

**Meta intelligence:
Alternative Paradigms in Intelligence to face the challenges of the 21st century**

Dr Pascal FRION

Researcher in Applied Intelligence Education
Jules Verne Institute for Prospective
and Innovative Projects (Locarn – France)
pascal.frion@acrie.fr

The author has practiced and studied Intelligence for Business since 1996. In 2012, his doctoral thesis showed that discourses on Competitive Intelligence have produced a "poor breakthrough." Companies have been mostly reluctant to this discourse and did not use its recommendations. Significant fragile underpinnings were identified in these discourses. They remained homogenous for the last 20 years: Bad old ways repeated themselves.

In order to find ways and means to more easily inoculate Intelligence in Business, other Intelligences have been studied in Law Enforcement and in National Security, where it has been institutionalized for decades.

Two major axes emerge:

- Some fragile underpinnings in Intelligence for Business can also be found in other Intelligences. Law enforcement and the Military could benefit from this initial research in Business;
- Some practices and discourses from the Police and the Military diverge from the ones in Business and the discourse for Intelligence for Business could also benefit from other intelligences.

The author calls for a Meta-Intelligence.

Author's background

Researcher and teacher in Intelligence.

During his National Service in Competitive Intelligence, he learned the official discourse by the book (1996-1997). Right after this, he started his own Business – Acrie (www.acrie.fr) and he experienced difficulties in implementing this official discourse. He identified numerous and large gaps between incantatory discourses and efficient practices.

During his PhD in Information and Communication – defended in 2012 – he studied the lack of presence of the human dimension and a dozen major weaknesses in Intelligence discourses. For tens of years an anachronistic discourse - largely based on a mechanical dimension - has been used in a vicious circle with not much learning effect.

Since then, he is considering the harmful effect of weak underpinnings of the competitive intelligence discourses, and he is trying to see if they are also present in the other fields of intelligence.

He is also a partner in a Predictive Crime Mapping Software company since 2009. On top of this he has been involved in a National Security association since 2000, a member of a team or in charge of a few Security and First Responders activities during special events since 2005, and in the Land Reserve Corps since 2015.

His research is on "how to inform ourselves".

He is trying to find more efficient practices, methods, tools, and thinking modes that support the opacity, incongruity, ambiguity, equivocability, uncertainty, and incompleteness of Intelligence situations. He has replaced the weak statements by robust ones and he has been experimenting the replacement of bits of the Classical Discourse by a modern approach with success.

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A) Introduction.

Expectations are rising.

Resources are limited.

Opportunities and threats are more diverse.

Intelligence discourses suffer from weaknesses.

It is hard to train intelligence that includes the modern challenges.

Where do we start to review the ways we practice and the ways we teach it?

My presentation is split in two:

- The good old Intelligence
- An alternative Paradigm in Intelligence to face the challenges of the 21st century: A Meta Intelligence

B) The Good Old Intelligence

An opportunity to cease: Our universe is changing

Major differences with the beginning of the 20st century

1. Information abundance
2. Multiplicity of adversaries and allies
3. Many of the challenges we face today are new
4. Increased velocity in professional activity and in expectations
5. Technology boom
6. More constraints like legal and public scrutiny
7. Diversity of private actors who can contribute
8. Real time reporting across the world
9. Images are competing more with text
10. General complexity

Major situations and conditions we face to work in the field of Intelligence

1. Lack of priorities in our numerous requirements
2. The Intelligence framework is based on the Industrial Age thinking mode
3. My boss doesn't know what he wants, clearly
4. New situations, new threats
5. Layers of review
6. Multiple tasks, multiple bosses and multiple audiences
7. Too many sources
8. Deception prepared by our adversaries
9. No clear "finishing line" when we can stop searching and analyzing
10. Catching the attention of his boss
11. Difficulties to validate, triangulate, verify information
12. Modeling from the start (pull) or observing the potential of the situation (push)
13. When I have finished with my enemy, who will be my next enemy?

C) The classical discourse in Intelligence suffers from harmful weaknesses

The classical discourse can be roughly put as "more information, more analysis, and will will know what to do"

Major concepts we usually consider in intelligence. Consciously or unconsciously.

The usual discourse in Intelligence for Business for the last 20 years.

1. Information centred (signs, data, information, knowledge, intelligence), foreknowledge (Sun Tzu), data-bases, big data, information acceptance. Informational approach vs communicationnal approach and informative approach
2. Sources (open-sources), information exists, information is out there. Maximum variety of sources is promoted. Nowadays, we can access information.
3. The completeness of information (more than 100% of the pages of Intelligence Education documents include the words like "all, complete, every, exhaustive, full, whole, etc."). Exhaustivity is necessary to make a decision. Monitoring is permanent.
4. Mastering information, organization and technology
5. Critical mass of information is rather large
6. Security, risk. Risk Reduction, avoiding surprises
7. No-preconceived ideas, neutrality
8. Serendipity (provoke information and you will be lucky)
9. Secrecy (or confidentiality) on our advantages
10. Information Analysis (Analysis is considered as the cornerstone) and not much Synthesis
11. Processes / Monitoring, making sense, connecting the dots, accumulation, sum, addition, Mosaic theory of analysis
12. Pollination (Progress paradigm). Turning information into knowledge
13. Sharing vs spamming (In doubt, we share: Badly informing ourselves is better than not being informed)
14. Situation awareness vs sending what we know
15. Resources and people we can use are everywhere for us and for our adversaries. Networking, collaboration, integration. Intelligence is everyone's business.
16. Legal issues
17. Information advantage, situational awareness. Strategy will come from information and analysis.

Major metaphors we frequently use in intelligence and we should replace

1. Information is the blood of the organization, the new black gold
2. Mining, data-mining (time and strength to make efforts)
3. Nuggets (efforts pay)
4. Binoculars (focusing)
5. Jigsaw puzzle
6. Raw material / refinery (Baumard, 2002, p. 10)
7. Funnel shape process
8. Radar
9. Connecting the dots
10. Vacuum cleaner
11. Source

Major weaknesses we need to overcome

1. Information is considered as a raw material (Information attributes)
2. Information is taken as a good thing (Beliefs). It is a particular case. The general case isn't it infoxication?

3. We are info-addicts (we can't bear having silence)
4. We are possessed by information (Behaviors), we can't think out of the "information box"
5. We take for granted that our boss knows what he wants
6. Process first and not human first
7. What are the "hidden costs" of the Intelligence Discourse of "more information"?
8. What is the "opportunity cost" of the classical Intelligence discourse?
9. There is often "no context"
10. Text is the most used vector to communicate and it is the poorest means of communication
11. Too much Functionalism vs not enough Humanism
12. We have many data-bases and no or few need-bases
13. Curiosity (Beware of the curiosity, it can lead to more information, analysis paralysis, anchor effect, and a poor choice – Loewenstein, 1994)
14. Lack of trust, lack of transparency

The classical model is anachronistic, and we tend to do more of the same thing with new issues and new conditions. It is time to review it.

Major fears we need to tackle

1. Fomo (Fear Of Missing Out)
2. Gigo (Garbage In Garbage Out)
3. Information Overload
4. Accountability
5. Inappropriate threat assessment
6. Paranoia
7. Losing his credibility
8. Spamming his colleagues and bosses
9. Absence of priority
10. Overinterpretation
11. Overfitting
12. Deception
13. Knowledge gap with the boss
14. Being shot as a messenger
15. Weak interpersonal skills
16. Inappropriate focus (under the radar)
17. Attention deficit
18. Blindspots
19. Endless work
20. Revealing a secret
21. Difficulties to access data (format, clearance, etc.)
22. Legacy scrutiny (privacy, etc.)
23. Making choices
24. Badly estimating doubt

D) A General Theory for Intelligence

- The idea is not to replace a dominant authoritarian discourse by another one.
- The idea is to empower people with a more universal approach to identify the situations and the conditions so that we can choose quickly which robust approach, tool, discourse, competence, and training fits best.
- We need to address these issues and try and make some evolve by the people rather than by a strong hierarchy, strong bureaucracy and strong processes. If we don't face these issues, we either keep on doing the same things, or we fancy the latest toy out there and test it.
- We can start working on Organization, or on Tools, but the results will not vary as much as

with People.

Major choices we need to address

1. Surprises (avoid surprises or being able to be surprised).
2. Silence (non information) or noise (too much information)
3. Risk (risk aversion or risk taking)
4. Luck and voluntarism (Observing the potential of the situation – filtering - or Modelling - targeting)
5. What we know or what we don't know (library or anti-library – Umberto Eco)
6. Information is good, bad, undetermined by nature?
7. Information first or strategy first?
8. Stressing on "knowing that" or on "knowing how"
9. Technology – Organization - Competencies
10. Distrust (oblige people to share) or trust (allow people to ask)
11. On going – On the spot
12. Need to know vs need to ask
13. Need to share vs need to take care

If we do not choose them, they will not remain unchosen. Therefore we only rely on historical practices, intuition and it is not balanced with a more conscious selection.

They are not necessarily clear-cut choices or preferences, they can also represent a continuum.

Major Concepts we need to grasp today

1. Naive intelligence
2. Rubble (and not only nuggets)
3. Zemblanity (Boyd, 1998)
4. Infobesity (too much information)
5. Infocination (a little piece of information is toxic, Information is toxic)
6. Human limitations (ex: Simon and his Bounded Rationality), Information Behaviours (www.informationR.net), Intuition
7. Agnotology - The study of ignorance (Proctor & Schiebinger, 2008)
8. Information Resistance (Frion, 2012; Juge Freeh, 2014, Dunganvan, Global Intelligence Forum)
9. Anti-library (Umberto Eco)
10. Accountability
11. Informative need (rather than possessing information)
12. Means, Results, Choices (respectively at the Agriculture age, Industrial Age and Information Age)
13. Transparency in the process for the insiders (secrecy in the goal for outsiders)
14. Complexity to inform ourselves (not simplicity to process data)
15. Info-lust or information obsession (Blair, 2010, p. 11)
16. Asymmetrical Information

Major Attitudes

1. Information Acceptance
2. Tolerance
3. Avoidance
4. Resistance / Refusal

Ann Blair (2010) clearly shows that Information Overload existed at different periods of time. The perception of Information Overload depends on our attitudes: Curator (safeguard information, Blair, 2010, p. 22), Compiler (Blair, 2010, p. 13), Censor, Collector.

Historical mottos / beliefs we need to question (When we don't know what to do, they come to our mind)

1. Badly informing ourselves is better than not being informed
2. Weak signals will become strong signals
1. Efforts will pay: The Mine and the nuggets metaphor
2. My boss knows what he wants, clearly
3. More information is better
4. Information is a good thing
5. Everything can be explained
6. Information does exist (we don't invent it, we need to find it)
7. Human behaviors are as controllable as technology and organization can be
8. Fight against pre-conceived ideas
9. Analysis is key (what about synthesis?)
10. Totality is the goal
11. We can always find something useful from the noise, whereas there is nothing to find in the silence. Pliny "There is no book so bad that some good cannot be gotten from it" (Blair, 2010, p. 13)
12. Better to predict than to react

Major approaches in management for Intelligence teams (Frion, 2016, to be published)

1. Informational
2. Communicational
3. Informative

Major competencies to develop

1. Critical thinking
2. Challenging assumptions, identifying hidden costs
3. Estimating time, efforts and success
4. Assessing his own needs
5. Choosing, selecting, prioritizing, qualifying, characterizing
6. Deliberating, considering opportunity cost
7. Catching the attention of someone (without robbing his attention)
8. Imagination (Alternative)
9. Transparency in the tools and beliefs we use
10. Credibility, non-ambiguous communication (Trust)

Major modern tools to implement

1. Seeking Prototype
2. Monitoring Prototype
3. Need base
4. Priority Prototype
5. MIR – (T)MIR: (Temporary) Methodological Information Resistance/Refusal
6. A credit system to be allowed to contact some people directly

Major modern mottos: When we don't know what to do, which little song could we refer to

1. "Less information is better than more"
2. "Interacting yes, spamming no"
3. "What am I looking for? and when do I know I have won"
4. "Information represents a small portion in informing ourselves"
5. "When we don't know if a piece of information is useful, we leave it"
6. "A boss doesn't know what he wants, clearly"
7. "If my boss doesn't change his mind during a project, I get scared"

8. "Don't do what your boss wants until you ask him to reformulate his needs"
9. "Communicating is not "shooting information and forgetting", communicating is taking care"
10. "Interesting information doesn't interest me" (there is too much information to stop each time it is only "interesting")"
11. "No research without a search plan" (80%-90% of the time?)
12. "We can invent information" (information can also be what doesn't exist yet)
13. "Information without context is no information"
14. "Whatever we can predict we need to be able to react"
15. "There are always some pieces of information we miss, we just have to leave with it"

E) Opening and discussions

There are other topics of interest.

- The Intelligence Mythology needs an upgrade
- If we don't address this issue, we use an historical way of doing intelligence
- We can create and implement a modern thinking mode for Intelligence in the 21st century
- It is the Breda Call for large scale experiments to adjust it to different Intelligence fields, expectations and constraints
- Meta Intelligence is about taking a quick step back to resist the dominant Intelligence and to choose or to design the best approach

The next step

- Where should we start?
- The author identified that starting points do not bring back much value.
- One best way seems to emerge.
- Now the underpinnings are identified, more research needs to be done on the necessary shift in Intelligence for the 21st century.

My suggestions

Depending on a variety and on a diversity of situations, conditions, and beliefs that Intelligence activities meet, my main operational objective is to provide actionable methods, tools, references and advice.

If we manage to identify clear situations and conditions, then we will be reasonably confident of using the most appropriate messages to create appropriate management, training sessions, actionable methods, effective tools, and engage in a virtuous circle of a learning effect.

The idea is not to blame it on the old discourse, but rather to introduce new considerations, based on a changing world, so that people can engage in considering new ways to practice their various Intelligence Activities.

Now the wicked problem is when we don't really know the situation neither the conditions.

In this last case, we usually follow our intuition, our flair, our gut feeling, our experience.

This is not easy to teach and train.

So before times goes on and we become older and really good at making "educated guesses", I am trying to identify or to create some modern principles, rules, references, and mottos so that we can orientate our critical thinking very quickly and act accordingly when we are puzzled and paralyzed by wicked problems.

Let's investigate our preferences, our pre-conceived ideas, our fears; identify our context with its constraints and its potential, imagine alternatives, and select a successful modelled solution or construct an ad hoc reaction.