WIKI, BLOG AND TRANSVERSAL ANALYST –
INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS, FROM PAPER TO BLOG*

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Motto: "Intellipedia is Wikipedia on a classified network, with one very important difference: it's not anonymous. We want people to establish a reputation. If you're very good, we want people to know you're good. If you make contributions, we want "If you're an idiot, we want to know."
Thomas Finger, former Deputy Director of the National Intelligence Service

Abstract:

Adapting to the information age, providing #liveintelligence to costumers, PC-mediated interaction and collaborative platforms for collecting, storing, labelling, analysing and capitalizing on national security information are major changes, difficult to implement when resistance to change is very high. The change is so profound that some perceive it as an affront to their education (because their parents did not (mis)educate them). In reality, the new technologies are user friendly, they have a lot of technology based on intuition, meaning you know what to do if you know how the product of your own creation should turn out. Moreover, the introduction of modern concepts of communication and public relations such as the blog and wiki platforms, software dedicated to data analysis, can bring an unsuspected benefit, which we present below.

Keywords: *Intellipedia, blog, wiki, A Space, transversal intelligence analyst.*

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Introduction

The paradigm shift in intelligence (Intel) is now obvious, represented by the switch to the web 2.0, made up of users and online communities, that we can simply call – communicators. We see nowadays how the virtual environment changes behaviours, from the simplest ones (shopping behaviours) to complex social constructions (the Arab spring); we witness nowadays a dramatic change in the communication theory, induced by the fact that the masses communicate, or, in other words, the public, the traditional target of communication, has become the biggest communicator. In the security field, and especially in intelligence analysis, one cannot avoid these changes.

In recent years, intelligence communities have been searching for solutions to the intelligence analysis systemic problems, from its being defined as art or science to methodological elements, respectively the identification of structured analysis instruments. At the same time, initial steps have been taken to the studying of social networks, wiki and blogging, collaborative platforms, from the perspective of adopting these new technologies and studying their effects on the intelligence analysis.

The collaborative paradigm and the implementation of platforms in intelligence

An unanimously accepted and supported point of view, even imposed in some information communities, is the need to implement the new communication and data processing technologies. The change is a major one, only thinking of the implications in the field of information protection, but things have been transferred when the need to share was proclaimed.

Figure 1: The collaborative paradigm (Source: by Ion Lucian Petraș)

Sharing information is not enough; collaboration and moving to need to collaborate are necessary. What does this new challenge mean? It is the adoption of the collaborative way of working through the implementation of dedicated IT systems that are similar to those used by the wider public on the internet, but adapted to the needs of the intelligence services and transposed to the internal networks (Intranet), secured and classified. The truth is that, traditionally, intelligence analysis is not an activity carried out by a single person; more often than not, there are teams of analysts, which involve a high degree of adaptability to the collaborative model and an easier implementation of the new technologies, these being meant to create only the virtual space that allows and supports the collaborative analytic process.

This discipline of collaborative or collective intelligence is based on the new paradigm of "need to share" and it ensures the passage from the expertise of one individual towards a group of specialists; ideally, this chain should continue to extend beyond the information community, following the principle of outsourcing.

The collaborative platform can be imagined as a virtual space (room) (Wheaton, 2008) which has the advantage that it exceeds the limits of geographical space; an analyst's office where one can enter anytime and from anywhere, where the guests are interested in certain topics, are familiarised with them and share common values and principles; the common "wall" where they can expose their new ideas, which provoke discussions. These assets have led to the use of the collaborative soft especially in the academia, but also in intelligence analysis.

Another very important characteristic of these platforms is that they stimulate debate and facilitate interaction in real time, bringing together specialists that otherwise cannot be reunited without high costs and by extracting them from their routine activities.

The information communities do not need Wikipedia, but they need similar technologies to:

√ offer the possibility for analysts to express their beliefs and reasoning independently (blog type);

√ ensure extended relation possibilities at the community level in convergence projects (collaborative platform type intra or inter agencies), including the intelligence customers;

√ facilitate notification and warning systems (SMS, RSS, subscription and so on);

√ allow analysts to assume failure and success (sharing lessons learned) and to develop a reputation.

The best-known example of a collaborative platform is the online Wikipedia. In intelligence, the information community in the USA, under the coordination of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, initiated and subjected to public debate, even in the research field, its projects for implementing the new technologies in the intelligence analysis field, these types of software being experienced as far back as 2006. The US intelligence community benefits at present from an entire system that facilitates the sharing of information and cooperation, respectively a collaborative platform suggestively named Intellipedia, a blogging project for analysts called A – Space and a national intelligence library called Library of National Intelligence (LNI); all these instruments were presented at the Symposium "Analytic Transformation – Moving Forward Together" ever since September 2007.

Starting from my practical experience I made an inventory with the advantages and disadvantages of using such online collaborative instruments in the intelligence analysis.

Advantages:
- ✓ Works as a knowledge market and it can raise the quality of the intelligence products by eliminating the vertical chains (*pipes*) and the Concentration on joint targets (target centric approach) (Clark, 2010);
- ✓ Live intelligence (early warning; immediate feedback; direct collaboration);
- ✓ It is adapted to the consumer's needs;
- ✓ Facilitates team work and the implementation of structured analytical methods;
- ✓ Favours the use of softs dedicated to intelligence analysis;

✓ Ensures rapid integration of the intelligence products coming from different agencies;

✓ Organises the process, ensures traceability and raises the visibility of the analytical act;

✓ Offers direct interaction between the levels of the intelligence cycle: operational, analytical – project manager – costumer;

✓ Provides organizational filters.

Disadvantages:

✓ A too direct involvement of the consumers in the analytical process;

✓ Raises the risk of consumers choosing only the information convenient to them (the online option allows the client to choose what he wants to know);

✓ The appearance of some consumer-type effects – they will produce only what the market searches for (demand – offer type functioning) which can lead to neglecting some threats and risks (rejecting some topics while also focusing the interest on appreciated topics);

✓ False alerts could spread rapidly which could dramatically reduce receptivity to alerts and erode trust within the analytical community;

✓ The use of equipment in other spaces than the secured ones can allow access to some unauthorized people to sensitive information;

✓ Information security risks can arise and info can be exposed to cyber-attacks and also to negligence in use (exploitation or transfer to systems other than the secured ones).

Why does the intelligence analyst want a blog and how could his activity be improved?

The truth is that people are not machines, they are not identical, no matter how much we want to identify the analyst's psychological

profile and to select analysts according to these traits favourable to analysis. In my opinion, since there is no perfect analysis, there is no perfect analyst. On the other hand, machines alone cannot make high-quality analyses without being managed by people. In other words, both analysts and intelligence consumers filter information through their own system of values, their own misconceptions and stereotypes that can influence the way in which each of them perceives reality. Therefore, what we can do is to know the analyst's limitations and those of the intelligence analysis and to encourage diversity in our way of thinking. Academia must find itself in the intelligence analysis too; diversity is one of the engines of knowledge, the collaborative model being recommended to fulfil these tasks.

As it comes up from the chosen topic itself, I advocate for blogging in intelligence because the analyst's blog can become the expression of a different way of producing intelligence, offering the possibility to the expert in analysis to express different points of view (original perspectives, interpretations, alternative scenarios, predictions, intuitive constructs) which are exposed for debate to an informed public. The blog can bring new ways to reflect upon security issues and it can become an environment where analysts launch/test ideas and theories, rapidly eliminate invalid hypotheses and identify innovative solutions to the problems they need to deal with.

The blog will also be a useful instrument for the transfer of expertise at the level of a large analytical community, and also a way to reduce the response time to events (through immediate reaction). Moreover, it could also be a way to raise the level of awareness when it comes to the threats and risks we confront with, facilitating debates between experts of different levels and training, raising the level of diversity when it comes to tackling issues of interest. Ever since 2004, Warren Fishbein and Gregory Treverton proposed using blogs as a platform for intelligence production, claiming that they can be beneficial for debating unfinished products, stimulating the virtual dialogue where both intuitive elements and more formal arguments can be posted so that they can be disputed among those with alternative opinions. Furthermore, US researchers advance the idea of rethinking the concept

of intelligence product proposing the adoption of interactive forms, more consumer friendly, among which is the use of blogs; they offer the consumer the opportunity to enter public debates with the analytical community and to post their own questions.

The intelligence analyst's blog – main characteristics:

Style – the approach of a personal style is typical for the idea of a blog, but it does not have to ignore professional ethics; it also has to allow for presenting different facets of reality perception and an expression which is free of organisational constraints (hierarchy or status), also the forming of a profile, like a brand (as an effect of the gained experience). This method of communication favours introspection and debate because it has two dialogue dimensions, one to self (the diary model) and one with others, where we mainly search for recognition and validation. The former dimension helps us show what we think and how we analytically interpret a certain topic, while the latter dimension allows and encourages the confrontation of ideas and their fertilization.

Originality and creativity: these are two of the characteristics that made blogging be appreciated. Originality makes the difference between the users of this type of communication and the classical ways of mass media, and consumers search for such a product. In what concerns strategic analysis, creative approaches are valued the highest, being useful in the construction of the possible future, the production of predictions and the making of scenarios, respectively eliminating the so-called blind spots. One of the principles of ethics to which the intelligence analyst relates is creativity, together with the innovative spirit and also originality (Răduțu, 2011, p. 45).

Effervescence: if you aroused the interest of the community, the comments will come immediately, they will certify the fact that the chosen topic is of interest and the exchange of ideas can only be beneficial, the session of discussion is saved in time and everybody else can see what was said. The advantages of such an approach are the significant number of ideas, opinions, recommendations, that can be collected in a very short period of time, and the fact that each participant can present his arguments and get an instant feedback. The article can be

modified on the spot, conclusions can be inserted after talks between analysts, leading to consensus or, on the contrary, different point of views be maintained and highlighted. In the online media I have found initiatives of this type, in which press agencies or prestigious publications (*Hotnews*, in Romania, *New York Times* in the USA) invite several personalities of the political or cultural world for sessions of online discussions that are later synthesized in an article. There are also high representatives of the business world or the academia that used to take part in such online chats to interact directly with the public who is interested in the topics on the agenda. I think that such direct interactions with the intelligence consumers are beneficial for both parties, especially because the new generation of decision makers is used to working like this (many political leaders are actively present on social networks and on blogs, they come from a generation that is used to the content generated by the users, they are familiar with the new technologies and use them on a regular basis). Thus, I do not see why the intelligence community could not initiate such discussion sessions following the principle of Q&A (Questions and Answers).

Time: even though at first sight managing a blog could seem a waste of time for analysts, especially if we consider the time constraints they are confronted with, online relations as a whole reduce the reaction time of the community to events and remove a series of redundancies. Moreover, talking about an issue with a team of analysts who are part of a joint project could mean dozens of phone calls, e-mails and videoconferences, while online collaboration has the advantage that it does not require travel costs, it is done on the spot and without long interruptions in the current activities.

Process transparency: the collaborative model allows the identification of all modifications and interventions on an article, from views to different production stages. Retroactive analysis allows the identification and correction of errors because this system ensures viewing the evolution of the article from the first save to the last chosen alternative. The production process of an article can be audited based on the principle how it's made? in each stage of the editing process, until the moment of its dissemination to the authorized ones. This facility raises

the capacity of monitoring the production during its entire intelligence cycle, and even more, it allows the oversight committees to identify possible dysfunctions.

Being up to date: electronic products can generally be more easily updated to be at the same pace with the evolution in this field. The article can be permanently updated with the data flux.

Any theory regarding the relationship between the intelligence services and the decision makers must focus on the intelligence consumer as the aim of intelligence is to offer analytical products that serve the state decision. How can the briefing of decision makers evolve in the online age when it is already advocating for the switch to superior versions of the web 2.0? Irrespective of the will of the intelligence communities, beneficiaries are now consumers of web-based products, the decision makers, even at the highest level, know and use social media including blogs, social networks and they are active participants in online debates, being forced by the technological evolutions to choose between being on-line or off-line. Intelligence consumers are familiar with obtaining information upon request in real-time and the intelligence services come to the information market of the modern Intelligence products with the classical paper-based info; don't you think something new would be welcomed?

Transversal analysts – with a type „T" professional configuration

The interaction between information services and the decision makers is approached from multiple perspectives, and it is normal to raise interest, both in the academia and in the political spectrum. Taking into consideration the fact that the mission of the Intelligence agencies is to provide analytical products that serve the decision in the state and the technology of Intelligence production is lately receiving special attention, this special interest is welcomed.

The decision process in the state is featured by the legislation but the mechanisms and gearing that determine a certain decision are, most of the time, known by a limited number of people. Few are those who have the privilege to work in both systems and thus possess the

advantage of understanding their inner workings; even fewer are those who shared their experiences, as consumer and producer, with the wider public.

National security as a mission is not only the task of the intelligence services, and lately, the need for defining the common mission is felt more acutely, based on a model of a network of experts who manage collaboratively the security issues. The costumers can obtain from the dedicated analytical departments more than processed information, they can get expertise which has at its basis years and years of activity in a certain field or area of interest, which means special training sessions, quality human resources, and, not least, material resources which the state puts at the decision makers' fingertips. The intelligence analyst, as the centre of the intelligence cycle, becomes more and more a component of the organisation with a „T" type professional configuration („T shaped skills/person") I called it Transversal analyst.

As opposed to an analyst in a single field type I (I-shaped person) or a generalist "jack of all trades, master of none", a "t-shaped" analyst is an expert in at least one field and somehow able to carry out many other and various activities.

In this format, the vertical line of the letter „T" represents the depth of the expertise in his field of responsibility and the horizontal line stands for the abilities and the capacity to collaborate with experts from other fields of work and to take over knowledge applicable to the Intelligence analysis.

Thus, the longer the horizontal line, i.e. the capacity for collaboration (and for obtaining expertise from different fields), the bigger the depth of knowledge and the abilities in their own domain. The more capable are the intelligence analysts to offer answers to the questions of the day, to make the switch from the old, „puzzle" and „connect the dots" type paradigm, to the new paradigm, the more it means getting out of patterns in order to identify asymmetric threats, with a low degree of predictability.
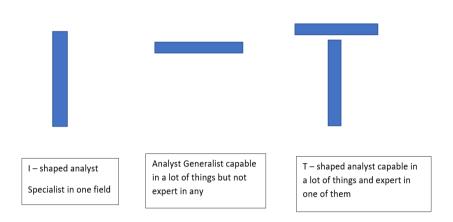
Figure 2: I-shaped vs generalist vs T-shaped
(Source: https:// jchyip.medium.com/why-t-shaped-people-
e8706198e437 originally made by Jason YiP)

The need for interdisciplinarity in intelligence is only natural given the wide range of risks nations have to handle at present. It is also implicitly by the wide range of domains in which the analysts' expertise is needed. From the perspective of the high need for adapting to the new, as the innovative spirit has a special meaning in the field of analysis, interdisciplinarity is very important in developing intelligence products and in implementing the new methods and techniques we need. Intelligence analysis no longer provides pieces of intelligence, but offers integrated intelligence services, which means expertise, resources (human/financial) and products.

Transversal analysts are about adaptation and resilience in an ever-changing world, when there is no time to gather experts for all areas of interest in a short time; it is also a form of rapid adaptation to consumer demand. Intelligence production and analyst teams are receiving increasingly diverse requirements, each requiring a different set of capabilities, talents and abilities. T-shaped analysts also mean that we can do more with fewer people or do the same with fewer employees (although it may be more expensive to pay T-type analysts than generalist or ultra-specialized, type I analysts).

Transversal analysts can discuss more effectively by learning the skills of others (share know how, not only Intel); moreover, speaking a common language to all of them, analysts can communicate much more effectively which helps consumers and managers to understand the various perspectives.

The decision maker comes in a public position with an already formed informational background, most often outside the governmental system, and is not familiar with the previous activity of the institution he will lead, with its politics and strategies that were initiated in the early mandates by the predecessors, but the activities in the field of national security have continuity; they did not appear at the same time with his taking over the mandate and they will not end with it. On the other hand, the analyst has enough expertise to ensure both continuity and receptivity to new missions meant to protect national interests; the quality of the analytical expertise being, many times, more important than new Intel.

Conclusions

The transition to wiki and blogging will soon become a natural process; it will be as easy as the transition from paper-based media to electronic media, for the simple reason that the latter is more efficient, easier to use and live with. We have mentioned here the influences and effects of this change from multiple perspectives: the perspectives of analysts, consumers and that of production. We could say that the change is an important one and that it will generate essential changes for each of the dimensions analysed above. I consider that the benefits of using collaborative software will lead to major changes in the perception of Intelligence experts, but also in the decision-maker's relationship with them. These modern means provide a high degree of flexibility to Intelligence structures, being beneficial for rapid adaptation to unforeseen situations; another advantage is the visibility of the analytical process in all its intermediate stages; also facilitating democratic control, stimulating teamwork, facilitating the management of projects involving different people and institutions, no matter where they are, also increasing interoperability. However, it should not be ignored that these technologies substantially change the behaviour of different actors

interacting institutionally, introducing new, unknown elements that can negatively influence both the analytical and managerial process.

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