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2:40 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

War Goes Viral: Social Media's Role in Conflicts Today

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Abstract: We've evolved from a time when the spread of information and propaganda was dictated from the top down, to a time when every bystander in a conflict is a potential phone-wielding soldier. From the propaganda battle waged by ISIS to the winning of international hearts and minds by Gaza's socially-engaged youth, what happens online and on social media has real world—and real war—consequences. How do defense agencies meet this new, digital challenge? Hootsuite's Principal Solutions Consultant, Ben Cathers, discusses the implications of war as it is increasingly played out on social media. He addresses the issues that can be faced when engaging with citizens—and adversaries—and offers tips on how to create a proactive social strategy that covers social listening to manage rumors and mitigate risk, and engagement to build trust and ease tensions. This session will outline the benefits of defense agencies developing their social media strategies and then dive into how Hootsuite can help teams deliver on their agency mission. The session will cover using social media to better understand civilian populations, communicating agency purpose and employee stories in meaningful ways, and recruiting the next generation of the Sea Service more efficiently.