



NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE
COMITÉ MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD



11 February 2015

MC 0422/5 (Final)

FINAL DECISION ON MC 0422/5

NATO MILITARY POLICY FOR INFORMATION OPERATIONS

On 22 Jan 15 the North Atlantic Council approved MC 0422/5 (Military Decision), NATO Military Policy for Information Operations. PO(2015)0028-AS1 refers. This document clears MC 0422/3 (Final).

FOR THE MILITARY COMMITTEE:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CHP', written over a blue scribble.

Sir Christopher Harper
Air Marshal
Director General
International Military Staff

NOTE: This Final Decision Sheet shall now be attached to MC 0422/5 as the top sheet. Page numbering of the complete document when this decision is attached is as follows:

MC 0422/5 (Final)	- Page 1
MC 0422/5 (Military Decision)	- 1 page
MC 0422/5	- 14 pages

Distribution As for basic document

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NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE
COMITÉ MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD



19 December 2014

MC 0422/5 (Military Decision)

SECRETARY GENERAL, NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

MILITARY DECISION ON MC 0422/5

NATO MILITARY POLICY FOR INFORMATION OPERATIONS

1. On 19 Dec 14 the Military Committee agreed MC 0422/5, NATO Military Policy for Information Operations, a copy of which is attached at enclosure. MC 0422/5 is forwarded to the North Atlantic Council for their consideration and approval.
2. This document clears IMSWM-0356-2014, 17 December 2014 and all SDs thereto.

FOR THE MILITARY COMMITTEE:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CH Harper', with a large, stylized flourish above it.

Sir Christopher Harper
Air Marshal
Director General
International Military Staff

Enclosure:

1. MC 0422/5, NATO Military Policy for Information Operations.

Copy to: SDL Z, IS/OPS, IS/DPP, IS/PDD
Action Officer: LTC K. Himmelheber, OPS (5674)

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FOR

INFORMATION OPERATIONS

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NATO MILITARY POLICY FOR INFORMATION OPERATIONS

References

- A. PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, 29 Sep 09.
- B. MC 0133/4 (Final), NATO's Operations Planning, 07 Jan 11.
- C. MCM-0164-2009, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, 29 Sep 09.
- D. MCM-0085-2010 (Revised), Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications, 11 Aug 10.
- E. MC 0457/2 (Final), NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs, 08 Feb 11.
- F. PO(2011)0045, Updated List of Tasks for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Approach Action Plan and the Lisbon Summit Decisions on the Comprehensive Approach, 01 Mar 11.
- G. C-M(2008)0029-COR1, Proposal on a Way Ahead on Comprehensive Approach, 02 Apr 08.
- H. PO(2010)0143-FINAL, Comprehensive Approach Report, 12 Nov 10.
- I. PO(2011)0141, Political Military Framework for Partner Involvement in NATO-Led Operations, 13 Apr 11.

GENERAL

1. The Information Environment (IE) comprises the information itself, the individuals, organizations and systems that receive, process and convey the information, and the cognitive, virtual and physical space in which this occurs. This environment has seen significant changes in recent years. The importance of worldwide distributed information, the speed at which information is communicated, the role of social media and the reliability of information systems have created a situation in which no Alliance decision or action can be taken without considering its potential impact on the IE, or the IE's influence on the decision. The ubiquitous nature of information and the potential strategic ramifications of tactical actions add to the challenge faced by NATO Commanders. In this new IE it is more difficult to distinguish between the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The coordination, synchronisation and execution of information activities (IA)¹ that deliberately create desired effects in the IE is essential to the Alliance's successful functioning in peace, crisis and conflict.

2. Info Ops is a staff function to analyze, plan, assess and integrate activities focused on the IE rather than a capability in its own right. As a staff function, Info Ops provides the Commander with an assessment of the IE and a mechanism to plan and coordinate Information Activities on a continuous basis to achieve effects in support of operational objectives.

3. At the Political-Military (Pol-Mil) level, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Military Committee (MC), establish mission specific guidance, including StratCom guidance, to enable and maximize the effects of all information-related aspects of NATO's operations and activities. Throughout the full spectrum of operations, peace, crisis and conflict, the integration, implementation and synchronization of IA

¹ Information Activities (IA) are defined as actions designed to affect information and/or information systems. They can be performed by any actor and include protection measures.

at every level of command is essential to overall success. The early application of IA can save resources, improve force protection and the effectiveness and efficiency of military capabilities through the establishment of planning and targeting priorities, and de-confliction and synchronization of activities.

4. Info Ops integrates the employment of a range of capabilities, tools and techniques to conduct IA as well as protect Alliance decision-making process and capabilities from external influence.

5. To successfully meet the NATO Commander's objectives Info Ops must be fully integrated and coordinated with all other Joint Force actions. To create the desired effects, headquarters, adjacent and subordinate commands, and the strategic-political level must achieve a coherent and synchronised approach. This is achieved by thoroughly coordinating effects within the information environment and related military actions from the strategic to the tactical level.

6. NATO IA are generally planned under the authority of the J5/Plans section and executed under the authority of J3/Operations sections. However, they are part of the wider NATO StratCom effort which ensures coherence of all information and communication activities and capabilities, both civilian and military.

7. The analysis of the IE by the Info Ops function is an integral part of the development of Military Response Options (MRO). This analysis requires the exchange of insights with other disciplines (e.g. J2/Intelligence, Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), Knowledge Development (KD), Military Public Affairs (PA), Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), etc.). The resulting assessment of the situation in the IE is the basis for the planning and execution of IA and serves as an additional input to the overall estimate of the situation provided by the J2. These features should be included in MROs to enable effective Pol-Mil guidance for Info Ops from the MC and NAC.

AIM

8. To state the NATO military policy for Info Ops.

SCOPE

9. MC 0422 provides the military policy for the implementation of Info Ops within the Alliance structure at all levels. It provides direction to analyse and assess the IE and effectively plan, synchronise and evaluate activities, including task specific fires and manoeuvre, to create desired effects in this environment. It specifically addresses the following aspects:

- a. Definition.
- b. Info Ops Framework.
- c. Counter-propaganda.
- d. Intelligence and Targeting.

- e. Info Ops Coordination / Synchronisation and Key Relationships.
- f. Non-NATO Entities and Partner Involvement
- g. Exercises and Training.
- h. Responsibilities.

DEFINITION

10. Information Operations. Info Ops is a staff function to analyze, plan, assess and integrate Information Activities to create desired effects on the will, understanding and capability of adversaries, potential adversaries and NAC approved audiences in support of Alliance mission objectives.

INFO OPS FRAMEWORK

11. At the strategic level, the NAC and the MC provide guidance to SACEUR regarding IA including approved audiences and general themes through the Operational Planning Process (OPP) and StratCom guidance documents as described in References A and B.² Through SHAPE's Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD), NATO Info Ops transforms this guidance on operational and tactical levels in accordance with the Commander's operational objectives.

12. NATO StratCom guidance enables the synchronization of all information and communication activities. NATO Info Ops supports StratCom by planning to achieve effects and coordinating IA on the operational and tactical levels in accordance with the Commander's operational objectives. The synchronization of IA occurs through the regular conduct of coordination boards and working groups to ensure that the communication disciplines are effectively harmonized and mutually reinforcing.

13. While Info Ops focuses on preserving and protecting alliance activities in the IE at all times, during military operations, the primary focus will be to affect the will, understanding and capabilities of NAC approved audiences. As part of the operational and tactical planning, Info Ops plans and coordinates IA to reinforce or affect changes in behaviour, influence the will, shape perceptions, improve or degrade capabilities, and affect information and information systems.

14. Info Ops is comprised of three inter-related activity areas:

- a. Information activities focusing on preserving and protecting Alliance freedom of action in the information environment at all times. This is achieved by defending the data and information that supports Alliance decision-makers and decision-making processes;
- b. Information activities focusing on behaviours, perceptions and attitudes of NAC approved audiences as part of Alliance military operations to induce, reinforce, convince or encourage them in support of NATO objectives;

² NATO StratCom is directed by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and Secretary General (SG) through the Assistant SG for Public Diplomacy (PD) as set out in Reference A.

- c. Information activities focusing on countering an adversary's propaganda as well as his command and control functions and capabilities that support his opinion forming and decision-making processes.

15. Use of IA for preservation and protection of Alliance freedom of action in the information environment requires no special authorization; however, the latter two areas may only take place within the framework of a Military Committee approved operations plan towards, or against, NAC-approved audiences.

16. The effective execution of IA requires appropriate and collectable measures of effectiveness (MOE) to ensure desired effects are achieved. Info Ops personnel will plan, synchronize, monitor and assess these measures as an integral part of their role in planning and coordinating the execution of IA.

COUNTER-PROPAGANDA

17. Counter-propaganda is a multidiscipline effort led and coordinated by Info Ops to analyze and adversary's counter-command and propaganda activities, to develop approaches and synchronize actions to counter these as appropriate. NATO PSYOPS forces and assets, supported by other functions, take a lead role in the analysis of adversary's propaganda and support a variety of IA to counter it.

INTELLIGENCE AND TARGETING

18. Information activities are based on a comprehensive and systemic understanding of the IE across the PMESII spectrum³. This includes all source intelligence from a wide variety of military and civilian sources, and the subsequent assessment of actors and audiences, their social context and bias, objectives, Centres of Gravity (COG), critical themes, capabilities, vulnerabilities, information systems and media. The analysis and assessment of the IE is an integral part of the Info Ops function and should be continuously updated and refined to ensure that the effectiveness of IA can be gauged and maximized.

19. Info Ops personnel are embedded in the planning and targeting process to identify early in the course of action (COA) development and throughout the process, where IA could be applied to achieve desired effects, and ensure appropriate capabilities are matched against target sets. Info Ops personnel also play a vital role in advising the commander and targeting team of the potential secondary and undesired effects of operations on the IE and ways to mitigate them.

INFO OPS CO-ORDINATION/SYNCHRONIZATION AND KEY RELATIONSHIPS

20. The analysis of the IE, as well as planning and coordination of IA must be initiated early and conducted continuously throughout an operation. As part of this effort, it is essential that resources and capabilities are identified early in the planning

³ AJP-3 states that understanding the operational environment requires a comprehensive view of all factors and actors relevant to the crisis. Modern crises are characterized by complex combinations of historical, political, military social, cultural and economic issues. The operational environment can be initially viewed through the following six aspects: political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and information commonly known as by the acronym PMESII.

process and provided in a timely manner, prior to the deployment of military forces, to ensure NATO's ability to conduct effective IA. The employment of IA should be seen as a continuum, in which their considered application throughout all phases of an operation will help to shape and define the conduct of the military mission. Info Ops staff must be embedded within the operations, planning and targeting functions to ensure early and continuous coordination across the full spectrum of operations.

21. Strategic Communications (StratCom). In accordance with Reference C, NATO StratCom is a Pol-Mil process to ensure that NATO communications and IA and disciplines are coherent, mutually reinforcing, and advances NATO's aims.⁴ It closes the gap between Alliance actions and messages. Information Activities have potential strategic level effects. For this reason IA, planned and conducted at all levels, must reinforce relevant StratCom objectives and the overall narrative. In accordance with Reference D, Commanders at the operational and tactical level ensure through the Info Ops function, that all military IA are properly coordinated as well as integrated into the operational planning process, and support the overall StratCom approach.

22. NATO Military Public Affairs (Military PA). Military PA and Info Ops are separate but related functions. Both directly support military objectives, counter adversary disinformation and deter adversary actions; however, Military PA is the commander's interface with the media and the public in accordance with policy described in Reference E. Military Public Affairs is intended to improve public awareness and understanding of the military aspects of the Alliance's role, aims, operations, missions, activities and issues, thereby enhancing organisational credibility. NATO StratCom guidance provides the means to effectively synchronize military PA with IA, through the appropriate staff mechanism, in support of the Commander's operational objectives.

- a. Although Military PA and Info Ops require similar planning, message development and media analysis and are both conducted within the same overarching StratCom framework, their activities differ in audience, scope and intent. Therefore all IA must be closely coordinated with Military PA in order to ensure consistency in the messages to external audiences and to promote overall effectiveness and credibility of the campaign.
- b. This coordination is initially achieved through NATO's StratCom guidance documents. At the operational and tactical level it is advanced through regularly scheduled coordination boards and working groups. The chairmanship for these bodies is stipulated by the Commander. While coordination is essential, the lines of authority will remain separate and there shall be no overlap of personnel during operations.

⁴ NATO policy defines Strat Com as "the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities - Public Diplomacy (PD), Public Affairs (PA), Military PA, Information Operations (InfoOps) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), as appropriate - in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims."

23. Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC). As with all NATO activities, CIMIC sends direct and indirect messages to audiences, internally within the Joint Operational Area (JOA) and externally to the wider international community. While it is not the primary purpose of CIMIC, these activities present an avenue to directly inform leaders and organizations regarding NATO's activities, goals and objectives in order to minimize friction between organizations. Often these leaders and organizations have access to key host nation audiences with whom they have established credible communications. For these reasons CIMIC is a capability that is relevant to the achievement of information effects and should be coordinated and harmonized with IA and Military PA through the Info Ops function.

NON-NATO ENTITIES AND PARTNER INVOLVEMENT

24. With References F, G, H, and following the relevant decisions including those taken at the Lisbon Summit, NATO nations established and updated tasks for the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach Action Plan. Taking this into account, NATO commanders will conduct IA in an increasingly complex IE with a variety of local key leaders, opinion makers, International Organizations (IO) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), all of which may be addressing many of the same audiences. The Info Ops personnel must recognise that these persons and organisations may have channels to audiences that NATO does not possess. Info Ops shall coordinate messaging with other actors in the JOA when common goals and objectives exist. The sharing of classified and non-classified information will be in accordance with extant NATO Security and Information Management Policies, approved supporting documents and information sharing agreements.

25. NATO has set out procedures for formally recognising operational partners and their involvement in the decision-making process (Reference I). Info Ops will maintain appropriate contacts with all operational partners that may be affected by IA. Additionally, partners will be included as appropriate in coordination boards and working groups in accordance with the governing principles, procedures and mechanisms described in Reference I.

EXERCISE AND TRAINING

26. The Info Ops function requires dedicated and appropriately trained personnel, who can effectively plan, coordinate and oversee the integration of IA within an operation. Consequently, prior to taking an Info Ops position, personnel will have qualified at the NATO School in Oberammergau (NSO) and/or through a national training programme that provides an understanding of the differences between national and NATO doctrine as well as tactics, techniques and procedures in place for the coordination of NATO IA.

27. Info Ops are to be integrated into NATO military training and exercises based on AJP-3.10 Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations, to ensure that commanders and staffs are aware of the requirement and procedures to integrate IA into planning and conducting operations, the effects of those integrated operations on the IE, and the negative consequences of not integrating operations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

28. Military Committee (MC). The MC exercises its responsibility for NATO Info Ops through the IMS, Operations Division. To assist in this responsibility, the Military Committee Working Group (Operations) in Info Ops format (MCWG(OPS)Info Ops) is used to provide expertise, working capacity and advice on NATO Info Ops, particularly with regard to operations, policy and doctrine matters. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for this group are contained in Annex A. The specific responsibilities of the MC for NATO policy on Info Ops are:

- a. To provide Info Ops related military advice to the NAC and seek its guidance.
- b. To maintain an effective Info Ops policy and ensure that Info Ops aspects are included in other MC policy documents.
- c. To provide military guidance for Info Ops including operations, exercises, capabilities and training.
- d. To promulgate, monitor, co-ordinate and contribute to the development of Info Ops doctrine.
- e. To develop, maintain and disseminate information essential for the identification and protection of critical NATO information by appropriate organisations.
- f. To develop and maintain Info Ops related Crisis Response Measures (CRM).
- g. To direct the Strategic Commands (SC) as required.
- h. To consider adjustments to NATO Info Ops guidance to reinforce NATO goals in supporting allied and partner operations outside of NATO's area of operation.
- i. To ensure that StratCom guidance is provided to subordinate units in a timely manner.

29. Strategic Commands (SC). Specific responsibilities of the SCs for NATO Info Ops are:

- a. To consider Info Ops resource requirements, effects, and audiences at the earliest possible time to enable MC and NAC consideration and approval.
- b. To integrate Info Ops analysis and assessments as core part of the planning process, throughout the continuum of operational planning and execution.
- c. To designate Info Ops staff and mechanisms to integrate Info Ops doctrine/plans at the strategic level and to ensure that subordinate commanders assign responsibilities as necessary.

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- d. To develop and/or improve capabilities, techniques and security guidance within their commands, including incorporating Info Ops into their lessons learned process, ensuring their adequacy to conduct IA in support of operational objectives.
- e. To integrate Info Ops into existing and future operational planning documents in agreement with the guidance of the MC.
- f. To advise the MC on the requirements for IA and associated resources in support of effects.
- g. To review, and as required, request approval of Info Ops related CRM.
- h. To ensure IA of subordinate commands (JFC/SSC/NRDC) are coordinated and consistent with the approved mission specific strategic guidance.
- i. To develop training standards and integrate Info Ops into training, exercises and evaluations in representative environments.
- j. To provide guidance for instruction on Info Ops in NATO military educational institutions.

30. Nations. The specific responsibilities for Info Ops are:

- a. To consider Alliance Info Ops requirements during the NATO defence planning process and implement these requirements as appropriate into national planning.
- b. To develop Info Ops procedures within the framework of this document, and for Allies concerned, within the capabilities under NATO command, assigned, earmarked and other forces for NATO.
- c. To provide within capabilities and overall priorities adequate intelligence in order to support NATO Info Ops in all applicable NATO plans and operations.
- d. To prepare standards and procedures in co-ordination with NATO Military Authorities (NMAs) to ensure that interoperability is taken into consideration during development and procurement of capabilities to plan, conduct, and assess IA in support of effects.
- e. To include Info Ops in training and exercises.
- f. To provide resources and trained personnel to source NATO requirements and execute NATO Info Ops in operations and exercises.
- g. To consider possible effects on NATO military capabilities and operations resulting from national information activities.

- h. As appropriate, to contribute with personnel and other means, to counter information activities conducted against NATO, NATO nations and troop contributing nations (TCN) at the strategic level.

Annexes:

- A. Terms of Reference for the Military Committee Working Group (Operations) in Information Operations Format (MCWG(OPS)Info Ops)
- B. Lexicon of Terms

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
(OPERATIONS) IN INFORMATION
OPERATIONS FORMAT (MCWG(OPS)INFO OPS)**

INTRODUCTION

1. In an evolving security environment, the area of Information Operations (Info Ops) requires ongoing re-examination. Policies, directives, doctrine and guidance require co-ordination within the Alliance.

AIM

2. The aim of the MCWG(OPS)Info Ops is to ensure the Alliance maintains an effective Info Ops function by:

- a. Providing military advice to the MC on operational resource requirements, objectives, and audiences to enable early and robust conduct of Info Ops.
- b. Developing and examining all Alliance Info Ops issues.
- c. Reviewing and confirming NATO military policy on Info Ops.
- d. Coordinate NATO Info Ops doctrine.
- e. Examining Info Ops requirements for both operations and exercises/training.
- f. Applying lessons learned from operations to policy and doctrine documents.

MEETINGS, RECORDS and COMPOSITION

3. The WG Chairman and Secretariat is provided by Operations Division, International Military Staff (IMS), NATO HQ. The WG will meet on a quarterly basis with representatives from the military delegations. Additionally, the working group will meet as required/requested, but at least once per year, in a reinforced format with national representatives in the field of Info Ops. The Chairman will ensure that a mutually agreed summary record of each meeting, including decisions taken and actions pending, is prepared and distributed to all members and participants. Members and representatives are responsible for informing their respective chains of command.

4. The Chairman will issue a proposed agenda for each meeting. WG members may propose items for discussion as additions to this agenda. Following the meeting, the WG Secretary will prepare the summary record and action list for review by the Chairman and approval by the MC.

5. The MCWG(OPS)Info Ops membership consists of one representative from each of the NATO nations, ACT and ACO as well as other NATO organizations as appropriate. The national member is normally the senior national Info Ops military official. The ACT/ACO representative is the senior Info Ops officer in that command.

6. Members representing ACT/ACO and representatives from other NATO bodies do not have a vote in proceedings nor the power of reservation. They do have an acknowledged right to express views in proceedings and have such views recorded if they so desire. National representatives are the voting members of the WG. WG members should come to meetings fully briefed and prepared to present national or HQ views. They are expected to participate in discussions on proposals with a view to reaching agreement. Final acceptance of proposals will be obtained from the nations through the normal staffing process.

7. Activities of the working group are focused on the tasks described below in support of the MC. The Bi-SCs are encouraged to support initiatives to further develop broader issues related to Info Ops such as advances in the science and technology of communications, social network analysis, Military Deception in the current IE, Allied IA capabilities and organizations, or other areas.

TASKS

8. The MCWG(OPS)Info Ops will:

- a. Examine all aspects of Alliance Info Ops.
- b. Support the MC in the development of military advice for the MC's approval covering Info Ops planning in particular in terms of resource requirements, objectives, and audiences as required.
- c. Adopt and review terms of reference for the working group.
- d. Review and advise the MC on actions required to develop and maintain Info Ops related Crisis Response Measures.
- e. Co-ordinate Info Ops doctrine in accordance with NATO Military Policy on Info Ops (MC 0422), AJP-01, AJP-3, and Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD)/AJP-5.
- f. Review and make recommendations for updating and revising all NATO and ACT/ACO Info Ops policies, directives, doctrine, and procedures.
- g. Ensure that nations and commands are kept informed of all developments and that their concerns are adequately addressed in the deliberations of the WG.
- h. Discuss Info Ops requirements and make proposals for force standards and capabilities.
- i. Develop, co-ordinate, promote and provide NATO Info Ops training guidance in co-operation with the nations.

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- j. Initiate requests for scientific research and development for the improvement of Info Ops related techniques and methods for the coordination and conduct of IA.
- k. Provide a forum for the discussion and fulfilment of Info Ops requirements for both operations and exercises/training.
- l. Ensure that Info Ops considerations are coordinated with the StratCom Policy Board/StratCom Standing Working Group.

LEXICON OF TERMS

civil-military interaction (CMI): a group of activities, founded on communication, planning and coordination, that all NATO military bodies share and conduct with international and local non-military actors, both during NATO operations and in preparation for them, which mutually increases the effectiveness and efficiency of their respective actions in response to crisis.

civil-military cooperation (CIMIC): a joint function comprising a set of capabilities integral to supporting the achievement of mission objectives and enabling NATO commands to participate effectively in a broad spectrum of CMI with diverse non-military actors.

information activities: an action designed to affect information and/or information systems. They can be performed by any actor and include protection measures.

information effects: a desired condition created in the information environment as a result of information activities. Information Effects should be measurable in order to enable analysis, planning, execution and assessment of related actions and the effects them self.

information environment: is comprised of the information itself, the individuals, organizations and systems that receive, process and convey the information, and the cognitive, virtual and physical space in which this occurs.

information systems: an assembly of equipment, methods and procedures and, if necessary, personnel, organized to accomplish information processing functions.

message: any thought or idea expressed briefly in plain, coded, or secret language, prepared in a suitable form for transmission by any means of communication.

messaging: the transfer of any thought or idea from one person or device to another, by using any medium of communication.

narrative: a concise but comprehensive written statement of an organization's situation and purpose, which can stand on its own as the principle context to strategic planning directives or be used to support the creation of individual culturally attuned stories that will resonate with particular audiences and foster cohesion within the organization.

theme: the unifying subject or idea of a message or set of messages.