USU JCOM professor publishes in Military Review | Journalism

11/03/2015

November 3, 2015

A scholarly article co-authored by JCOM professor Tom Terry has just been published in Military Review, the professional journal of the U.S. Army. Titled, "Military Communication Strategies Based on How Audiences Meld Media and Agendas," it appears in the November-December issue of Military Review.

Co-authors with Dr. Terry are Dr. Donald Shaw, Kenan Emeritus Professor in the School of Media and Journalism of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a retired colonel in the U.S. Army, and Milad Minooie, a doctoral student at UNC-Chapel Hill.

The article reviews agenda setting theory and the connection between media and public with an eye to its value and challenges for military information planning. Citizens – whether in uniform or not – blend unique and often-contradictory attitudes and opinions to form their own personal agendas. This "agendamelding" affects their choice of media and how that media in turn influences their perceptions of the rank ordering and importance of particular issues.

Shaw, Terry, and Minooie believe that social media has democratized the news and that this has profound and under-realized implications for the military. They point out that there is vast difference in media use by senior officers and junior officers or enlisted personnel. Nearly 560,000 officers and enlisted personnel are 25 or younger, while only about 63,000 are 41 and older. The authors recommend that senior military leaders incorporate the media platforms their audiences prefer when devising information strategies.

The three authors designed an intriguing Agenda Community Attraction (ACA) formula to explain the informational and experiential knowledge that creates the agenda or opinion structure for an individual, organization, or country. Applying the formula, they found that the traditional vertical media that appeal most broadly to all layers of society (such as the main networks and the New York Times, among others) still guide the nation’s agenda despite the explosion in social media. The traditional media infiltrate niche publications and social media and their impact is significantly magnified.