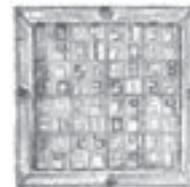


ORGANIZE, ANALYZE, DISTRIBUTE: THE ENTERPRISE WEBLOG

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One of the principal competitive intelligence (CI) functions is to develop quality information sources and provide analysis, but often much of a CI professional's time is spent juggling information and managing outbound communication. Enterprise weblog technology and quality analysis can provide relevant competitive and market information to the right stakeholders in a timely manner. The result is a high performance, real-time competitive intelligence function that puts information at the fingertips of your stakeholders.

QUIZ

What percent of your time is spent doing the following information management tasks?

- 1) organizing and reorganizing source information
- 2) querying the sales team for human intelligence
- 3) constructing and sending a weekly newsletter
- 4) customizing the newsletter for different audiences
- 5) digging through your file system for source information to answer specific requests or weekly analysis requirements
- 6) referencing the source information or attaching it to the analysis

How much of your time is spent doing analysis?

If most of your time is spent on organization and distribution, you are minimizing your ability to focus on analysis deliverables on which a large part of your performance is evaluated.

THE CHALLENGE

Technology shortfalls consume time and systematically degrade the valuable knowledge you generate and distribute on a daily basis. Consider the following challenges:

Organization

An article written on your industry may reference two competitors, their pricing practices, and forecast market trends. The article is valuable and will be a headline in your weekly newsletter. So you decide to click Save As and are confronted with your filing system (See Figure 1). What now? You choose one folder, or make four copies.

This is a simple example, but it illustrates the limitations of many information taxonomies. Intelligence information must exist in multiple

locations, and each location may require separate security permissions to protect sensitive material.

Analysis

Analysis doesn't happen in a vacuum. It requires you to comment on and refer to information from published sources, human intelligence, and competitive profile reports.

- Effective commentary requires that you point out key information that appears deep within a published article or an email from a field representative.
- Synthesis requires that you make conclusions and point to the validating source material. Can you easily call out and comment on

information as depicted? (See Figure 2.)

The challenge is to call out key information at the paragraph level and to cope with filing systems where source information may change or move. Your reader wants to find and understand your important points but doesn't have the time to sift through mountains of text.

Communication

Intelligence is shared with the

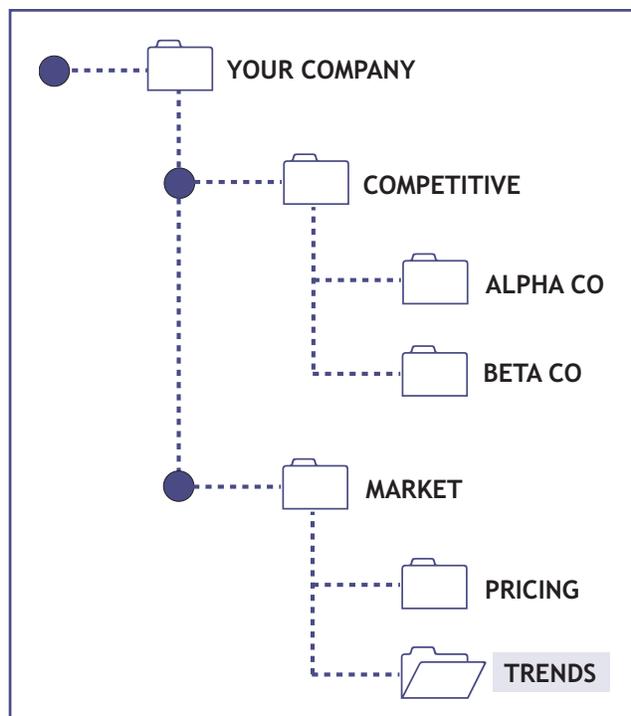


Figure 1: Filing System

IBM ON WEDNESDAY plans to announce 23 new partner vendors to its program designed to deliver a diverse set of capabilities into its WebSphere Portal Server. 07

alert portal

Note IBM does not have a weblog partner, but this technology is spreading fast (see MarketResearch7: Flash: Blogging Goes Corporate). The time to move is now. [frank 12/4/02 9:43 pm]

The partnerships with vendors such as Vignette, i2, Information Builders, divine, and paybox bring a variety of application functions into IBM's portal offering via portlets.

private web-based workspace where both appear as an article on a news page rather than a file in a folder

- assign labels and comments to paragraphs to call out key information
- present sensitive or timely material as alerts or alarms
- make links between

articles to validate conclusions or relate information

- publish selected articles into individual news pages
- automatically generate customized newsletters sent to all involved in the CI process

A good solution may also support a process for receiving feedback, questions, and intelligence from the field. Taken one final step, this type of resource can also be deployed as a project communication system for account teams and product managers. The notes they take on customer meetings, customer opportunities (won or lost), and emails they forward to the system with product requests become a valuable source for CI and market information.

The weblog may begin as a primarily one-directional resource to enable you to communicate with your stakeholder, but can easily grow into a resource that enables your stakeholder to communicate with you.

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Figure 2: Comment, Link and Label

organization on both a proactive and reactive basis. The act of communicating intelligence requires that you identify a target audience, produce information and distribute it to them:

- newsletters include market monitoring updates
- analyses presented to executives and line-of-business directors
- information collection provided reactively in response to inquiries

Jane Marin's November 8 article in SCIP:Online, *The gathering and internal dissemination of CI*, emphasizes that email is the most common distribution medium. She also notes that intranet use is limited because of content management issues such as preventing overload and restricting access to certain material. Email is fast and direct, but it poses a filing challenge to the person who receives it, in addition to not being stored for later reference with your source information.

THE ENTERPRISE WEBLOG

Many solutions are available to search volumes of published information and to help produce competitive profiles and feature comparisons. But the challenge remains to effectively manage volumes of information, project your analysis into it, and provide a resource that distributes the relevant sound-bites automatically to selected stakeholders.

Weblog software is a rapidly emerging alternative that can help to fill

this gap. Weblogs are easy to write internet or intranet-based journals, organized by time and topic. They put the full power of the web at your fingertips by letting you write to the web on a regular basis with a set of very basic tools.

Over the past year or so, weblogs — blogs for short — have turned from an information-sharing vehicle for techies into a tool with a strong and growing following. Today, more than half a million people use these

Analysis comments on and refers to information

regularly-updated, online diaries to contribute, link, and control content on an editable web page.

Enterprise weblog software retains the concept of an easy to use web-based journal, but is built for team contribution. It adds corporate must-haves like security, document handling, and an audit trail.

This type of solution helps you to organize and communicate information in the process of collection and analysis functions. The result is a high performance intelligence process and a high quality, real-time product. At a minimum, a weblog solution for CI should allow you to:

- consolidate published information and human intelligence into a