

For a new discourse on Competitive Intelligence

Institutional, commercial and scientific discourses on Competitive Intelligence (CI), in France were studied⁽¹⁾. Over the last 20 years, these speeches aimed to help companies, local regions and countries to grow and to protect their assets. However, Competitive Intelligence discourse has not succeeded in meeting the requirements of small companies.

CI discourses have been based on a common set of understatements and produced a homogeneous discourse. Many of these "understatements" are fragile:

- "information is good to take";
- "We need the facts before anything else";
- "The value is in the analysis of information," among others.

Practices that were mentioned in the speeches were essentially functionalist practices for large companies, focusing on information that is available. It has been believed that it is sufficient to access, collect and analyze information to improve the situation, to innovate, to protect, to gain performance and international competitiveness.

The practical consequences were the large absence of the human dimension in favor of an anachronistic organization dating from the industrial era: more information, faster, earlier. In short, more of the same thing. The computational approaches often could replace individuals, because they are unstable, fragile, asking questions and likely to challenge an industrial process that targets and filters information. These speeches have been kept to a simple level of collection and analysis of information, without integrating most of the complexity of informing ourselves. The discourse was supposed to inform us, it often misinformed us. While we have all experienced situations when information has been beneficial and has changed our way of thinking, the rule that the information is a good thing is wrong. The speeches have suffered from epistemological differences that have been misleading. They amplified information overload.

The analysis of Competitive Intelligence practices in business was also conducted and we observed difficulties and low profitability after the implementation of the conventional discourse.

The information must not be the center of the universe of CI. Stronger operational considerations need to be used, including a defocusing complex approach of the "action to inform oneself", more human oriented, not starting with information monitoring. The human perception of information overload does exist, the information is not necessarily a good thing. Therefore, why should we always accept and sort out information?

A new theory is proposed: the MIR (the Methodological Resistance to Information). This resistance or refusal is temporary: MIR(t). It saves time and provokes critical discussions. It also avoids the information available to come and pollute the initial thinking.

Discourse analysis on CI was originally intended for small and very small companies. However, the understatements of the discourse are also fragile for large companies, local regions and countries. Thus, this research is about: how to inform ourselves personally and professionally, individually and collectively in a simple and cost-effective manner, with an absence of some strategic information and a perception of a global information overload, securing a competitive advantage.

By replacing the fragile understatements by more robust ones, a new discourse emerges, marking a turning point in the intelligence for business, including information management, business management, business intelligence and local and national intelligence policies.

1. " **Genealogy of the low breakthrough of the Competitive Intelligence discourse in French Small Companies: Epistemological mistakes and operational proposals**" by Pascal Frion. Directed by Nicolas Moinet. Members of the jury : Eric Boutin , Ludovic François, Sophie Larivet , Alain Juillet. PhD in Information Science and Communication, defended in 2012, on December 7th, at the University of Poitiers (France). This thesis is available in paper and digital versions at www.acrie.fr.