



CyberPeace



Essay

Competition



**Strategic Communication
in the Digital Age**



1. The Research Platform & Objectives

The CLAWS Cyberpeace Chair of Excellence on "Strategic Communication Strategy & AI Safety" is a strategic research platform to study emerging threats, develop policy recommendations, suggest capacity building, promote interdisciplinary collaboration and capacity building at the intersection of AI, Cybersecurity and Strategic Communication. In today's highly dynamic national security context, preserving digital sovereignty and protecting our cognitive borders is of utmost relevance.

The Chair of Excellence invites comprehensive research essays from university students, research scholars, serving and retired members of the armed forces, Indian Coast Guard (ICG), Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), State Police Forces, government officials, industry professionals, media experts, and other digital communication enthusiasts. This competition aims to compile progressive, actionable insights on the emerging challenges and opportunities shaping India's cognitive security landscape through essays of 2,500- 3,500 word length .

In addition to the financial prizes awarded to the winning entries, selected high-quality papers will be shortlisted for publication in CLAWS and Cyberpeace journals, academic books, and policy chapters.

2. Essay Themes and suggested Focus Areas

Theme I: Strategic Communication for India: Countering Cyber-Enabled Information Operations, Networked Mobilisation and AI-Assisted Narrative Shaping

- Design of early detection, verification, forensic analysis, attribution, tracking, and flagging mechanisms for synthetic media in India's information space.
- Roles of various agencies, regulators, fact-checking networks, and tech platforms with a view to coalesce efforts for a whole-of-nation cognitive security framework.
- Proposals for a proactive, agile strategic communication structure with institutional links to government, armed forces, police, media, and international partners.
- Roadmap for India's Cognitive Security: Countering Synthetic Media and AI-Enabled Disinformation campaigns.



Theme II: AI Enabled Disinformation Tracking and Real-Time Counter-Narrative Dissemination for India's National Security

- Conceptualising a national AI-enabled system for ingesting OSINT / social media data, flagging hostile information operations, and supporting rapid, credible counter-narratives in multiple Indian languages.
- Doctrinal, technical, legal, and ethical challenges in automating parts of narrative monitoring and response while preserving democratic freedom.
- How adversaries use social media and encrypted messaging for psychological profiling to enable networked mobilisation and influence perceptions of the Indian state.

Theme III: Integrating Social Media Intelligence with Geospatial and Historical Trend Analysis for India's Internal and External Security

- Fusion of social media intelligence (SOCMINT) with geospatial data and historical trendlines for early warning, crowd control, border management, and counter-insurgency.
- Specific use-cases for armed forces (border incidents, grey-zone activity) and police (communal tension mapping, riot prediction, counter-radicalisation).

Theme IV: Digital Sovereignty and Protection of India's Information Space and Critical Narratives

- Legal, regulatory, and technical frameworks to safeguard India's data, platforms, algorithms, and key national narratives from external manipulation and coercive dependence.
- Balancing openness (innovation, free speech, global integration) with sovereign control over critical information infrastructure and cross-border data flows.

Theme V: From Arthashastra and Ashokan Edicts to the AI Era: Classical Indian Principles for Modern Strategic Communication

- Application of concepts such as Arthakrama, Sambandha, Paripurnata, and Ashokan communication practices to contemporary strategic communication challenges in an AI-mediated information environment.
- Ethical, culturally rooted approaches to influence operations, reassurance, deterrence, and narrative building in today's digital ecosystem.



3. Evaluation Criteria, Timelines & Submission Procedure

Submissions should follow laid down guidelines, and they will undergo blind evaluation by a Screening Committee based on the following:-

- Original content, critical thinking, and novel conceptual frameworks.
- Ability to throw fresh, analytical light on the chosen theme and make thoughtful recommendations of value to formulating workable roadmaps.
- Suitability of the paper for publication in a peer-reviewed security journal.
- Command of language, precise expression, and thorough adherence to the APA reference stylesheet.

4. Competition Categories and Prize Structure

To ensure fair evaluation across varying levels of research experience, the competition is split into two categories. Significant financial cash awards will be conferred on the winners.

Award Standing	Category A (University Students)	Category B (All Others)
First Prize	INR 25,000/-	INR 25,000/-
Second Prize	INR 15,000/-	INR 15,000/-
Third Prize	INR 10,000/-	INR 10,000/-

Note on Publications: Selected papers (except the prize winners) published in CLAWS and Cyberpeace peer-reviewed journals will be awarded an honorarium as per existing organizational norms.

Key Deadlines & Submission Details

- Submission of Completed Paper : 30 November 2026
- Completion of Registration & Submission of Articles & Certificates : 30 November 2026

Use the QR Code to register and then email the submission

Submission Email : bipinbakshi.cyberpeacecoe@claws.co.in

Enquiries & Support Helpline : +91-9311950042



<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/jFmjxVRU9a>



Technical & Formatting Guidelines (Latest APA 7th Edition)

Submissions should be in MS Word format and must strictly comply with the following technical and formatting standards:

- **Word Limit:** Essays must be between 2,500 and 3,500 words in length, excluding references, short abstract and a short 30 word brief about the author.
- **Abstract & Keywords:** Each submission must be accompanied by a 100-word abstract and exactly five (05) descriptive keywords.
- **Citation Style:** The Latest APA 7th Edition format must be utilized for formatting and referencing, with proper in-text citations. References must be placed as footnotes. For web references, full URLs must be provided.
- **Originality & Integrity:** Submissions must be original. An official Turnitin (or other authentic plagiarism/AI checker) report certifying zero AI-generated content and low plagiarism must be attached. All documents will be strictly audited for AI & plagiarism.
- **Clearance Certificate:** Serving Officers of the military, police, or government organisations must attach a clear 'Clearance Certificate' obtained from their parent headquarters/organisation.

APA 7th Edition Reference Quick-Guide (As Per CLAWS Stylesheet)

- **Journal Article:** Edwards, A. A., Steacy, L. M., Siegelman, N., Rigobon, V. M., Kearns, D. M., Rueckl, J. G., & Compton, D. L. (2022). Unpacking the unique relationship between set for variability and word reading development: Examining word- and child-level predictors of performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 114(6), 1242–1256. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000696>
- **Online News/Magazine:** Thomson, J. (2022, September 8). Massive, strange white structures appear on Utah's Great Salt Lake. *Newsweek*. <https://www.newsweek.com/mysterious-mounds-great-salt-lake-utah-explained-mirabilite-1741151>
- **Authored Book:** Levenson, H., Jinich, S., Vaz, A., & Rousmaniere, T. (2025). *Deliberate practice in emotionally focused couple therapy*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000436-000>
- **Report by Group Author:** World Health Organization. (2014). *Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition*. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/113048/WHO_NMH_NHD_14.1_eng.pdf?ua=1