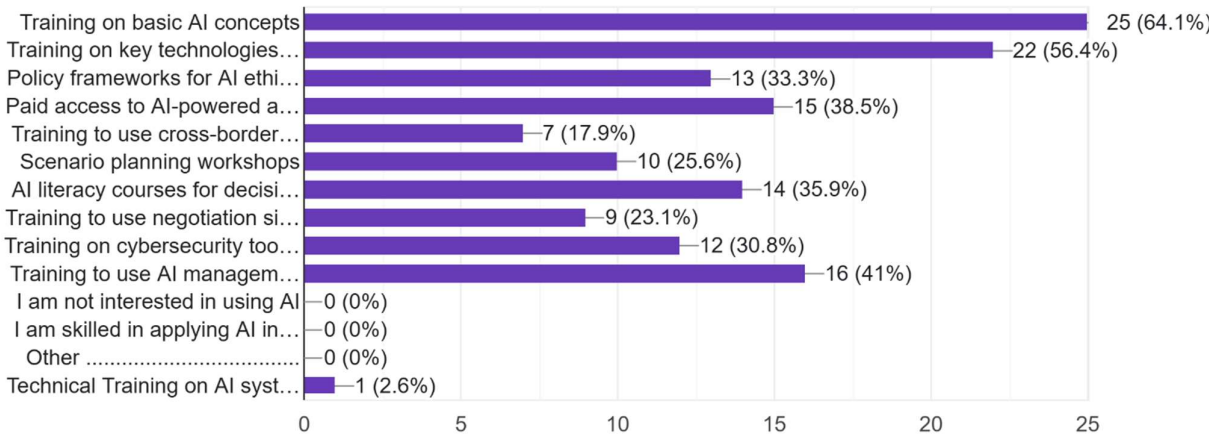


Figure 5: Required support/training

With regard to support and training needs, the most requested types of support and training for using AI tools, along with their respective percentages, are as follows:

- The most popular choice was "Training on basic AI concepts" (63%), followed closely by "Training on key technologies" and "Technical training and their use in diplomatic practices" (both at 55%).
- "Training to use AI management tools" was selected by 39% of respondents, indicating a strong interest in practical, hands-on skills.
- Other notable areas include "AI literacy courses for decision-makers" (34%), "Paid access to AI-powered analytical tools" (32%), and "Training to use cross-border collaboration

platforms" (29%). These findings suggest that, beyond foundational knowledge, there is significant demand for specialized training that supports both strategic understanding and operational use of AI in diplomacy.

- Less frequently mentioned, but still important, were "Scenario planning workshops" (24%), "Training to use negotiation simulation tools" (21%), and "Training on cybersecurity tools and regulation" (18%).

5 Discussion

The results of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how artificial intelligence (AI) is currently utilized within diplomatic practice and the challenges and opportunities it presents. Overall, the data indicate that while foundational digital skills are robust among the surveyed diplomats, there is a clear need for capacity building in advanced and emerging digital tools. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of digital literacy as a prerequisite for effective digital diplomacy ((Bjola & Holmes, 2015; Manor, 2019).

Importantly, the use of a mixed-method approach, combining a comprehensive literature review with empirical data from the survey questionnaire, proved conducive to the robustness of the results. This methodology allowed for a thorough contextual understanding and empirical validation, thereby enhancing the reliability and depth of the findings.

Addressing the first research question "How do diplomats perceive the integration of AI tools in their daily diplomatic practices (operational, tactical, and strategic)?", the findings show that respondents reported high proficiency in general digital tools and frequent use of AI for language processing, public engagement, and communication. The strong integration of language-based and communication tools reflects the sector's emphasis on messaging, engagement, and analysis of public discourse ((Manor, 2019). However, ratings for advanced tools such as project management applications, AI-powered analytics, and academic resources were more varied, with many respondents indicating only moderate or limited familiarity. This suggests that, although AI adoption is robust among a substantial portion of respondents, there remains significant potential for more frequent and effective use, particularly for specialized or intermittent tasks. Concerning attitudes, while the majority is optimistic about the adoption and sees AI as a tool for empowerment and facilitation, there are also concerns about its broader implications for the profession and some apprehension about possible drawbacks. Generally, across all levels, diplomats express a generally positive outlook on the role of AI, viewing it as a facilitator and enabler of more efficient and impactful diplomatic work.

Turning to the second research question "What are the main barriers and facilitators to AI adoption in diplomatic services, as identified by practicing diplomats?", the survey highlights that barriers to AI adoption in diplomatic services, are multifaceted and stem from both technical and organizational challenges. The most prominent obstacle highlighted in both the literature and survey responses is a lack of training and resources, which limits the capacity of diplomats to effectively integrate AI into their workflows (Grgic, 2024; Manor, 2019). This is reflected in the underutilization of advanced tools such as predictive analytics, cybersecurity systems, and project management applications, suggesting that gaps in digital skills and practical expertise persist across many diplomatic contexts. Cybersecurity risks and data privacy concerns are also significant, particularly given the sensitive nature of diplomatic communications and the increasing sophistication of digital threats ((Grgic, 2024; Pokhriyal & Koebe, 2023b). Ethical and legal challenges—such as algorithmic bias, transparency issues, and the lack of international regulatory consensus—further complicate adoption, as do concerns over AI-generated disinformation and the reliability of automated outputs (Bernal, 2015; Metz and Wiese, 2023).

Despite these barriers, several facilitators are evident. Diplomats express optimism about AI's potential to enhance efficiency, streamline administrative routines, and empower more effective engagement in public diplomacy and strategic planning. The widespread use of natural language processing, social media management, and collaboration tools demonstrates how AI is already being leveraged to break language barriers, monitor narratives, and coordinate across dispersed teams (Grgic, 2024; Manor, 2023). Moreover, the strong demand for targeted training - ranging from foundational AI concepts to the use of advanced management tools - signals a readiness among

diplomats to deepen their digital competencies and adapt to evolving technological landscapes. These findings suggest that, while significant barriers persist, there is a clear appetite for capacity building and institutional support, which, if addressed, could substantially accelerate the responsible and effective adoption of AI in diplomatic services.

With regard to the third research question “What kind of support or training do diplomats need to receive in order to be equipped to exploit AI in the best possible way?”, the data reveal a strong demand for targeted training and upskilling, particularly in project management, AI applications, and the use of academic resources. The most requested support areas included basic AI concepts, technical training for diplomatic practices, and the use of AI management tools. This is in line with calls in the literature for ongoing professional development and the creation of digital literacy programs tailored to the evolving needs of diplomatic professionals (Bjola & Holmes, 2015).

Taken together, these findings suggest several implications for future policy and investment. Diplomatic academies and organizations should prioritize training and awareness programs, especially for those using AI tools less frequently, to foster higher adoption across all levels. Customizing AI tools to specific diplomatic tasks and investing in predictive analytics and monitoring tools could further enhance proactive, data-driven decision-making. The low uptake of cybersecurity tools is a potential area of concern and warrants further exploration as digital threats become more sophisticated.

6 Conclusion

The use of AI tools make digital diplomacy more agile, dynamic, data-informed, and responsive, facilitating real-time coordination between missions, faster adaptation to emerging narratives, and more inclusive engagement with global publics. It is not a panacea nor will it replace the human diplomatic actors and their judgement but it is a powerful augmentative tool that can improve diplomatic effectiveness when used responsibly. As nations move forward, strategic investments in AI literacy, the development of ethical frameworks, and multilateral cooperation will be essential to harness the potential of AI while safeguarding the core values of diplomacy.

This research demonstrates that artificial intelligence is reshaping the landscape of digital diplomacy, offering both significant opportunities and notable challenges for practitioners and policymakers. Leading countries such as the United States, China, and the United Kingdom have pioneered diverse approaches to AI integration and benefited significantly - leveraging these technologies for predictive analytics, public engagement, crisis management, and nation branding - while also confronting ethical, legal, and organizational hurdles. The literature review and survey data confirm that although foundational digital skills are strong and AI tools are increasingly present in daily diplomatic routines, adoption remains uneven, especially for advanced applications. Key barriers include a lack of training, resource constraints, and concerns over data privacy and bias, highlighting the need for comprehensive capacity building and robust governance frameworks. Ultimately, successful and responsible AI adoption in diplomacy will require ongoing investment in digital competencies, targeted training, and the development of ethical standards to ensure that technological advancements translate into more effective, transparent, and adaptive diplomatic practice.

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