



The impasse of competitive intelligence today is not a failure.

A special issue for papers at the ICI 2020 Conference

Intelligence studies started as strategy, the “art of troop leader; office of general, command, generalship”, both in Europe (in Greece as *stratēgia*, but first of all much later with Carl von Clausewitz’ book “On War”, 1832) and in China much earlier with the seven military classics (Jiang Ziya, the methods of the Sima, Sun Tzu, Wu Qi, Wei Liaozi, the three strategies of Huang Shigong and the Questions and Replies between Tang Taizong and Li Weigong). The entities studied then were nation states. Later, corporations often became just as powerful as states and their leaders demanded similar strategic thinking. Many of the ideas came initially from geopolitics as developed in the 19th century, and later with the spread of multinational companies at the end of the 20th century, with geoeconomics.

What is unique for intelligence studies is the focus on information— not primarily geography or natural resources— as a source for competitive advantage. Ideas of strategy and information developed into social intelligence with Stevan Dedijer in the 1960s and became the title of a course he gave at the University of Lund in the 1970s. In the US this direction came to be known as business intelligence. At a fast pace we then saw the introduction of corporate intelligence, strategic intelligence and competitive intelligence. Inspired by the writings of Mikael Porter on strategy, as related to the notion of competitive advantage the field of competitive intelligence, a considerable body of articles and books were written in the 1980s and 1990s. This was primarily in the US, but interest spread to Europe and other parts of the world, much due to the advocacy of the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP). In France there was a parallel development with “intelligence économique”, “Veille” and “Guerre économique”, in Germany with “Wettbewerbserkundung” and in Sweden with “omvärldsanalys,” just to give some examples.

On the technological side, things were changing even faster, not only with computers but also software. Oracle corporation landed a big contract with the CIA and showed how data analysis could be done efficiently. From then on, the software side of the development gained most of the interest from companies. Business intelligence was sometimes treated as enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relations management (CRM) and supply chain management (SCM). Competitive intelligence was associated primarily with the management side of things as we entered the new millennium. Market intelligence became a more popular term during the first decade, knowledge management developed into its own field, financial intelligence became a specialty linked to the detection of fraud and crime primarily in banks, and during the last decade we have seen a renewed interest for planning, in the form of future studies, or futurology and foresight, but also environmental scanning. With the development of Big Data, data mining and artificial intelligence there is now a strong interest in collective intelligence, which is about how to make better decisions together. Collective intelligence and foresight were the main topics of the ICI 2020 conference. All articles published in this issue are from presentations at that conference.

The common denominator for the theoretical development described above is the Information Age, which is about one’s ability to analyze large amounts of data with the help of computers. What is driving the development is first of all technical innovations in computer science (both hardware and software), while the management side is more concerned with questions about implementation and use. Management disciplines that did not follow up on new technical developments but defined themselves separately or independently from these transformations have become irrelevant.

Survival as a discipline is all about being relevant. It’s the journey of all theory, and of all sciences to go from “funeral to funeral” to borrow an often-used phrase: ideas are developed and tested against reality. Adjustments are made and new ideas developed based on the critic. It’s the way we create knowledge and achieve progress. It’s never a straight line but can be seen as a large number of trials and solutions to problems that change in shape, a process that never promises to be done, but is ever-changing,

much like the human evolution we are a part of. This is also the development of the discipline of intelligence studies and on a more basic level of market research, which is about how to gather information and data, to gain a competitive advantage.

Today intelligence studies and technology live in a true symbiosis, just like the disciplines of marketing and digital marketing. This means that it is no longer meaningful to study management practices alone while ignoring developments in hardware and software. The competitive intelligence (CI) field is one such discipline to the extent that we can say that CI now is a chapter in the history of management thought, dated to around 1980-2010, equivalent to a generation. It is not so that it will disappear, but more likely phased out. Some of the methods developed under its direction will continue to be used in other discipline. Most of the ideas labeled as CI were never exclusive to CI in the first place, but borrowed from other disciplines. They were also copied in other disciplines, which is common practice in all management disciplines. Looking at everything that has been done under the CI label the legacy of CI is considerable.

New directions will appear that better fit current business practices. Many of these will seem similar in content to previous contributions, but there will also be elements that are new. To be sure new suggestions are not mere buzzwords we have to ask critical questions like: *how is this discipline defined and how is it different from existing disciplines?* It is the meaning that should interest us, not the labels we put on them. Unlike consultants, academics and researchers have a real obligation to bring clarity and order in the myriad ideas.

The articles in this issue are no exception. They are on collective intelligence, decision making, Big Data, knowledge management and above all about the software used to facilitate these processes. The first article by Teubert is entitled "Thinking methods as a lever to develop collective intelligence". It presents a methodology and framework for the use of thinking methods as a lever to develop collective intelligence.

The article by Calof and Sewdass is entitled "On the relationship between competitive intelligence and innovation". The authors found that of the 95 competitive intelligence measures used in the study 59% were significantly correlated with the study's measure of innovation.

The third article is entitled "Atman: Intelligent information gap detection for learning organizations: First steps toward computational collective intelligence for decision making" and is written by Grèzes, Bonazzi, and Cimmino. The research project shows how companies can constantly adapt to their environment, how they can integrate a learning process in relation to what is happening and become a "learning company".

The next article by Calof and Viviers entitled "Big data analytics and international market selection: An exploratory study" develops a multi-phase, big-data analytics model for how companies can perform international market selection.

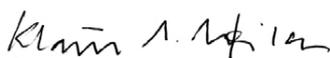
The last article by Vegas Fernandez entitled "Intelligent information extraction from scholarly document databases" presents a method that takes advantage of free desktop tools that are commonplace to perform systematic literature review, to retrieve, filter, and organize results, and to extract information to transform it into knowledge. The conceptual basis is a semantics-oriented concept definition and a relative importance index to measure concept relevance in the literature studied.

As always, we would above all like to thank the authors for their contributions to this issue of JISIB. Thanks to Dr. Allison Perrigo for reviewing English grammar and helping with layout design for all articles.

Have a safe summer!

On behalf of the Editorial Board,

Sincerely Yours,



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