

THE HOLY TRINITY OF

# INFORMATION OPERATIONS



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## Executive Summary

Great power competition between Western and Eastern countries is a competition for good governance and mastery of grey zone warfare. Hybrid warfare tactics manifest below the legal norms of armed conflict but can be as devastating and dangerous as conventional warfare. Information operations including the space, cyber, and cognitive domains are the new way to play in great power competition, and the public and private sectors in the West are hard pressed to catch up to and compete with the East.

The major advantage Eastern powers Russia and China have over the U.S. and the West is the interest alignment between the public and private sectors. The ability to place information operations and technological advancement directly into the hybrid hands of the military and state-sponsored private sector powers creates an internal strategic alignment that is proving to serve the Eastern interests well. The United States and the West must take advantage of holistic strategy and analysis to remain competitive on the world stage going forward. The Cultured Scholar Strategic Communications is prepared to help lay plans on how to achieve this goal.

### The info war catalyst

There is no singular U.S. government definition of information warfare (IW), but a few attempts at defining it exist. The Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Information Warfare and Innovation [defines](#) it as, "the operational advantage gained from fully integrating the Navy's information functions, capabilities, and resources to optimize decision making and maximize warfighting effects." An [article](#) from the U.S. Naval Institute defines it as, "offensive and defensive actions in physical and virtual space that enable and protect the friendly force's ability to access, process, and communicate information that also deny, exploit, corrupt or destroy an adversary force's ability to use information."

The Cornerstones of Information Warfare published in 1995 [defines IW](#) as, "any action to Deny, Exploit, Corrupt or Destroy the enemy's information and its functions; protecting ourselves against those actions and exploiting our own military information functions". The Congressional Research Service presents the [concept](#) as "a strategy for the use and management of information to pursue a competitive advantage, including both offensive and defensive operations." [NATO](#) defines IW as "an operation conducted in order to gain an information advantage over the opponent." Common themes would define IW as offensive or defensive actions taken in physical or virtual space to deny, exploit, corrupt, or destroy an adversary's forces to gain a competitive information advantage.

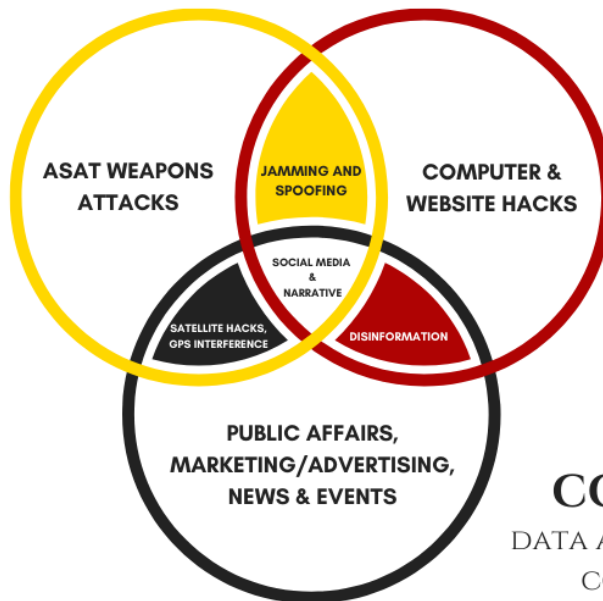
The Cultured Scholar Strategic Communications defines IW as operations intended to deny, exploit, corrupt, or destroy oppositional efforts to gain influence and strategic

advantage in the space, cyber/electronic, and cognitive domains. For example, GPS jamming and spoofing deny and corrupt satellite data that play a critical role in global sectors and industries, namely supply chain and telecommunications. Truckers use \$10 [GPS jammers](#) to block employers from tracking their movements, China has spoofed AIS data signals to [confuse](#) maritime traffic, and Russian jamming interference has interrupted our communications with prospective clients in Israel.

The major gap in understanding information warfare and operations is a lack of a method for connecting the dots. How do information warfare practitioners make sense of narrative warfare, space operations, and cyber operations? What is the convergence point for space, cyber, and narrative?

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**SPACE**  
DATA AND  
INFORMATION  
TRANSMISSION



**CYBER**  
DATA AND  
INFORMATION  
DELIVERY

**COGNITIVE**  
DATA AND INFORMATION  
CONSUMPTION

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**Space.** The space domain consists of satellites, cosmic phenomena, artificial objects, and orbital debris which are detected, tracked, identified, and catalogued. Direct threats include orbital debris, spent rocket bodies, and/or antisatellite weapons (ASAT). The crossover with the cognitive domain includes satellite hacks and telecommunications interruptions that shape reality altering news and events. For example, GPS systems can be disabled due to ASAT weapons attacks, leading to multiple newsworthy car crashes or shipwrecks over a short period of time. Jamming and spoofing are shared by the space and cyber domains though denying or spoofing satellite data transmitted to electronic devices.

**Cyber.** The cyber/electronic domain includes the internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, electronic devices and the grid, and embedded processors and controllers. Direct threats include computer and website hacks, device hacks, and kinetic weapons to destroy infrastructure. Through these channels, information and data are delivered to end-users and consumers. The crossover with the cognitive domain includes disinformation and misinformation campaigns.

**Cognitive.** The cognitive domain includes thoughts about facts, terms, concepts, ideas, relationships, patterns, and conclusions about any subject. This domain speaks particularly to the PSYOP/MISO, public affairs, government relations and affairs, public relations, marketing, advertising, and press areas of practice – all practitioners of propaganda. Through these operations, data and information are consumed as information products. News and events tend to be the outgrowth of effective messaging, marketing, public relations, and advertising.

The synthesized domain for all three key information operations domains is social media and strategic narrative domain. Social media platforms are highly engaging mediums for aggregate data and information sharing, especially disinformation or misinformation campaigns. A powerful strategic narrative crosses all domains and can be measured and tracked with social media and news monitoring tools.

### **Strategizing the narrative**

Strategic narrative is not only more basic but also a phrase commonly reserved for the private sector. Strategic narrative is driven by the actions taken by a brand or brand personality to push an agenda in the media. Marketing, advertising, public relations, and strategic business changes all drive narrative. Edward Bernays, the father of modern public relations, said in his book [Propaganda](#) that the public relations consultant's job is to create the news by advising a business or brand on strategic action steps that are worthy of media attention. Jeff Bezos' obsession with customer satisfaction drives Amazon's customer service [narrative](#), driving sales, trust, brand value, and stock price.

Part of Chinese strategic doctrine is [The Thirty-Six Stratagems](#). We can see these strategies employed in Great Power Competition with China and Russia.

Stratagem #	Proverb	Three Warfares Reference
1	Fool the Emperor to cross the sea	Lawfare and PSYOP
2	Besiege Wei to rescue Zhao	PSYOP
12	Seize the opportunity to lead the sheep away	Influence/public opinion/PSYOP

For example, Stratagem 12 *Seize the opportunity to lead the sheep away* can be seen in China’s [COVID-19 propaganda](#) that misled the public on the [origins](#) of COVID-19, ultimately creating discord and mistrust in the American body politic and ongoing questioning of public health, the United States government, and the World Health Organization (WHO) – an effective PSYOP on the part of the CCP.

Stratagem 1 *Fool the Emperor to cross the sea* and Stratagem 2 *Besiege Wei to rescue Zhao* can be seen in the seemingly unsuspecting use of free markets and the Belt and Road initiative to engage in the Western led global market, cementing China’s influence in the international order and flexing that power through exacerbating the supply chain crisis by flooding ports and having cargo ships’ AIS data go [dark](#). China also refrains from engaging in conventional warfare, as well as other countries, because such a challenge would be foolish on the world stage. This obvious yet prudent application of Stratagem 2 is further exploited by China’s choice to focus on soft power and hybrid/grey zone warfare by employing the economic warfare as well as Three Warfares (psychological, influence/public opinion, and lawfare).

Strategic narrative is the tip of the spear for information operations, as it is cognitive warfare that drives the consumption of information and data that are launched by the arms of space domain infrastructure and delivered by the rod of cyber and electronic domain technologies.

### **The Cultured Perspective: Reconciling space, cyber, and cognitive warfare**

The Cultured Scholar Strategic Communications takes information operations, particularly strategic narrative, seriously, and we are committed to delivering solutions-based services. Our keen understanding of how the space, cyber, and cognitive domains oscillate between one another positions us as a strategic partner in the space. We lay strategic plans to help you see the way forward on how to design and move through your conquests in daily life, at the micro and macro scales.

Information operations are complex, but the key to understanding strategic convergence is understanding how to move through the strategic framework of data and information movements. Data collected in low earth orbit (LEO), medium earth orbit (MEO), and geostationary earth orbit (GEO) are transmitted to ground stations, which then deliver the data to various electronic devices through APIs for consumption. The magic of translating space and cyber into the cognitive domain is understanding how people consume and respond to information, which is where public affairs, marketing, and advertising strategies are ripe for weaponizing in response to Russian and Chinese grey zone operations.

Russia's direct ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) [missile test](#) against its own COSMOS 1408 satellite shows the potential dangers in outer space and how they can impact life on earth. The orbital debris created by the destruction of the Russian satellite put the International Space Station in harm's way, putting lives in danger in outer space. Orbital debris can also make outer space too dangerous to access, enclosing humanity on earth and inhibiting space exploration initiatives. Effective ASAT weapons can destroy a number of satellites in a way that compromises the function of GPS capabilities or telecommunications networks such as Elon Musk's Starlink. Imagine a world where the internet ceases to exist because adversarial powers successfully destroyed or compromised Western satellite constellations and data transmission networks. It would be pure chaos! Can your organization afford to allow this level of blind anarchy and disruption to the international order come to pass? Most likely not.

The Cultured Scholar Strategic Communications performs 360-degree analysis to assess the consciousness from where information originates (be it COVID-19 misinformation or dark vessels), the technologies that transmit and deliver said information, the public policy opportunities and political risks that come with data transmission and delivery, and the greater problem-solution narrative that plays out in real time. Our research and analysis help you see the big picture clearly so you can make better decisions and be confident in taking decisive action in a timely manner.

### Reviewing the evidence

**Space saves the day.** One of our clients was a space-to-cloud data analytics startup looking for close more government contracts. One of the key offerings was GPS jamming and spoofing geolocation. Through understanding the nuances of how GPS signals can be jammed and spoofed, impacting supply chain operations, telecommunications, and everyday life (which drives narrative), we produced a policy-oriented blog post that successfully supported sales efforts with the Department of Transportation. Our focus on solving policy problems with modern technology yielded conversations with the Department of Defense on using sea ice data to track activity in the Arctic in a way that

supports U.S. space superiority objectives. Our work has shown high-level contacts and decision makers the connection between space and ground operations, which drive narrative and influence operations through competitive advantage.

**Policy drives the narrative.** A pro-bono opportunity allowed us the honor of designing information operations strategy by using public policy initiatives to drive and control the U.S. narrative in a time when adversarial powers were running away with influence operations. After delivering a strategic narrative analysis report including relevant public policy topics Alt-Right extremists take interest in, we witnessed our thoughts become things during the abortion debate that arose from the leak of Supreme Court Justice Alito's opinion on Roe v. Wade.

### **Carefully cultivating the future**

Life is a movie, or at least, it can be. In the micro, people play hero roles in all their stories, but there are larger strategic narratives at play driven by institutions that have just as much personality and ego as any given person's favorite A-list Hollywood star. Whether the United States fights to promote democracy and maintain its global hegemony, Russia seeks to rebuild its great power status, or China works to safeguard its interests in Asia, the Pacific, and Europe, information operations from the sky to your computer to the protest down the street work in concert to shift global consciousness and carefully cultivate movements and narratives that change the face of life on Earth for generations to come.

The Cultured Scholar Strategic Communications helps you identify, analyze, and respond to these narratives and information operations in a way that is comprehensive, in-depth, filled with meaning, and, most importantly, empathetic and ethical – in alignment with global sustainability through positive transmutation of consciousness toward a higher state of being and standard of living.

**Want to learn more? Ready to get started?**

**Schedule your consultation today!**