

About the Competitive Intelligence Center:



How it all Started

The Competitive Intelligence Center (CIC) began inside a major publicly traded corporation as a proprietary, value-added services module designed to create a web of CI resources across the enterprise. The intent was to push CI best practices, activities, information gathering and knowledge from a centralized marketing research function out to the edges of the enterprise. This was a concerted effort to assist the knowledge workers in their day-to-day understanding of their market environment and to increase their CI knowledge and skills. Ultimately, we strived to institutionalize CI and make it a very comfortable, efficient and routine activity for all to participate in. With effective CI, strategic and tactical agility can be improved in an effort to **outperform, outmaneuver and outsmart** the competition.

Build, Integrate, Connect and Extend

The path would follow the build (the platform), integrate (within an automated delivery vehicle like an intranet), connect (with the users) and extend (beyond the borders of the enterprise) approach. Once developed, tested and deployed across the private company intranet, this CIC portal was to be a value-added services module for our affinity portal building capability. The idea was simple: in addition to providing the users of private online communities (our company, other client corporations, associations and trade groups) a "My Yahoo" experience, offer them a CI portal capability where they can conduct proactive, efficient, timely, coordinated and relevant competitive intelligence activities for better decision making.

Over time, priorities changed, e-commerce investments dwindled at the parent firm and the site was spun-off by the CIC founder and creator **Bill Tyson** and made public for everyone's use.

Why Competitive Intelligence (CI) is Critical

Competitive intelligence has become an increasingly important function in the corporate world. Advancements in technology, the rapid emergence of a new breed of competitors, and changes in the economy all have lead companies to acknowledge the need for a systematic means to proactively gather and share Competitive Intelligence (CI). In a 2002

survey published by the Fuld-Gilad-Herring Academy of Competitive Intelligence, most companies are unprepared for increased industry risk. Among the survey's findings:

- Over 77% of managers believe that they will face an increased business risk over the next 2-3 years.
- Nearly half for see major competitive threats from competitors introducing a proprietary or breakthrough product or service or an alternative technology replacing the need for their company offering.
- Only 5.4% consider their management proactive in responding to industry shifts with over half finding their management' either slow to react or gripped with analysis paralysis (see [Factiva](#)).

This has resulted in an overwhelming need by business professionals to employ efficient searches through online tools, which will assist them in obtaining, consuming and sharing competitive intelligence with colleagues.

Why the Internet is Not Enough

On the surface, the Internet appears to be a cheap and efficient means for CI research, dissemination and analysis. However, in reality, with millions of active web sites and billions of active web pages the Internet is really vast, unorganized and inefficient means to gather quality competitive intelligence. The Competitive Intelligence Center helps by recommending a combination of tools be used for effective CI including: targeted free web sites listed in the CIC Library, Subscription-based interactive services (i.e. the Interactive edition of the Wall Street Journal), off-line sources and value-added information services (Factiva, Lexis-Nexus, Morningstar, Dun and Bradstreet, etc.). The Competitive Intelligence Center is an objective, unbiased third party site that will assist users in accessing free and fee-based CI services.

The ten links below will take the user through a series of tools and techniques essential in compiling a competitive review. Each of these sections include: practices, methods, tips, template report formats and also emphasize any limitations regarding the competitive review process. You can choose to conduct your reviews using one or more of these tools. By following **all** ten paths and the tools with recommendations therein you should conduct a **comprehensive competitive review**.

1. [Understanding Competitive Intelligence](#)
2. [Developing CI Strategies](#)
3. [Choosing Online Sources](#)
4. [Media Analysis](#)
5. [Researching "Outside the Box"](#)
6. [Researching Public Records and Government Databases](#)
7. [Researching Business Web Sites](#)
8. [Industry Analysis](#)
9. [Analyzing Competitors' Websites](#)
10. [Compiling the Competitive Review](#)

For more information about the Competitive Intelligence Center see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

If you have any suggestions, comments or questions, please contact **The Competitive Intelligence Center**.

Words of Wisdom

"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle." -*Sun Tzu, "The Art of War"*.

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