

Governing for the Algorithm

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Governing for the Algorithm

Power in the Age of Digital Communication

The Paradigm Shift

For decades, the language of state communication followed a familiar institutional script: press briefings, official statements, designated spokespeople. In March 2026, however, the White House announced the bombing of Iran through a video montage built from Hollywood film clips. There was no formal address. There was an edit.

This was more than a symbolic departure. It was the clearest manifestation yet of a transformation more than a decade in the making: political power now communicates through the logic of digital content. Engagement comes first; information follows. And in that inversion of priorities, the nature of political communication itself has been fundamentally reshaped.

What links Trump and Milei is not ideological alignment — their visions of economic order often diverge sharply — but a shared communicational framework.

Their political affinities followed.

Their convergence in communication strategy came first.

The Context: Fifteen Years of Platform Transformation



In 2010, Facebook dominated the digital landscape with 500 million active users. Instagram had just one million. TikTok did not yet exist.

The shift from 2010 to 2025 is not merely quantitative — it is structural. TikTok introduced a fundamentally different logic: social graphs no longer determine visibility. The old model, built around who you follow, gave way to an algorithm driven by interest. Virality is no longer reserved for those with established audiences; anyone can reach mass visibility without a single prior follower.

Political scientist Ian Bremmer describes this era as one of “technopolarity”: a world in which major technology companies exercise forms of social power that, for centuries, were the exclusive domain of the state.

The clearest illustration of this new order did not emerge at a diplomatic summit, but on January 6, 2021. In the aftermath of the attack on the U.S. Capitol, it was Twitter, Facebook, and Amazon — rather than public institutions — that responded with the greatest speed and operational effectiveness.

The Four-Phase Model

The communication pattern of administrations operating under this logic can be understood as a replicable cycle:

Phase 1 — Institutional

Rebranding: Renaming an institution is no longer cosmetic; it reshapes public identity. From the historical shift from “Department of War” to “Department of Defense” in the US to the visual reengineering of ministries in Argentina, state identity moves beyond administration and becomes declaration.

Phase 3 — Narrative

Centralization: The communications apparatus increasingly converges around a narrow set of political priorities. Content that reinforces the governing narrative is amplified; content that complicates or contradicts it is marginalized. Strategic sectors receive visibility.

Phase 2 — Agenda

Saturation: The objective is to flood the public sphere with simultaneous initiatives at a pace that makes sustained scrutiny nearly impossible. One decree follows another. One controversy replaces the last. The strategic goal is not to win every debate, but to prevent any single debate from consolidating.

Phase 4 — AI as Spectacle:

Synthetic imagery no longer serves merely to illustrate political narratives — it actively constructs them. These images do not document reality; they propose it. In the attention economy, emotional intensity often outweighs informational depth. What emerges is not simply technology serving politics, but politics increasingly designed to function within the demands of technology itself.

Why the Cycle Works: A System Already Primed for It

This model is effective not simply because of strategic sophistication, but because it operates on terrain already shaped to receive it.

The line between being known and having a governing track record — between visibility and legitimacy — has rarely been thinner.

In Latin America alone, between 2021 and 2025, twenty presidential elections took place. In sixteen of them, the winning parties did not exist a decade earlier. In Europe, between 2000 and 2020, eighteen newly created parties reached presidential power. Eleven have already disappeared.

There are growing signs that this digital fluency carries costs we have yet to fully calculate. Across OECD countries, PISA scores reached their historical peak around 2012. Since then, the trend has been downward.

The algorithm operates in seconds; governance produces consequences that may take years to materialize. In that gap lies something no edit, no viral clip, and no platform logic can ultimately overwrite: trust, legitimacy, and the enduring credibility of institutions — public or private alike.

The spectacle of power can capture attention. But reality, with all its slowness, eventually asserts a narrative of its own.

Implications for Organizations and Leaders

This environment is redefining the rules of organizational communication. Audiences increasingly function through the same attention mechanisms shaped by algorithmic governance.

1. Visibility is no longer earned through relevance alone:

Organizations now compete for attention in the same ecosystem where states themselves produce content with the aesthetics of fandom, virality, and platform-native spectacle.

2. The news cycle is increasingly fragmented and accelerated:

Organizations without the capacity for rapid, adaptive response risk exclusion from the broader narrative — even when their position is substantively correct.

3. AI-powered image creation introduces a credibility dilemma:

Those who use AI primarily to amplify spectacle may gain immediate reach. Those who invest in genuine authority and strategic consistency are more likely to sustain relevance over time.

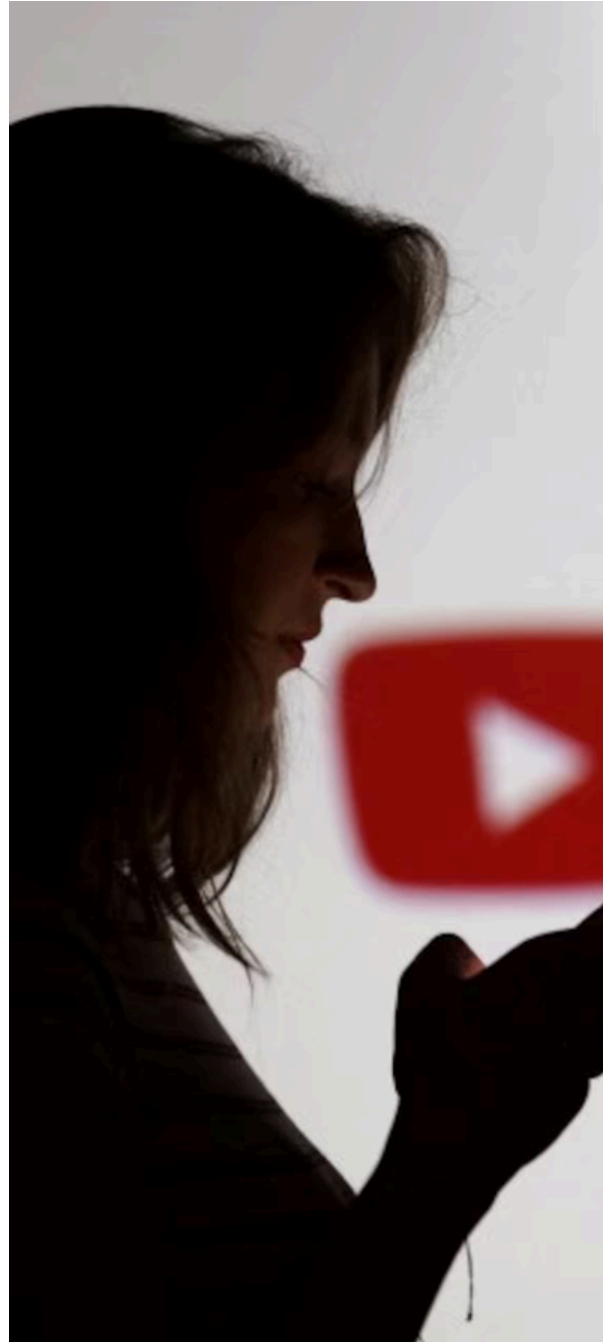
4. The distinction between communicating and informing has never been more consequential:

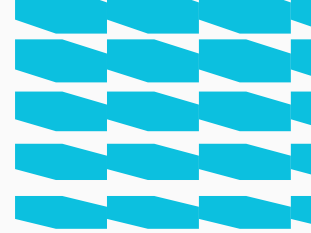
Organizations that optimize solely for engagement, without substance, risk eroding the asset that is hardest to rebuild: the trust of their most important audiences.

The Open Question

The shift is already underway. The question now is whether organizations will proactively shape their communication with intent — or simply adapt after the fact.

- Can any institution — public or private — sustain legitimacy in an environment where everything is optimized for the algorithm?
- How can organizations build communicational authority when the state itself competes for attention using the aesthetics of entertainment?
- What distinguishes the brands and leaders that remain relevant from those that were merely loud?





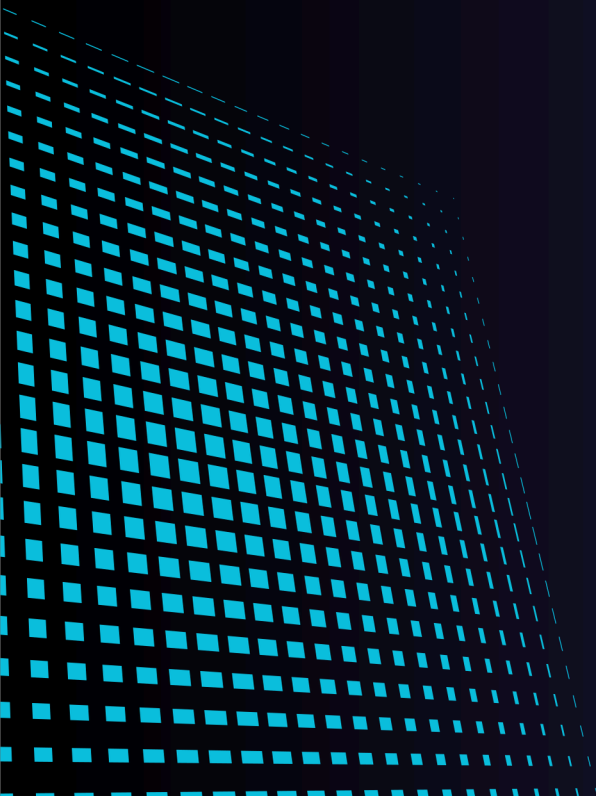
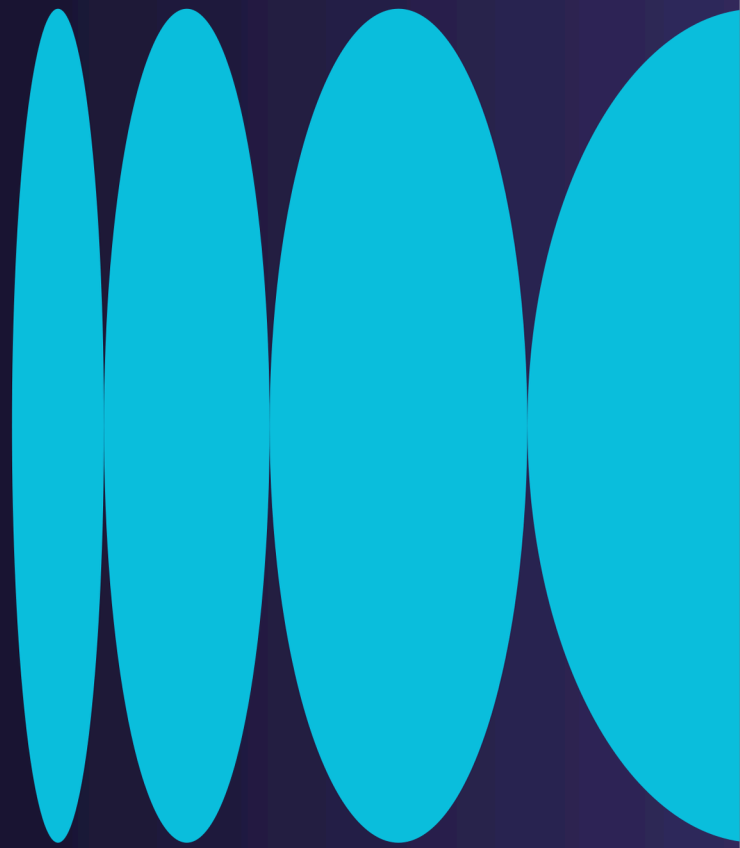
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PEC helps companies and leaders build meaningful presence and real influence in an environment where attention is scarce and credibility is the most valuable asset. We integrate communication strategy, content production, and leadership positioning — using AI as a tool, not an end in itself.

Looking to build your voice with purpose, backed by data and shaped by a distinct identity? Let's talk.

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