



Digital Diplomacy in Algerian Foreign Policy as a Mechanism to Support African Integration: Theoretical, Critical, and Implementation Roadmap Dimensions

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Abstract:

This article investigates how digital diplomacy can be strategically deployed within Algeria's foreign policy framework to bolster African integration projects amid intensifying competition for continental digital space. The analysis departs from a central observation: Algeria's digital footprint across Africa remains modest and disproportionate to its political and geostrategic stature, resulting in a pronounced gap between its traditional diplomacy and digital-mediated influence capabilities.

The article employs a multi-layered theoretical framework integrating Joseph Nye's Soft Power theory, Anne-Marie Slaughter's Network Diplomacy, the New World Information and Communication Order, Barry Buzan's Regional Security Complex approach, and Digital Colonialism theory to elucidate power asymmetries in the emerging African digital landscape. These perspectives highlight that Africa has evolved beyond a mere geopolitical arena into a contested domain for data control, digital infrastructures, and public opinion shaping, dominated by state actors (China, Turkey, France, Israel) and non-state players (social media platforms, digital influencers).

A critical historical review traces the evolution of Algerian communication strategy from 1962 to 2025, underscoring the sluggish institutionalization of digital diplomacy. Key deficiencies include the lack of multilingual platforms, poor coordination between media and diplomatic entities, and absence of a coherent narrative-building strategy around "African Algeria" or "Algeria as a regional pole."

The study maps the African digital ecosystem, revealing that competition now encompasses infrastructure, smart services, and cyber surveillance. China advances via its Digital Silk Road; France leverages targeted media like France24 Africa; Turkey deploys cultural-religious diplomacy through TRT Africa; Israel utilizes cyber technologies for non-traditional influence; and African digital sovereignty initiatives emerge to counter Western-Eastern dominance.

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The article underscores digital diplomacy's role in advancing flagship African integration initiatives, notably:

- The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) through awareness campaigns;
- Energy/transport connectivity projects like the Nigeria-Algeria pipeline;
- Pan-African University (PAU) as a unified digital academic platform;
- African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) via early-warning digital systems;
- Shared African content platforms to amplify continental narratives;
- AI-driven sentiment analysis of African digital public opinion.

The article concludes with actionable policy recommendations for Algerian decision-makers, advocating a comprehensive Algerian-African Digital Diplomacy Strategy encompassing multilingual content development, joint data centers, cyber capacity enhancement, and digital media investments across Africa to reposition Algeria as a pivotal digital influencer on the continent.

Keywords: Digital diplomacy; Algeria; African integration; Soft power; Digital narratives; Geopolitical influence; African informational security.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, diplomacy has undergone radical transformations driven by the digital revolution, shifting soft power from traditional institutional domains to virtual spaces where policies, mental images, and geopolitical narratives are constructed. Within this context, Algeria-as a pivotal North African state and traditional actor in Sahel and Saharan affairs-confronts profound shifts in international communication structures. Transitioning to effective digital diplomacy is not merely a technical choice but a strategic imperative tied to national security and African geoeconomic integration.

Despite launching several official digitization initiatives (government platforms, expanded submarine internet cables, external communication policies), Algeria's digital efficacy in African space lags behind global and regional powers (China, Turkey, UAE, Israel, France), which cultivate dense digital presences through structured narratives and communications.

This challenge intensifies amid emerging virtual African spaces reshaping interstate relations and shared interests, rendering digital diplomacy essential for genuine African integration-economic, security, and communicative.

To address this critical issue, we pose the following research problem for analysis and in-depth examination:

Research Problem

How can digital diplomacy be practically directed within Algeria's foreign policy to support African integration (economic, political, cultural), what structural, communicative, and geostrategic challenges impede this, and what feasible implementation options exist?

To address this problem, we propose the following sub-questions:

- What is the status of digital diplomacy within Algeria's current political approach?
- How do competing international powers contribute to digital hegemony over African space?
- What gaps exist between Algeria's digital capacities and requirements for effective African presence?

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- What strategic vision is possible for digital diplomacy supporting African integration projects (PAU*, AfCFTA*, APSA*)?¹
- What field-level implementation plans should Algeria adopt to rebuild its African digital influence?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The theoretical framework constitutes the backbone of any analytical study in digital diplomacy and international relations, serving not merely as a conceptual field but as a methodological tool for interpreting phenomena and deconstructing their practical dimensions. Within the context of this research—which explores the potential of Algerian digital diplomacy in supporting African integration—a singular perspective proves insufficient. Instead, dimensions of power, culture, networks, security, and digital sovereignty intersect to analyze this sensitive subject. Accordingly, we adopt a **multi-theoretical approach** encompassing Soft Power Theory, Network Diplomacy Theory, the conceptual framework of the "New International Communication Order," Digital Colonialism Theory, and Regional Security Complex Theory.

Below, we present each theoretical approach succinctly, elucidating its analytical functions within the study and demonstrating its practical operationalization (indicators and sub-hypotheses), with direct linkage to the research problem to delineate the actual limits of Algerian digital diplomacy's efficacy in advancing African integration.

A. Soft Power Theories

Soft Power Theory posits that influence extends beyond military or economic coercion (hard power or payment capacity) to encompass a state's ability to make others "want what it wants" through culture, values, and persuasive policies (Nye, 2004).

Application of the Theory in the Current Study:

- It enables us to interpret digital diplomacy as a contemporary extension of soft power; digital platforms, cultural content, educational initiatives, and digital exchanges (scholarships, MOOCs) shape positive mental images of Algeria across the continent.
- Measuring the impact of Algerian digital presence in amplifying "symbolic attraction" toward partner African states.

Within this theoretical approach, we propose operational indicators to analyze Algeria's positioning:

Indicators of "Mental Image": Digital content analysis, implementation of electronic opinion surveys in selected countries regarding perceptions of Algeria.

Indicators of Digital Cultural Engagement: Number of joint digital cultural initiatives, views/interactions on Algeria-targeted cultural content for African Union states.

¹- (Note: PAU = Pan-African University; AfCFTA/ZLECAF = African Continental Free Trade Area; APSA = African Peace and Security Architecture)

(The provided text appears truncated at this point. The full article would continue with theoretical framework, critical analysis, roadmap, and conclusions. If additional sections are available, they can be translated accordingly. This translation maintains academic rigor, precise terminology, and APA-style compatibility for citations.)

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These can be operationalized through analysis of Algerian digital campaigns (content/language/messages) and benchmarking against soft power efficacy via pre/post-intervention perception changes (pre/post design or longitudinal measurements where feasible).

B. Network Diplomacy Theory (Anne-Marie Slaughter)

Core of the Theory: Network Diplomacy asserts that the contemporary world operates through multi-level networks (governmental, quasi-governmental, private, civil society), where diplomatic efficacy is measured by a state's capacity to build effective communication networks and leverage them (emphasizing the pivotal role of interactive relations via smart media) (Slaughter, 2017).

Application in the Study:

- Explains how Algeria can utilize its networks (embassies, cultural branches, universities, tech companies) as an integrated digital diplomacy system.
- Highlights the importance of linking local and international actors through shared digital tools.

Proposed Operational Indicators:

- **Network Density Indicator:** Number of digital partnerships with African entities (universities, cultural institutions, companies).
- **Bond Strength Indicator:** Content exchanges, bilateral partnership agreements, funded projects.

The theory can be applied by: network mapping of Algerian actors active in Africa, analyzing information/material flows across these networks, and identifying weaknesses (missing connection points, unilateral reliance on foreign platforms).

C. New International Communication Order Theory

This school argues that media globalization has not produced an equitable system but rather created an "information gap" between sender and receiver nations, and between core and peripheral states, impairing the latter's ability to craft their narratives and convey their voice (Hamelink, 1994).

Purpose of Employing This Theoretical Lens:

- Provides a framework for understanding the uneven distribution of digital-media capacity between Algeria (and Africa broadly) and influential powers (West/East).
- Explains how this disparity leads to image appropriation and imposition of external narratives on African audiences (core to digital marginalization).

Key Indicators for Measuring Distribution and Narrative Disparities:

- Ratios of access to multi-platform digital broadcasting in African states.
- Share of local/Algerian content in each African digital market's infosphere.
- **Audience Inclination Indicators:** Measuring public preference for external content over Algerian/African content, particularly in sensitive political/cultural domains.

Analytical Application: Comparative analysis of Algerian content availability/support ratios versus competitors (Chinese, Turkish, French) on specific platforms in selected African markets, alongside audience reception trends.

D. Digital Colonialism Theory



Core of the Theory: Refers to how global technology platforms and their economic rules transform data and infrastructures into new control instruments, reproducing power-weakness dynamics in digital space (Zuboff; Couldry & Mejias).

Application Objectives:

- **Critical-Analytical:** Clarify how Algeria's (or African states') reliance on foreign platforms/services risks losing sovereignty over political/economic narratives.
- Highlight the need for regional digital infrastructure or protective strategies (data governance) as prerequisites for effective digital diplomacy.

Proposed Field Indicators:

- Ratio of Algerian/African content hosting on local vs. foreign servers.
- Presence/absence of national data protection policies or bilateral agreements.

Analytical Application: Critique outsourcing policies to foreign platforms, propose alternatives (regional data centers, African content platforms) with cost/benefit economic-political analysis.

E. Regional Security Complex Approach (Buzan)

The Regional Security Complex Theory developed by Barry Buzan and colleagues represents one of the most significant analytical frameworks for understanding threat patterns and political unit behaviors within geostrategic regions (Buzan, Barry & Wæver, Ole, 2003). The theory rests on a central hypothesis that security is not an isolated phenomenon within state borders but an interconnected system defined by shared threat patterns among states within a "Regional Security Complex," where these states are linked by intertwined relations of competition, cooperation, or mutual dependence (Lake, David A. & Morgan, Patrick, 1997).

Application in the Study: Buzan's approach is employed as a tool to understand how Algerian digital diplomacy can transform into a structural element supporting African integration across several levels:

Linking Digital Diplomacy to Regional Security

The theory illuminates how Algeria addresses cross-border threats (digital terrorism, illicit trafficking networks, media disinformation) within a regional environment requiring collective coordination.

Thus, digital diplomacy becomes a channel for enhancing: combating online extremism, securing shared digital spaces, protecting sovereign digital ports/data, intelligence information exchange via secure platforms.

Highlighting "Knowledge-Security Infrastructure"

Enabling digital diplomacy to build shared Early Warning Systems relying on AI and data analytics to anticipate crises: cross-border terrorism, political tensions, health crises (as revealed by COVID-19), climate shifts.

Transforming Digital Space into a Regional Security Domain

Shifting from traditional security models (borders-armies-equipment) to a "digital-knowledge security" model protecting the African communication domain from hostile narratives, informational breaches, and digital hegemony.

Proposed Operational Field Indicators: For testing the Regional Security approach's presence within Algerian digital diplomacy, we propose:

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- **Shared Digital Information Exchange Platforms:** Security platforms between Algeria and Sahel states (G5 Sahel) to counter violent extremism; shared databases monitoring irregular migration; real-time intelligence sharing metrics.
- **Regional Cyber Defense Readiness:** Alignment levels between concerned African states' cybersecurity strategies; existence of joint Cyber Defense Coalition plans; number of joint cyberattack simulation exercises.
- **Data Security Protocol Integration:** Compatibility of data protection policies between Algeria and neighboring African states; dissemination of unified encryption protocols.
- **Regional Crisis Response Coordination:** Existence of shared response scenarios for digital shocks (Mass Cyber Attacks); joint digital media monitoring mechanisms for disinformation correction.

Analytical Application: The theory guides practical analysis as follows:

- Integrate security as a structural condition for African digital integration (e.g., assess security risks before launching any shared African digital platform, establish collective protection frameworks).
- Analyze Algeria's digital projects (Africa Digital Gateway, fiber optic connectivity, cybersecurity strategy) in terms of their role in shaping a "digital security complex."
- Compare Algeria's position with competitors (Morocco-Nigeria-South Africa) to measure its place in the African security network.
- Propose implementation scenarios: establishing an "African Cyber Intelligence Center" with joint Algerian-African funding.

Digital Diplomacy in Algerian Foreign Policy - Critical Aspects

Over the post-independence decades (from 1962 to the 21st century), Algeria relied on a combination of traditional diplomacy (official channels, diplomatic networks, state media) and symbolic policies grounded in its historic regional stances (support for national liberation causes, mediation in African affairs) (Aghrout, A., & Zoubir, Y., 2009). However, qualitative shifts in influence tools over the last two decades (global digital transformation and emergence of social media platforms) necessitated reconfiguring Algeria's communication approach—from one-way broadcasting logic to interactive digital network logic (Zghidder, 2020). Despite national digitization initiatives (*Digital Algeria 2030*) and official institutional activity through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website and some regional digital platforms (hcn.dz+1), this transition remained fragmented in strategic and operational terms well into the third decade of the 21st century.

First, the core flaw in Algerian digital diplomacy practice is weak systematic presence in the African digital space. Local digital initiatives demonstrate domestic digitization interest but lack a dedicated communication strategy tailored to African arenas that leverages linguistic, cultural, and media specificities of each regional market. Usage data indicate Algeria has achieved relatively high local internet penetration rates, yet this does not automatically translate into extended digital influence capacity across competitive African markets dominated by international and regional actors with specialized, well-funded strategies ([DataReportal - Global Digital Insights+1](#)).

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Second, there is a clear deficiency in linguistic access tools and multilingualism. No comprehensive official Algerian platforms oriented toward Africa's multilingual market (Arabic-French-English-regional languages like Swahili) yet exist as independent hubs for constructing a unified Algerian narrative on economic, cultural, and political issues. This gap creates a practical "access barrier" for Algeria's narrative, leaving space for competing international or regional platforms offering localized language content (see the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website for available platforms).

Third, a gap persists in building a cohesive digital mental image around what can be termed "multiple national identities": (1) Algeria as a regional pole with geostrategic weight; (2) African Algeria as a developmental continental partner; (3) Algeria as mediator bridging North-South and acting as political broker. These are not clearly conveyed through unified digital content nor translated into strategic digital campaigns progressively targeting specific African audiences. This communication mapping absence leads to fragmented impressions where local African audiences encounter contradictory or alternative narratives amplified by external actors.

Finally, comparative benchmarking with countries pursuing active digital strategies highlights Algeria's practical gaps. Turkey developed an institutionalized collective presence through institutional and cultural channels (e.g., *TRT Africa* and Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (*TİKA*), accumulating soft power via developmental projects and targeted cultural content) (Köse, T., & Özcan, N. A., 2019; Taşpınar, Ö., 2020). China leveraged "material" digital projects (*Digital Silk Road*) alongside dedicated media platforms (*CGTN Africa*) to entrench economic-political narratives backed by infrastructure (Wu, Y., 2020). The UAE executed focused investment and digital initiatives targeting African youth (*Africa Digital Hub*) for direct economic-digital ties (Al-Abed, I., 2020). Even France maintained strong media presence through regionally adapted platforms (*France24 Africa*), sustaining narrative influence over broad African audiences (Tudesq, A.-G., 2019).

These experiences demonstrate that integrating material investments (infrastructure), cultural programming (multi-channel, multilingual content), and funding/partnership mechanisms yields advanced efficacy in the African digital landscape—a holistic integration and resource allocation currently lacking in Algeria's approach.

Critical Characterization and Recommendations: Algerian digital diplomacy requires rebuilding a comprehensive strategy built on four interconnected pillars: (a) Creating professionally managed multilingual official platforms serving as continental digital hubs for Algerian messaging; (b) Concurrent investment in regional digital infrastructure and partnerships to reduce digital marginalization (data hosting, CDNs, localized platforms); (c) Producing holistic content blending political, economic, and cultural narratives distributed according to target African market specificities; (d) Developing long-term partnership and funding programs (including cultural and academic initiatives) to create "influence networks" modeled on *TİKA/TRT*, Chinese, or Emirati approaches—but with digital sovereignty and ethical safeguards. Implementing such a plan demands high-level political decisions, inter-ministerial coordination (Foreign Affairs, Digital Transformation, Trade, Culture), and targeted financial-operational investments. Otherwise, Algeria risks remaining a "significant ground actor" but digitally limited in the African sphere where much soft power narrative-making now occurs.

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Mapping the African Digital Space - Actors and Narratives

A/ Competition for Digital Influence in Africa

The African digital space has become a geostrategic competition arena intersecting material investment (infrastructure), media influence, cybersecurity, and ideological-cultural appeals. Each actor constructs distinct narratives and entry points:

- **China - Infrastructure and AI:** Beijing pursues a dual strategy: funding/building digital infrastructure (fiber optics, data centers, 4G/5G networks) under the *Digital Silk Road* initiative, while promoting supportive media outputs and software aligned with its policies. It transfers AI capabilities and analytics applications to African partners, creating structural dependency (*infrastructure dependency*) and enabling China to shape continental technological standards and data management practices—with profound implications for digital sovereignty and local narrative agency (Wu, 2020; Zeng & Williamson, 2021).
- **France - Targeted Media:** Paris traditionally invests in directed media channels (e.g., *France 24* African editions) and Francophone cultural programs to maintain symbolic presence in French-speaking African public spheres. This approach blends traditional broadcasting with digital media, tailoring messages to local audience specificities, helping France sustain strong narratives among influential African audience segments (Savarino, 2018; Chafer, 2016).
- **Zionist Entity - Cybersecurity and Tech Influence:** Israel adopted a policy exporting cybersecurity solutions, intelligence training, and surveillance technologies to developing countries as both commercial products and influence tools. Israeli firms possess advanced expertise in encryption, surveillance, and digital intelligence capabilities, enabling direct influence channels within partners' security and digital structures (Singer & Friedman, 2014; Roll, 2019).
- **Turkey - Religious-Cultural Soft Power via Digital Tools:** Ankara focused on building cultural-religious presence through television content and media production (*TRT Africa*), developmental-cultural programs (*TİKA*), leveraging digital platforms to crystallize regionally appealing cultural-linguistic narratives. This "digital soft power" mix aims to forge social-cultural ties with youth and middle strata in target societies, enhancing Turkey's indirect political influence (Kraidy & Al-Ghazzi, 2018; Köse & Özcan, 2019).

Implications for Algeria and Digital Diplomacy: The practical conclusion is that any effective Algerian strategy must integrate structural investment (data centers/local hosting), multi-channel/multilingual content programming, cybersecurity capacity support, and balanced technical cooperation partnerships preventing unilateral dependency.

B/ Rise of Social Networking Sites (SNS) as Geostrategic Actors

Social networking sites have evolved beyond popular communication media into narrative confrontation tools, political mobilization platforms, and civil movement recruitment channels. They serve as official and unofficial public diplomacy conduits. Through these networks, state actors (governments, diplomatic missions) interact with influencers, civil society organizations, and small media outlets, spawning decentralized yet hyper-influential "influence networks" (Tufekci, 2017; Howard & Hussain, 2013).

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African social movement experiences (Arab Spring, Sudanese protests, Nigerian youth networks) demonstrate digital messages' rapid dissemination capacity, making SNS platforms catalysts for political mobilization and public consciousness formation. States leverage these channels for audience attention, national narrative shaping, and counter-disinformation. Algeria must thus position SNS at the center of its digital strategy—not as one-way broadcasting but as bidirectional interaction spaces for public mood monitoring/analysis and rapid responses to hostile information campaigns (Howard & Hussain, 2013; Tufekci, 2017).

C/ Role of Digital Influencers in Shaping African Public Opinion

"Influencers" have assumed central communicative roles, particularly among urban and youth demographics. They bridge official content and popular taste, influencing purchasing behavior, political attitudes, and cultural discussions. Field research in African markets shows messages channeled through local influencers achieve higher engagement and trust rates than unadapted foreign or local official messaging (Mutsvairo, 2016; Abidin, 2018).

Algeria can leverage networks of Algerian and African influencers in joint promotional programs (cultural-economic), provided selection, training, and transparency metrics avoid covert funding risks or credibility loss. Integrating "influencers" into localized-continental digital diplomatic campaigns enhances message relatability and organic spread.

D/ Shift Toward "African Digital Sovereignty"

Growing demands have emerged among African states and the African Union for *digital sovereignty*—control over data infrastructures, data governance policies, and digital service access rules protecting national/regional interests from digital dependency and exploitation (DeNardis, 2014; AU, 2020). These translate into policies promoting local data hosting, privacy rules, and platform regulations (African Union, 2020; Couldry & Mejias, 2019).

Significance of this shift: Without building reasonable digital sovereignty capacities, African states (including Algeria) remain vulnerable to *digital colonialism* mechanisms transforming data/content into externally exploited resources detached from local interests. Thus, digital diplomacy supporting African integration must include institutional cooperation on data governance, regional hosting centers, and reliable-secure information exchange standards (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Zuboff, 2019).

The above mapping reveals Africa's digital space as a multi-level competition arena: structural (infrastructure), informational (media narratives), security (cyber), and cultural (soft power via content). Any Algerian digital diplomatic project's efficacy in supporting African integration hinges on Algeria's ability to balance reliable infrastructure building, multilingual content mastery, security-technical partnerships, and local networks (including influencers) aligned with the integration narrative.

Digital Diplomacy as a Mechanism for Enhancing African Integration

African economic integration (AfCFTA/ZLECAF) represents a historic opportunity to reshape continental trade and value networks, yet its success faces structural obstacles: disparities in digital infrastructure across countries, data sovereignty, and external influence through platform and infrastructure exploitation. In this context, solid trade agreements alone are insufficient; digital communication mechanisms and strategic communication policies are required to promote

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opportunities, facilitate cross-border transactions, and support technical assistance and shared governance. Digital diplomacy emerges here as a practical tool—not a substitute for traditional diplomacy but its extension—aiming to link economic pathways with the communication-knowledge domain, thereby making digital action part of the institutional structure essential for integration success. However, digital campaigns risk becoming mere "communication decoration" without genuine infrastructure, or valuable technical tools when accompanied by investments in data, security, and shared digital services (African Union, 2018; AU, 2020).

A/ Supporting AfCFTA Projects through Digital Campaigns

The success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA/ZLECAF) depends not only on legal texts and customs commitments but on the ability of states and continental institutions to create shared awareness among economic actors—traders, SMEs, and consumers. Targeted digital diplomacy campaigns can perform multiple functions: simplifying market entry mechanisms, clarifying rules of origin and sanitary regulations, providing digital training for entrepreneurs via MOOCs, and facilitating B2B digital matchmaking connecting suppliers and buyers across borders (ODI, 2025). Official digital platforms can leverage programmatic advertising and geo-targeting techniques to test specific messages in selected markets (Diplo Institute report; AfCFTA digital trade protocol). For success, however, campaigns require: consistent local-continental messaging, culturally adapted multilingual content, and technical interoperability enabling cross-border payments and digital certification. Campaigns lacking these foundations remain vulnerable to creating illusory interest (*buzz*) without conversion to actual trade transactions.

B/ Promoting Energy and Transport Connectivity Projects (Nigeria-Algeria)

Major energy and transport connectivity projects—such as the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline (TSGP) or electricity, rail, and telecommunications grid connections—carry geostrategic, technical, and social dimensions. Digital diplomacy can support these through three strategic functions: documenting transparency and disseminating information on economic benefits and feasibility to reduce local community resistance; facilitating partner coordination via shared digital project management systems (*dashboards*) and real-time data; and building policy support through communication campaigns highlighting employment opportunities and regional integration (Global Energy Monitor; TSGP research). Major challenges persist: transit regions may be security-vulnerable, and digital campaigns may fail to reach actual local communities without local connectivity infrastructure. Moreover, projects like TSGP require linking digital strategies to physical and cyber security plans for connectivity sustainability. A unified digital narrative showcasing linkage benefits for regional growth can mitigate delay risks and enhance joint funding, provided it ties to transparency metrics and measurable outcomes.

C/ Building Shared African Content Platforms

Creating shared African content platforms (continental and regional) constitutes structural investment to host and promote local production, ensuring the continent's voice in the global content map. Such platforms fulfill roles: hosting cross-border digital markets, libraries for technical standards and measurements (*standardization*), e-learning curricula and training platforms, and spaces for exchanging continental economic-cultural stories. Technically, success depends on integration with local/regional data centers, broad language support, and sustainable funding models (subscriptions/public-private

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partnerships). Partial successes are evident in growing data centers and cloud investments across Africa (Africa Data Centres reports); yet gaps in local content and connectivity quality remain pronounced. Shared platforms can reduce reliance on foreign platforms and provide alternatives to major commercial ones, but require continental administrative frameworks, data exchange agreements, and protected intellectual property rights (African Union Digital Transformation Strategy; Africa Data Centres).

D/ Enhancing Informational Security through Data Exchange Centers

Informational security is not merely defensive technology but a sovereignty condition for digital trade—from protecting supply chains and securing cross-border transactions to ensuring consumer and corporate data privacy. Building local and regional data centers (*data centres & IXPs*) shortens response times, reduces transit costs, and bolsters digital sovereignty. Sector reports indicate rapid but geographically uneven growth, concentrated in few countries (South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, Morocco) (Africa Data Centres reports).

From an African integration perspective, shared regional data exchange centers—supported by unified cyber security agreements and threat intelligence-sharing protocols—enable states to benefit from economies of scale and mount collective responses to cyber incidents threatening cross-border energy and communications networks. The challenge is political-economic: requiring public-private investments, unified legal frameworks, and trust-building measures around governance and privacy.

E/ Leveraging AI for African Digital Sentiment Analysis

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning-based analytics provide powerful tools for "measuring digital mood" (*social listening & sentiment analysis*) across social media sites, forums, and e-commerce markets. Diplomatic entities can use these to monitor reactions to integration policies, detect operational risks (protests, rumors), and steer real-time communication campaigns. Social media analytics research shows combining sentiment classification models with network detection techniques helps distinguish disinformation waves from genuine reception versus robotic fabrications (*bots*) (Stieglitz et al., 2014; Tufekci, 2017). Practically, AI applications require clean data and local reference benchmarks for African languages/dialects, plus ethical privacy frameworks; otherwise, they produce biased or inaccurate analyses leading to misguided messaging interventions. Thus, deploying sentiment analysis technologies must accompany building local datasets, developing continental linguistic models (incl. African languages), and training programs for policy analysis teams in ministries and embassies.

Conclusion from the Analysis: Digital diplomacy can transform African integration commitments into practical outcomes—if partner states professionalize it by linking communication campaigns to technical platforms, infrastructure, and security. Digital tools are not magic wands but operational structures: AfCFTA campaigns need reliable platforms and payment services; connectivity projects require transparent local communication; content platforms demand hosting and governance rules; cyber defense needs regional cooperation. Ethical and effective AI deployment enhances actors' understanding and responsiveness capabilities, provided local data and quality interstate dialogue exist. Algeria's strategy in this domain should combine tactical digital work (campaigns-influencers-content) with structural efforts (data centers-agreements-capacity building) for genuine contributions to African integration.

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Proposed Field Roadmap for Building Algerian-African Digital Diplomacy (2025-2035)

A/ Strategic Level

- Establish the Algerian Digital Diplomacy Agency.
- Adopt a multilingual external communication strategy.
- Launch the Algerian African Digital Observatory.

B/ Technical Level

- Build an African-Algerian content production network (video, podcasts, AI).
- Partnerships with influential African platforms (Kenya Hub, Nigeria Tech Cluster).
- Use AI for analyzing African trends.

C/ Academic Level

- Create a Master's in "African Digital Diplomacy" at Algerian universities.
- Fund specialized research centers in African communication.

D/ Operational Level (Field Implementation)

- Open Digital Outreach centers within Algerian embassies.
- Train diplomats in digital campaigns.
- Launch a continental digital campaign titled "*Africa Connected with Algeria*".

E/ Strategic Conclusion

This study recommends Algeria adopt a multi-level digital diplomacy strategy centered on building dense, influential presence in African digital space, enhancing economic/security integration, and strengthening the state's regional influence. Transitioning to professional digital diplomacy is not merely technical but a prerequisite for elevating Algeria's position amid international competition over Africa.

Recommendations:

- Create an independent institutional structure for digital diplomacy.
- Train specialized diplomatic-communication elites.
- Invest in targeted digital content for African space.
- Use AI for tracking digital mood and crafting communication messages.
- Build digital alliances with rising African states (Kenya-Nigeria-South Africa).
- Launch a digital strategy supporting African integration projects (economic/security).

Footnotes

(Full APA-formatted references as provided in original text, translated and contextualized above. Key projects explained: PAU – Pan African University; ZLECAF/AfCFTA – African Continental Free Trade Area; APSA – African Peace and Security Architecture.)

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Pan-African University (PAU – جامعة إفريقيا عموم)

Project Nature: A network of universities and centers of research excellence under the African Union, established in 2011 to build high-level African human capital. It comprises five regional institutes distributed across the continent's regions (Energy & Climate, Governance & Social Sciences,

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Technology, Basic Sciences, Agriculture). Objectives: Enhance African scientific production and reduce knowledge dependency on the West; support innovation and applied research for continental solutions (health, climate, food security); create an intellectual-scientific elite capable of leading African integration.

African Continental Free Trade Area (ZLECAF/AfCFTA – منطقة التبادل الحر القارية الإفريقية) Project Nature: Officially launched in 2019, it constitutes the world's largest free trade area by number of participating countries (54 states). Aims to progressively eliminate customs duties and enhance cross-border movement of goods and services.

Objectives: Increase intra-African trade from 16% to over 60%; create a single market exceeding 1.3 billion consumers; activate continental value chains and boost local manufacturing. Strategic Value: ZLECAF represents the African Union's flagship economic project and the primary gateway to building a continental economic power capable of negotiating with global powers.

African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA – الهندسة الإفريقية للسلام والأمن) Project Nature: Institutional framework established by the African Union in 2004 for crisis and conflict management, comprising: Peace and Security Council (PSC), African Standby Force (ASF), Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), Peace Fund, Panel of the Wise. Objectives: Prevent conflicts before escalation; manage crises through independent African mechanisms; support mediation and peaceful dispute resolution.

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