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Primary sources to help you control your cow.

by David Carpe

In the field of competitive intelligence, primary research is loosely defined as 'in-depth interviews' with individuals likely to be intimate with competitor or marketplace activity. Everything else seems to become secondary research by default. Is there room for more stratification? Let's rethink what we're doing when we call 'all other' secondary research. Step back from popular CI industry definitions and imagine primary research to more broadly encompass any primary source. [full story p 8]

CI Partner Program update: 4 new members.

by Carolina Olivieri

[Inquesta Corporation](#) provides actionable answers to clients' questions about their external risks and adversaries. Inquesta is a network of resourceful thinkers from business, law and academia, directed by former US intelligence officers and experienced business executives. Inquesta's services include corporate and country risk management, as well as industry risk management including competitive intelligence to produce results-oriented, fact-based assessments leading to effective business strategies. For more information, please contact Jacques Island at +1.305.779.3069.

Founded in 1992, [DIE DENKFABRIK](#) (The Think Factory) is a full service competitive intelligence consulting firm. Based in Germany, DIE DENKFABRIK helps global clients gain competitive advantages through our world-class services including decision- and risk analysis, primary and secondary research, strategy development, in-house CI programs, counter intelligence and workshops. For further information, contact [Rainer Michaeli](#).

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[CBIA](#) is South Africa's oldest company specializing exclusively in competitive intelligence consulting and training. Founded in 1994, CBIA has played a major role in the development of this profession in Southern Africa and is also one of the older CI consultancies in the World. The CBIA training courses are accredited by the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) in Pretoria. For further information, contact [Steve Whitehead](#).

The intranet gets serious, part 2.

by Gerry McGovern

There is a view in some organizations that an intranet is only for staff, so you can publish what you want. Quality content matters as much on an intranet as on a public website. Get your content right to begin with. Keep it right by removing out-of-date content. While many intranets have indeed improved over the last five years, there is still one area where very little progress has been made: measurement of the return on investment (ROI). If you're managing an intranet today, you need to develop ROI models. [full story p 10]

JCIM v.1 n.2 is now available.

by Susan Crow

Issue 1 number 2 of the *Journal of Competitive Intelligence and Management* is now up on the [SCIP website](#). Featured articles are:

- Info-terrorism in the age of the internet: challenges and initiatives.
- Chronological and categorized bibliography of key competitive intelligence scholarship, part 2 1990-1996.
- Corporate intelligence in a corporately intelligent world

Have you done something interesting?

by Bonnie Hohhof

Have you been interviewed by the press? Published in a journal? Received an award? Presented to a professional group? Let us know about it. SCIP wants to highlight the accomplishments of its volunteers and members, both professional and personal. Just send [me](#) an email outlining what you've done.

Chapter Coordinator networking.

by Mark Sullivan

Chapters play a key role in the SCIP experience for most of our members and SCIP is moving to enhance that experience. The Chapters Meeting at the SCIP04 Boston Conference will kick-off a process to help the chapters better serve the membership, and improve the chapter experience for both the SCIP members and the hard-working volunteers that make the chapters possible. [full story p 12]

Write for CI magazine.

by Bonnie Hohhof

Interested in writing for SCIP's Competitive Intelligence Magazine? Here are the 2004 issue topics:

- March/April -- collection and networking
- May/June -- online services and the internet
- July/August -- analytical approaches
- September/October -- global
- November/December -- government and non-profit

Send your article ideas to [Bonnie Hohhof](#).

New CI Resource Directory edition now in March/April issue.

by Jon Lowder

Sign up now for the CI Resource Directory, now featured in the March/April 2004 issue of CI Magazine! This is an excellent opportunity to reach over 4,000 SCIP members worldwide. Most of our readers are senior professionals ready to make buying decisions. Keep your company in prime position by placing a listing in "business card format" in this handy pull-out reference guide!

In addition, the Resource Directory is maintained on the SCIP website. See the format of the last directory [here](#). Visit the SCIP [website](#) for more detailed information.

FYI: new and notable.

by Bonnie Hohhof

- Search engines: news and updates.
- Internet sites with information you can use.
- Software and products.
- Searching reviews and tips.
- General readings of interest.
- Articles mentioning competitive intelligence. [full story p 12]

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SCIP04 Tuesday evening event: Benjamin Zander.

Carolina Olivieri, colivieri@scip.org

SCIP is honored to present a very special event for Tuesday, March 23, 2004. Mr. Benjamin Zander, the world famous conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, will present an inspirational program on leadership, creativity, and team-building. *The Art of Possibility* will take SCIP attendees on an inspirational journey offering a completely new perspective on leadership!

The Art of Possibility has been successfully presented around the globe to CEOs and senior level business professionals. This advanced presentation is derived from his best selling book, *The Art of Possibility*, co-authored with his partner, leading psychotherapist Rosamund Zander.

Mr. Zander, using music as both a metaphor and a medium, will bring his insights as a conductor to business professionals involved in transformation and change. In this new model of leadership, the conductor sees his job as awakening possibility in others by inviting us all to become passionate communicators. This is not your ordinary speech, but a full-blown experience! You will leave a changed person by awakening your creative genius within. Mr. Zander's performance is as energetic as it is thought-provoking, involving personal anecdotes, piano playing and audience involvement.

For more information on Mr. Zander and his program, please visit [his website](#).

Don't miss this thoroughly enjoyable learning experience. This is an incredibly special program for all SCIP04 attendees. Visit the [SCIP04 Boston](#) web site now for details. If you sign up early, we have special discount coupons available for use in Boston. But supplies are limited, so sign up today.

Would Macy's Scan Gimbels? Competitive Intelligence and RFID.

Ross Stapleton-Gray, Stapleton-Gray & Associates, Inc. ross@stapleton-gray.com

This article speculates on some potential impacts of the advent of radio-frequency identification (RFID) technologies on retail stores in areas of competitive intelligence, and new availability of information within and about supply chains. The assessment is largely from the point of view of the retailer, and is intended to outline several hypotheses.

In-store scenarios

Various scenarios outlining the value of RFID for in-store intelligence collection by the retailer can be turned on their heads as prospective scenarios for competitive intelligence conducted by others:

- Consumer goods companies, such as Gillette and Procter & Gamble, say they are interested in smart shelves as a tool to help increase sales by ensuring that store shelves are always stocked with their products. With stock levels being continuously monitored by computers receiving wireless signals from the products themselves, retailers would no longer have to rely on employees to monitor their shelves. (<http://zdnet.com.com/2100-1103-979710.html> , "Retailers take stock of 'smart shelves'", January 8, 2003)
- One retailer is already experimenting with inventory control using RFID tags. By placing RFID readers on its store shelves, the retailer can identify low stock items, analyze traffic and purchase patterns, and identify potential theft of its products. (http://techrepublic.com.com/5100-6296_11-5054050.html , "The corporate impact of real-time inventory tracking", August 12, 2003)

In theory, all of the same information collection might be accomplished by any other party, for the cost of moving a reader through the same retail store; one would perform surveys over time to construct a longitudinal profile of the flow of products off of shelves, and the appearance of new stock.

So we might anticipate competitive intelligence collection among retailers, e.g., sending an "agent" to monitor a competitor's inventory. (Note: Anything that might be done via RFID tomorrow would be possible today, by visually examining shelves, recording product serials, etc.; in this case, the quantitative changes -- the ability to scan a whole aisle by merely walking its length with a reader hidden in a backpack -- makes for an enormous difference in feasibility.)

Future collection

There would be major questions of practicality and, potentially, legality. We might anticipate a variety of future means to collect RFID data, more imaginative than secreting a complete tag reader in a backpack, e.g., passive listening as tags are read by the store's own readers, perhaps even collection of signals from outside of the store itself. While read distance may be fairly limited today, innovative use of technology might permit a greater "stand off" distance.

While end consumers (the celebrated Joe Sixpack) likely won't be equipped with RFID readers any time soon, it's worth anticipating that what is now available only as specialized equipment may eventually be merged into end-consumer communication equipment. Motorola, Symbol and Nextel have announced (optical) bar code reader modules for cell phones and efforts such as Microsoft's AURA project are experimenting with end-user annotation of physical spaces, through web logs, and scannable tags (such as bar codes, including product UPCs), using standard commercial PDAs with attached readers.

While a good many end-consumer UPC scanning service ventures have been launched only to falter or fail (DigitalConvergence, Airclic, Barpoint, IQorder, and others), consuming in excess of half a billion dollars of venture capital funding in the process, some may eventually succeed, as some of the factors that produced the earlier failures change, such as the pervasiveness of Net-accessible PDAs and cellular phones, cost of add-ons to enable scanning, etc. All of these services were, on balance, disadvantageous to "brick and mortar" retailers: they encouraged use of such retailers as physical showrooms on behalf of Internet-only retailers with consequently lower prices, or offered third-party information not necessarily in the retailer's interest to present.

Other sources of competitive intelligence

Management of the Object Name Service (ONS) specified in the Electronic Product Code (EPC) architecture could also have a significant impact on the availability of competitive intelligence on retailers' operations (and the whole of any supply chains relying on use of EPC). The ONS provider or providers will be party to a tremendous volume of transactions, as manufacturers, retailers, and others up and down the supply chain make product inquiries, whether on the status of specific items, or at a higher level, for example to fetch product descriptive information to populate an in-store customer information service, or to create content pages on a store web site.

Ideally, for all of the content-exchanging parties, all transactions would be confidential to the parties, with no transactional information retained by the ONS service providers (other than what might be required for billing for services). Practically, it would seem likely that the latter will attempt to reserve the right to monetize transaction logs through analysis and sale of aggregated statistics.

If the medium for the retailer's inquiries is the open Internet, any exchanges should ideally be encrypted, or otherwise protected from interception. The truly paranoid user of ONS services might employ a proxy, to obfuscate the source of the inquiry.

So, who wants to know?

Competitive intelligence, on the inventory of a retailer, both its type, and turnover, may be of interest to retail competitors, to suppliers, and to manufacturers, as well as to third party companies collecting data for analysis. (Note: EPC scanning in the store would only provide unique identifiers of tagged items, though that is sufficient to identify the manufacturer, and product type -- through repeat scans over time, one could gauge product turnover. EPC scanning alone would reveal nothing regarding product pricing.)

Some of the discussion of the value of RFID in the stores presumes an effective flow of transactional information back to manufacturers, allowing them to make "just in time" decisions on production. We ought to question how likely this is to occur, given the complexity of system interaction, and the information economy: will manufacturers really provide incentives to retailers for such reporting?

The value of functional tags on the shelves

Over time, an increasing number of items will bear tags. An increasing percentage of tags will be more capable, and permit reprogramming, beyond "killing;" the retailer will have a capacity and interest in monitoring a larger percentage of the products on the shelves. "Over time" might constitute decades, however, given considerations of cost and perceived value.

As discussed at greater length below (regarding a "recoding" strategy), the retailer could consider (1) suppressing potential collection, by pre-emptive killing of any tag on an item not of interest in its own monitoring; and (2) making use of retailer-applied tags, on products not tagged by the manufacturer.

Qui Bono?

Cursory analysis suggests that retailers may see *fewer* benefits from adoption of RFID at the product level than other parties.

It would seem plausible that the value of EPC RFIDs at the actual point of sale will be very low, until and unless there is effective ubiquity of EPC tagging of products. All of the information required to easily record and charge for a purchase will be present in the "legacy" product code (UPC, ISBN, etc.). Most stores, and most consumers, will have little interest in a record of the item's unique serial (an element of the EPC, but not provided in the UPC). It may be that manufacturers will also be providing a print rendition of the EPC, whether or not they ever intend to encode it in an RFID tag. (The most obvious reason for doing so is to accommodate the situation where a tag is destroyed or disabled.)

Accommodating consumers' concerns regarding surveillance post-purchase will fall on the retailer: "You are selling me this [razor/CD/widget], you must kill its RFID." At this point, and largely as speculation of the potential for end-consumer surveillance, a few small but vocal consumer advocacy groups have been lobbying for RFIDs on products to be easily (if not always) killed at point of sale.

Most of the focus regarding RFIDs on products has been on the major manufacturers and retailers, whose buy-in would be necessary to achieve a "critical mass" of demand. The situation where point-of-sale killing of RFIDs was widely demanded would place a tremendous burden on myriad *small* retailers, many or most of whom would have no interest in RFID themselves, and presumably little or no capability to kill tags. It is also difficult to envision a scenario where tags may be readily killed even by "mom & pop" retailers, yet are sufficiently secure against disabling by shoplifters.

Dead tags tell no tales...

The value of preserving tags in the store will be in part dependent on the demand for functioning post-purchase tags. Depending on public opinion, this might be an expectation that RFIDs *not* persist, post-purchase. If there is strong consumer demand that RFIDs be killed at point of sale, there is an incentive for the retailer to kill each and every tag they don't themselves need, prior to moving the product onto shelves, and into situations where it might be monitored by others.

A recoding strategy

An ideal solution, as far as suppression of "leakage" of information (short of no RFID tags whatsoever) is use of store-specific tags, i.e., tags whose values are understandable only with access to the store's internal information systems. Recoding RFIDs would include:

- reprogramming reprogrammable tags with "store internal" values mapped to the actual EPCs
- killing non-reprogrammable tags
- affixing tags with "store internal" values to items, either those whose tags were killed, or which have never borne RFID tags, where in-store monitoring is desired

The first action could be performed at any of several points, such as when stock is received, in inventory, on the shelves, etc., with minimal effort (assuming some RFID management infrastructure including a reader capable of rewriting tags). It could also be performed piecemeal, and over time: any time a store reader encounters a reprogrammable tag with an EPC, it can reprogram it to a store-internal value. The store's information systems would hold the two values (original EPC, and in-store assignment) as equivalent. If killing tags is required *by* point-of-sale to address consumer privacy concerns, there is no reason it might not be done earlier, e.g., as stock is moved out to the shelves.

Conclusions

Any developments in competitive intelligence based on RFID collection and analysis will depend on EPC's penetration into the retail sales environment. Much of the speculation above may be mooted by a slow adoption of consumer product tagging. One over-arching hypothesis is that RFID on consumer packaged goods will largely be not useful to most retailers for the foreseeable future. As a consequence, retailers might adopt a policy of "killing" RFID tags prior to moving goods to the shelves, adding efficiency to killing tags (if required, post-sale), and lessening the risk of information "leakage" to competitors.

The preceding analysis assumed some demand for competitive intelligence by others (by competing retailers, or by manufacturers attempting to gain insights into their products' markets without reliance on reporting by the retailers). Exactly what demand will arise will depend on many factors, including both technical, and legal.

[Editors note: this article was originally presented at the RFID Privacy Workshop at MIT, November 15, 2003, sponsored in part by the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, MIT Media Lab, and RSA Laboratories. <http://www.rfidprivacy.org/papers/Stapleton-Gray.pdf>]

About the author:

Stapleton-Gray & Associates, Inc. is an information technology and policy consultancy, providing systems analysis and design, and project management, focused on issues of security, surveillance, and privacy. Principal analyst and founder Ross Stapleton-Gray, Ph.D., CISSP, has served as an intelligence analyst and planning officer with the Central Intelligence Agency and Intelligence Community Management Staff, and as a senior manager and entrepreneur with variety of organizations, in the commercial and non-profit sectors. www.stapleton-gray.com

Ten Reasons to Attend An Association Conference in 2004

Dale Fehringer

Have travel restrictions or reduced budgets prevented you from attending an association conference the past couple of years? Has an increased workload hampered your ability to keep up with the changes and new products in your profession? Does it look like you "might" have some funds next year for employee education? If the answer to any of those questions is "yes," consider enhancing your skills and catching up on what's new in your industry by attending an association conference.

This checklist will help you define to your management the value gained by attending an association conference.

1. Effective use of training funds.

With limited funds for education and training, most of us can only justify one or two training experiences next year. A conference makes good use of those limited dollars by allowing us to review all the new technology, attend multiple seminars and workshops, and share best practices with our industry peers – all in a single outing.

2. Professional growth.

Conferences help us expand our knowledge base and skills, which will make us more valuable to current and future employers.

3. Learning.

Most association conferences offer educational opportunities for all levels of experience. Check your association's Web site and conference agenda to see if there are workshops, seminars, or other programs that would enhance your job skills.

4. Find out what's new.

Vendor booths at association conferences allow you to review the latest software and hardware in the least amount of time – and company representatives to explain it to us.

5. Share best practices.

Many of us tend to use the techniques we are most comfortable with. Conferences offer a vast array of new techniques, and people who are willing to tell us how the techniques might help our company become more competitive.

6. Develop networks.

Conferences offer a confluence of people with similar responsibilities, and provide excellent peer networking opportunities.

7. Access to experts.

Conferences attract a group of senior industry practitioners who are willing to share their expertise with conference attendees by serving as speakers, workshop leaders, or in some other advice-giving capacity.

8. Seminars and workshops.

In conference seminars and workshops, the educational topics are focused on your interests, and interactive formats allow you to work closely with the instructors.

9. Discounts.

Many associations are offering discounts to new members, or to members who sign up early for conferences. Check with your association to see if discounts are available.

10. Help the association.

The purpose of an association is to develop, expand and enhance the professional knowledge and status of the profession you belong to. Your participation in an association conference will not only support you professionally, but also helps the association maintain the resources to continue to provide valuable services to you and your industry.

Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP) will hold its [2004 Annual International Conference & Exhibit](#) from March 22-25, 2004 at the Sheraton Boston Hotel and Hynes Convention Center in Boston, Massachusetts. If you need to stay ahead of the curve and focus on the future of competitive intelligence, understand where it's growing and where it's going, and ultimately better utilize intelligence to drive success for you and your organization, this is your conference.

Primary sources to help you control your cow. (part 1 of 2)

David Carpe, david@clew.us

"To control your cow, give it a bigger pasture." - Suzuki Roshi, Zen Master

In the field of competitive intelligence (CI), primary research is loosely defined as 'in-depth interviews' with individuals likely to be intimate with competitor or marketplace activity. This might include employees of a competitor, suppliers and buyers, partners, pundits, former employees and many other sources ranging from neighbors to local government figures. Everything else seems to become secondary research by default.

Is there room for more stratification? Could this perhaps be as simple as 'first person accounts'(and related) versus 'one step removed'?

For a moment, let's rethink what we're doing when we call 'all other' secondary research. It feels as though secondary has now become just about anything that can be faxed, photocopied or printed on cheap paper in black and white ink on old machines (think: after Chaplin rolled through the gears in *Modern Times*, but before Reeves entered *The Matrix*).

Step back from popular CI industry definitions, if you will, and imagine primary research to more broadly encompass any primary source that permits us to get close to what is happening, has happened or will happen while reflecting the individual viewpoint of the observer, participant or otherwise intimately involved people.

This might allow you to generate alternatives where staple secondary research sources are exhausted, come up short, or otherwise prove to be of little value without deeper context. Isn't this why we often spend so much time on the primary research? Though analysis is absolutely critical, but primary research consumes the lion's share of project hours.

I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel here, just trying to reframe the Rosie-O'Donnell-sized universe of resources now available to all of us. If one were to reorganize secondary resources so that primary sources become more like a 'layer of meaning' (or value) superimposed on all such resources, then perhaps these might fall under the auspices of the following broad categories (broad because this column must stay short, not because I'm simple minded).

Memoirs, manuscripts, autobiographies and 'corporate cheerleader' business books

Tell-all stories and 'how I conquered the industry' books are generally the bane of my existence. Often these first person accounts are rife with bias, related distortion, dimming memories or outright 'creative or selective' memory. I much prefer quality fiction.

However, buried within many of these historical tales – both in print and in online excerpts – are countless references to specific project codenames, key figures, key dates and other data points often not captured in the reviews and brief write-ups. These range from Bill Gates' 'Road Ahead' to the book-turned-movie tale, 'Barbarians at the Gate' (the RJR LBO war story).

Many other online libraries and related projects make a lot of text available online (in which books, manuscripts and other documents are scanned in to archives). For this, the Internet Public Library serves as a solid example (www.ipl.org), as well as the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (www.siris.si.edu), which also connects extensively to other categories discussed herein, ranging from photographs to manuscripts. Oh, and Barnes & Noble also operates as a library if one chooses to not leave the premises.

There will be 'freshness' issues surrounding the information. For research, focus instead on insight into attitudes and culture and, where relevant, first person accounts of major corporate transactions. I find it quite helpful to pull out the old pet project names used in corporations to track down living figures connected to the original effort.

For example, while researching operating systems, I had tremendous interest in a particular project from the 80's, and needed to track down the projects personnel nearly 18 years later. I found an ancient personal memoir that had been reproduced online. It detailed original (and unusual) codenames for the project during the first few years, along with notes regarding specific individual contributions. Using this information, I refined basic searches and tracked down the sources with a few phone calls.

Diaries, minutes, personal web pages, 'blogs,' journals, letters and memos

First person accounts, replete with attitude and a full slant, are wonderful resources for uncovering key figures as well as for corroborating findings. While published diaries and first person narratives are often dated, many blogs and personal web pages are quite current.

I've mentioned one site many months ago, InternalMemos.com (www.internalmemos.com). They are focused on gathering insider memos from major corporations. Interesting stuff...a bit smarmy, but really very interesting. Beyond the memos are the infinite corporate and industry rumor mills (a subject of a much earlier column in 2003). These are interesting resources to keep in mind as they often overlap with the blog entries found on personal sites.

For those unfamiliar with web logs (aka blogs), picture a world full of updated online diaries and personal narratives connected dynamically to large socially networked communities. Regular people have decided to take themselves very seriously and assume that others will want to follow their occluded daily and weekly thoughts, bookmarking their often cryptic and poorly maintained diaries. Can you tell that I'm kind of down on blogs? If you really want to get technical about what makes a blog, you can read up on the subject at Harvard Law School (<http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/whatMakesAWeblogAWeblog>). By the way, the same goes for the vast universe of dull personal home pages.

With my own purposes in mind, I'm generally far less interested in what's 'on the blog' or the personal home page than what's connected to it; that is where I find tremendous value. These authors often maintain extensive links to industry and social relationships, typically as a long vertical list of names (connected to other blogs or personal pages). This is an outstanding resource for those consultants constantly in search of a better or more knowledgeable source, preferably connected to the original source. There is a risk: you might wind up tracking down buddies from their softball team as well as from work and industry.

For example, while researching advanced security architecture, I stopped by the personal page of Ron Rivest at MIT (<http://theory.lcs.mit.edu/~rivest/>). For those unfamiliar with Ron Rivest, he's the 'R' in 'RSA,' arguably the most important commercial encryption company in recent decades. Within his site, a hyperlink to a larger page of industry and personal links, scroll down to 'people' to see what I mean (<http://theory.lcs.mit.edu/~rivest/crypto-security.html#People>).

Regarding minutes and records, these are often insightful where they come from an organization or association of interest. They might glean tremendous insight into current attitudes and planning activities. I can't possibly pay homage to the discipline of public (and related) records research in this one paragraph - sorry.

Use common sense and care when expanding the pasture.

I'm certainly not advocating the use of any of these methods in particular, as many will not be applicable to your own projects. Rather, I humbly suggest that we rethink the value of primary sources as they map to primary and secondary research. All of the aforementioned resources will allow for one to get a bit closer to an event, organization, or individual of interest prior to telephone interviews.

By the way, have you noticed a theme? It's an interesting conundrum. These categories, like much of secondary research I suppose, are all potentially very time-consuming and unproven as particularly valuable for any one need in our interview-driven industry. I'd be very hard pressed to add "20 Hours: Watching Television" to any of my own proposals...though I'd be much more uncomfortable requesting "Another 40 Hours: Primary Research" as a result of unimaginative resource planning.

Background:

David Carpe received his BFA from the George Washington University and his MBA, with a concentration in Finance and Entrepreneurship, from Babson College. He has authored a case on Valuation for the Division Chair and has also served as a Volunteer Teacher with the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship. Professionally, David has worked in research with Fidelity Capital, served as a Management Consultant, acted as the founder and CEO of a venture backed software startup, and most recently has been working with Clew, LLC www.clew.us serving some of the world's most formidable organizations through Clew's CI for Strategic Human Resources practice (HRCI) and ClewRaRE™ services. David, his two sons, and their dog reside in Lexington. He is a member of SCIP, MIT Enterprise Forum, Human Capital Institute and IRE and serves on the Board of Conditor, LLC. David has spent the majority of his career involved, somehow, with research, analysis, consulting and planning. He can be reached at 781.674.CLEW (2539). As mentioned in earlier columns, please feel free to send an email if you have questions or comments: contact@clew.us

The intranet gets serious: part 2 -- if you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

Gerry McGovern, gerry@gerrymcgovern.com

There is a view in some organizations that an intranet is only for staff, so you can publish what you want. Quality content matters as much on an intranet as on a public website. Get your content right to begin with. Keep it right by removing out-of-date content.

Spring cleaning

Your intranet is not a dump. It is not about the volume. It's not 'have gigabytes must fill'. View your content as an asset, not a cost. It's not a document management challenge, so don't see the problem from a storage point of view. It's publishing. It's about finding that small set of content that drives productive actions from staff and management.

Do you have a process whereby every single piece of content on your intranet gets read at least once a year? Those organizations that can't do this are admitting that their intranet is unmanageable. Tetra Pak, a global leader in packaging systems, is not one of them.

The Tetra Pak approach

Mats G. Johansson is responsible for web content management in the Tetra Pak technical service area. The readership is approximately 4,500 people. In 2002, Tetra Pak decided to get serious about content.

First off, a style guide was created, covering such things as: style and tone, length of summaries, a description of how the content should be laid out, treatment of pictures, etc. (A style guide is an essential first step in achieving consistent content quality.)

Next, the 70 administrators (editors) were trained in professional publishing techniques. Quality, up-to-date content was stressed. A typical question that was posed was: "Would you hand out your business card with the wrong telephone number? Then, why is the number not correct on your webpage?"

Professional publishing processes take time to develop. Many staff are simply not used to publishing quality content on a regular basis. They need training and ongoing support. And that's exactly what they got from Mats and his team.

Control what you deliver

Crucially, the intranet is measured on an ongoing basis. "We now review all pages on a three-month basis," Mats states. "It requires less and less effort to correct things as the administrators learn how to maintain their content and they know that they will be reviewed regularly."

There is an important point here. In the past, I've heard it said that it is neither right nor possible to control content on the intranet. That argument might have made some sense during the pioneering phase of web development. Pioneers are full of enthusiasm, love to take risks and hate being measured or trained.

There is a very different breed of person involved in the intranet today. This person just wants to get the job done as quickly and efficiently as possible. Tetra Pak found that staff were glad that a systematic approach was being taken. There are now ongoing requests for more training. People are eager to learn how to get better at publishing.

Of course, the biggest fans of a well run intranet are the staff who read it. Not surprisingly, Tetra Pak is getting very good feedback from its staff who are delighted that the content is up-to-date and correct.

Your content is a valuable asset. Manage this asset by publishing only quality content and removing out-of-date content. To do this, you need to train, motivate, reward and measure your publishing team.

Create a single approach

Intranets don't self-organize. Without planned, centralized information architectures and clearly defined published processes, they become unproductive. Intranets often have applications that either don't work properly, are too difficult to learn, or have no clear business benefit. Applications, like content, must be able to establish a clear return on investment.

IBM used to have some 7,000 intranets. Annually, IBM surveys staff to find out where they get the information they need to do their jobs from. Historically, the number one source has been other colleagues. When the intranet arrived in the mid-Nineties, it went to the bottom of the list.

When IBM had 7,000 intranets, it was hard to find anything. Lots of content was out-of-date. IBM went to a single intranet architecture, and introduced much more formal publishing control. The following year's survey found staff rating the intranet as their number one source.

Keep your killer app up to date

What is the intranet's killer app? It's the staff directory. And what is the number one problem with the staff directory? It's out-of-date. We need to start thinking like publishers. Publishers are focused on getting the right content to the right person at the right time at the right cost. Publishers keep staff directories up-to-date.

Be very wary of personalization. I know it would be a really exciting thing to implement. But how about making sure your staff directory, as well as all your other content, is correct first. Take a crawl, walk, run approach.

Measure what you deliver

While many intranets have indeed improved over the last five years, there is still one area where very little progress has been made: measurement of the return on investment (ROI).

According to a study published in November 2003 by Prescient Digital, intranet ROI remains guesswork at most organizations. In his report entitled 'Ten best intranets of 2003', Jakob Nielsen writes that, "There continues to be a paucity of detailed usability metrics for intranets. Most teams focus on doing a good job, not on justifying their existence."

There is an old saying in management: If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. The average intranet is not being measured. Therefore, it is not being professionally managed. Some people don't know how many pages they have on their intranet. Some don't even know how many intranets they have.

As more and more senior managers do get engaged, they start asking tougher questions about the value of the intranet. If you're managing an intranet today, you need to develop ROI models.

Ask yourself these questions: If your intranet was shut down tomorrow, would your organization become less productive? Would your organization become more productive?

Achieving best practice will be a slow process. That's okay. It will require a five-year plan, not a series of 3-6 months tactical initiatives. The intranet changes how an organization communicates. That's a big change. As Tetra Pak and others have found, successful intranet management begins with successful people management.

Article originally published in New Thinking, December 1,8, 2003 V.8 n.46-7.

http://www.gerrymcgovern.com/nt/2003/nt_2003_12_01_intranet_3.htm

http://www.gerrymcgovern.com/nt/2003/nt_2003_12_08_intranet_4.htm

Chapter Coordinator networking.

Mark Sullivan, General Motors

The SCIP Chapters organization will be launching a new networking process at the 2004 Annual Meeting next March in Boston. All Chapters are highly encouraged to send a representative to the Chapters Meeting, which will be held Sunday, March 21 from 5 to 8 PM.

Chapters play a key role in the SCIP experience for most of our members and SCIP is moving to enhance that experience. The Boston Chapters Meeting will kick-off a process to help the chapters better serve the membership, and improve the chapter experience for both the membership and the hard-working volunteers that make the chapters possible. This process must originate with and be driven by the chapters themselves. We must tap into the rich vein of knowledge and experience among the chapters' leadership.

If the Chapter Coordinator cannot make this meeting, please insure that a representative is there from your chapter. Since this will be a 'heavy hordourve' meeting, it is important that SCIP know how many people will be planning to attend this Chapters Meeting. Accordingly, each Chapter is requested to contact [Lisa Heitchew](#) to inform her whether the Chapter will be represented at the Chapters Meeting, and who will be attending. Mark Sullivan, the SCIP Board Member responsible for Chapters, will be contacting the chapters with further information soon.

Starting in 2004, SCIP OnLine will be featuring an article in each edition dedicated to sharing chapters' best practices, recognizing the hard work of chapter volunteers, and improving communications among the chapters. Any ideas or contributions for this standard article should be sent to [me](#).

We look forward to seeing you all in Boston.

FYI: new and notable.

Bonnie Hohhof, bhohhof@scip.org

- [Search engines: news and updates.](#)
- [Internet sites with information you can use.](#)
- [Software and products.](#)
- [Searching reviews and tips.](#)
- [General readings of interest.](#)
- [Articles mentioning competitive intelligence.](#)

Search engines: news and updates.

Google is now experimenting with automatic stemming. Google changed its [Basic Help page](#) to announce that it is now using stemming. Basically, Google now takes search terms and looks for grammatical variants of SOME of them. Unfortunately, Google does not make it clear which terms it stems and which it does not. Greg Notess. 'Google starts auto stemming searches.' Search Engine Showdown, Nov. 28.

<http://www.searchengineshowdown.com/newsarchive/000742.shtml>

It's been a busy year for the major **meta search engines**, with a number of notable developments that have restored their usefulness as worthy search tools. Over the past year, [Doggpile](#) got a new look and features, [Vivisimo](#) announced Release 4.0 of its award-winning clustering engine, [InfoSpace.com](#) re-launched as a dedicated Yellow and White Pages destination site, and Intasys agreed to sell its wireless billing subsidiaries in order to focus exclusively on [Mamma.com](#). Greg Jarboe. 'Meta Search engines are back.' Search Engine Watch, Dec 4

<http://www.searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3109441>

Metasearch engine **Vivisimo** is rolling out the search engine toolbars. The minibar is at <http://vivisimo.com/minibar> -- you'll need Windows and IE to use it. The toolbar is at <http://vivisimo.com/toolbar> and offers a few additional features -- again, you'll need Windows and IE. Tara Calshain. ResearchBuzz, Dec 8.

<http://www.researchbuzz.org/archives/001300.shtml>

Internet sites with information you can use.

BBC News Online is the internet arm of the biggest broadcasting news-gatherer in the world. It provides minute-by-minute updates on news stories through a series of 12 geographic and subject 'front pages.' Each page is published by the teams of online journalists. Much of the material is written by these journalists and the rest comes from writers in the BBC's specialist units. <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

BBC News Country profiles provide an instant guide to the history, politics and economic background of almost 200 countries. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm

The aim of the **Directory of Open Access Journals** is to increase the visibility and ease of use of open access scientific and scholarly journals thereby promoting their increased usage and impact. The Directory aims to be comprehensive and cover all open access scientific and scholarly journals that use a quality control system to guarantee the content. All subject areas and languages will be covered. <http://www.doaj.org/articles/about/>

The **Energy Information Administration (EIA)**, created by Congress in 1977, is a statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Energy. It provides policy-independent data, forecasts, environmental impact, and analyses for all energy markets. Information can also be accessed by geography, fuel, sector and price. <http://www.eia.doe.gov/>

Welcome to the **European Private Law Homepage**, hosted by the Centre for European Legal Studies (**CELS**) of the University of Exeter. This Web site provides a starting point for legal research on European private law. The second objective of these pages is to bring together other Web resources in the field of European Private law, in particular the work carried out by colleagues at the European University Institute. <http://www.ex.ac.uk/law/europriv/>
FCC Search for Filed Comments: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) offers a database of comments filed with the agency. Search by company name, law firm, attorney, location or other criteria to find public comments, including letters, notices, complaints, memorandum opinions and more, filed since 1992. Genie Tyburski. The Virtual chase, Dec 5. <http://www.virtualchase.com/tvcalert/dec03/5dec03.html#bool>

To provide better service in alerting the American people to unsafe, hazardous or defective products, six federal agencies with vastly different jurisdictions have joined together to create www.recalls.gov -- a "one stop shop" for U.S. **Government recalls.** <http://www.recalls.gov/>

The Governments of the Guangdong Province, Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Region have introduced gateway access to [intellectual property databases](http://www.virtualchase.com/tvcalert/dec03/5dec03.html) in their regions. The databases cover trademarks, patents, registered designs and copyright. A table indicates whether a specific database is available for a particular region. It also explains the contents of the database (e.g. trademark law, trademark search). Genie Tyburski. The Virtual Chase, Dec. 3, <http://www.virtualchase.com/tvcalert/dec03/5dec03.html>

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office announced the availability of a new database called [Trademark Assignments on the Web System](http://www.virtualchase.com/tvcalert/dec03/8dec03.html). Search by a variety of criteria, including assignor or assignee name, or applicant or registrant name, to find trademark assignments back to 1955. The announcement notes that the agency will introduce a similar system for patent assignments on 26 January 2004. Genie Tyburski. 'USPTO launches trademark assignments.' Dec 3. <http://www.virtualchase.com/tvcalert/dec03/8dec03.html>

Software and products.

Dialog, a Thomson business and a leading worldwide provider of online-based information services and integrated information solutions, today announced the launch of its Dialog Application Programming Interface (API), a Web Service that enables Dialog's extensive content collection and renowned search engine to be integrated transparently into Web sites, enterprise portals, corporate intranets and extranets, software applications and other interactive services. Press release, Dec. 1, www.dialog.com

Ecomp is a subscription service that provides access to over 50,000 executives' compensation information from over 12,000 U.S. publicly traded companies' proxy statements, 10-Ks, and Registration Statements. <http://www.ecomponline.com/>

Since 1997, **Hitwise** has been monitoring the largest sample of global Internet users ever assembled. Each day, Hitwise monitors how more than 25 million Internet users from around the world interact with over 450,000 websites, across 160 industry categories. Providing comparative and competitive information to its 600+ clients worldwide, Hitwise strives to supply companies with relevant, timely and actionable intelligence about the changing preferences of consumers. Press release. www.hitwise.com

The **Intelink Management Office**, which oversees top-secret, secret and sensitive but unclassified intranets for the CIA and other intelligence organizations, has adopted the **Google** Search Appliance from Google of Mountain View, Calif. IMO provides centralized services for several intelligence networks, including e-mail directories and network connections, Web-crawling services, security oversight and collaboration applications. Wilson Dizard. 'Intelligence networks go for Google.' Government Computer News, Dec 5. http://www.gcn.com/vol1_no1/daily-updates/24358-1.html

Air Products, a supplier of electronic materials, hydrogen, helium, and select performance chemicals, has chosen **Inxight SmartDiscovery** to provide more than 10,000 Air Products employees worldwide with access to information via its corporate portal. The Air Products corporate portal is organized as a collection of Web pages, end-user applications, and services. It consists of 700 intranet Web sites that contain information residing in hundreds of document formats that are spread across multiple data repositories. Press release, Dec 8, www.inxight.com

MapInfo Corporation announced the release of HotSpotInfoTM, a first-of-its-kind data solution that enables users to determine the location of Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the United States. By combining MapInfo technology with Jupitermedia's Wi-FiHotSpotList.com database, users can quickly and accurately pinpoint the location of Wi-Fi hotspots, enabling them to analyze Wi-Fi market penetration, perform in-depth competitor analysis and improve customer service. Press release, Dec 1. <http://www.mapinfo.com>.

Northern Light Group, LLC has announced that it will introduce the Northern Light Business Research Library on January 15, 2004. Powered by the Northern Light Enterprise Search Engine, the Business Research Library is a paid service for enterprise customers containing a collection of Web content specially selected to be of high value to business professionals as well as a collection of 1,900 periodical titles. All of the content in the periodicals collection will be available in full page-image format showing all the pictures, tables, and charts in the original articles. The Northern Light Business Research Library, which will be available at NLRResearch.com, will be free of advertising. Press release, Dec. 8, www.northernlight.com

Worldnews.com, a multilingual news portal known for its independent coverage, offers a unique, tailor-made news service to businesses. Powered by a proprietary news search engine, **WN Network** uses several hundred online news sources in 20 languages and presents them in over 500 subject and geographical categories. These resources can now be refined and used to create customized news pages specifically for your business. <http://www.mywn.com/>

Searching reviews and tips.

Government Gazettes, which are published by federal governments worldwide, are the means through which the government can communicate to officials and the general public. Although most countries publish a gazette, their regularity and content varies widely, which is noted in the description of each gazette. Gazettes are useful not only to monitor the actions of the government, but also as primary source documentation in research. Government Gazettes Online attempts to list all online government gazettes and their characteristics to aid researchers. A description of the contents and coverage are included for each gazette. <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/gazettes/>

Research 101 is an interactive online tutorial for students wanting an introduction to research skills. The tutorial covers the basics, including how to select a topic and develop research questions, as well as how to select, search for, find, and evaluate information sources. University of Washington Library. <http://www.lib.washington.edu/uwill/research101/>

Research guides already abound, and one aim of this "integrated guide" will be to offer a selection of these, both official and unofficial, in the context of research strategies. The other goals will be 1) to provide a context for categories of sources within this body of law and 2) to provide a template for research across all formats given that, even with electronic access to the materials, researchers face large amounts of documentation and terminology that is unique and perhaps unfamiliar. Most references will be to the official web site of the EU, <http://www.europa.eu.int>. Marylin Raisch. 'European law: an integrated guide to electronic and print research.' LLRX.com, Nov 29, <http://www.llrx.com/features/eulaw2.htm>

RSS In Government contains news about how RSS is being used by international, federal, state and local governments. Includes information on how to search RSS feeds from major search engines. <http://www.rssgov.com/>

Knowing that all information--and therefore, all media--contains bias, researchers expect to encounter opinions and persuasive writing on the Web. But those conducting thorough research expect to find differing arguments. This article, however, suggests that simple queries--consisting of one or two-word phrases--might promote [bias in search results](#). If a researcher were to depend solely on the top results of a query, s/he could receive an incomplete picture of an issue. Some possible solutions include: "(a) web page authors adopting research citation practices, (b) search engines balancing organizational and analytic content, and (c) searchers practicing more wary multi-searching." Genie Tyburski. The Virtual chase, Dec 2, <http://www.virtualchase.com/tvcalert/dec03/2dec03.html>

General readings of interest.

Plain English Campaign winner of the 2003 Golden Bull Award: **Jungle.com** for an e-mail. They were asked a simple question - Do you still sell blank CDs? Instead of simply saying 'No', the company replied: 'We are currently in the process of consolidating our product range to ensure that the products that we stock are indicative of our brand aspirations. As part of our range consolidation we have also decided to revisit our supplier list and employ a more intelligent system for stock acquisition. As a result of the above certain product lines are now unavailable through jungle.com, whilst potentially remaining available from more mainstream suppliers.' <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/goldenbull.html>

It is my distinct pleasure to offer the very first **ELF Report**. Respondents are collectively known as ELVES, which (let's say) stands for E-business Leaders, Visionaries, Entrepreneurs, and Scholars. The ELF Report's methodology is slightly less scientific than backyard cold fusion. The good news is the ELVES find a lot to be thankful for. The ELVES submitted a fairly short list of wishes. Gary Stein. 'Introducing the ELF report.' Internet.com, Dec. 1, <http://www.clickz.com/mkt/capital/article.php/3114031>

Spyware programs range from annoying to the dangerous, including keyboard loggers and screen capture applications that can steal passwords and other sensitive information. The programs are sometimes bundled in with shareware or freeware programs that can be downloaded from the Internet. Often times they claim to be helpful utilities that also carry a more sinister side. 'Inside Spyware: a guide for finding, removing and preventing online pests.' Intranet Journal. <http://www.intranetjournal.com/spyware/>

It should be obvious; an organization can gain value by sharing information across an organization through effective **knowledge management** (KM). Yet, most KM initiatives have failed to deliver on the promise. The usual reason is that people have been left out of the equation. This article suggests five key steps that will help make your KM initiative work by bringing people — your management and staff — into the center of the picture. Fumiko Kondo. IntelligentKM, Dec. 3 http://www.intelligentkm.com/feature/2003/12/0312feat1_1.shtml

In the wake of the **Sarbanes-Oxley Act** and other emerging laws and regulations, managing corporate information is a mission-critical challenge. With their integrity on the line, CEOs, CFOs and other corporate officers mean business when they demand "confidence in the numbers. But where can top executives and IT managers turn for answers? "Complying with Sarbanes-Oxley" provides just those answers. Intelligent Enterprise special ebook. (requires free registration) <http://www.iemagazine.com/register/ebook/sarbanesoxley/>

A four-part practical approach to **handling email** concentrates your action on four key "pressure points" at which your efforts can have the greatest results. It does not focus on unsolicited commercial email or "spam," as it has become popularly known. Spam handling flows naturally out of the process. The four pressure points are: (1) before emails are sent to you, (2) when you send emails, (3) when you receive emails, and (4) when you read and/or store emails. Dennis Kennedy. 'The fourfold path to email enlightenment.' LLRX.com, Nov 29. <http://www.llrx.com/features/emailenlighten.htm>

Text-mining software implements innovative display and navigation techniques that graphically represent networks of conceptually interrelated documents. Text mining will let us move from knowledge management to knowledge analytics. Seth Grimes. 'The word on text mining.' Intelligent Enterprise, Dec 10, http://www.intelligententerprise.com/031210/619decision1_1.shtml

The **Handbook of Business Strategy** 2004, now available from UK-based Emerald Publishing, includes a chapter by Seena Sharp, "Build Better Decisions: Strategies for Reducing Risk and Avoiding Surprises." For details, visit: http://www.managementfirst.com/strategy/journals/strategy_handbook.php

By now, you've been working with Microsoft **PowerPoint** long enough to create presentations, organize them effectively, and even help others who aren't as savvy. But you may not know that PowerPoint has features—many of which aren't well documented—that can help you work faster and make cooler presentations. Here are 15 insider tips that can help you use PowerPoint like a pro. Linda Bird. '15 top PowerPoint tips.' PC Magazine, Dec 30. <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,1404043,00.asp>

Articles mentioning competitive intelligence.

Thomson Legal and Regulatory in Eagan is looking for global strategists for its internal consulting group. The strategists will help define markets, strategy and new products and conduct **competitive research and analyses**. The focus is on expanding product offerings to existing customers, many of them attorneys. Jack Dougan, vice president for global strategy, describes his area as a "talent incubator" for the \$3 billion business. The goal is to move people into other parts of the business after three to four years. 'Who's hiring? Strategists will think globally.' Pioneer Press, Nov 23. <http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/business/7321751.htm>

The Xerox Profile: Best Practices in Organizational Improvement by the American Productivity & Quality Center (APQC) is now available. A compilation of valuable research, this report takes readers through Xerox's improvement efforts over eight years to show readers how organizational best practices impact the bottom line. **Competitive intelligence** and market insight practitioners will benefit from insight into Xerox's structured decision support process for all new products; and its quantitative analysis of customer data. http://www.apqc.org/portal/apqc/site/store?paf_gear_id=1300011&pageselect=detail&docid=113573

Television ratings provider **Nielsen Media Research** will track product placement on the top US broadcast networks, allowing advertisers to compare their exposure in the growing practice of embedding products into TV story lines. "We're tracking consumer products placement and that'll be made available to our marketplace.... It's also a form of **competitive intelligence**." 'Nielsen will track product placement.' The Economic Times, Dec. 5. <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/338288.cms>

Keith LeFebvre is Vice President of Business PCs for PSG's Americas Region. In this role, Keith is responsible for P&L performance for HP's Business PCs, thin client desktops and displays in the Americas region. Keith oversees product marketing, lifecycle management, **competitive analysis**, pricing and sales development. Press release, Dec, 2. http://www.hp.com/hpinfo/newsroom/press_kits/2003/virtualization/bi_lefebvre_k.pdf

"Implementing **competitive intelligence** is not for the faint of heart. Getting the sales force involved in CI is a huge task. If you guide the sales organization incorrectly, they'll never trust you again." --Arik Johnson, founder and managing director, Aurora WDC. 'Insight: heard and overheard.' Destination CRM, Dec. 1. <http://www.destinationcrm.com/articles/default.asp?ArticleID=3604>

BizBest(R), a provider of independent analysis of small business solutions, has released the 2004 edition of its paperback "The 100 Best Resources for Small Business." It delivers profit-boosting firepower for business owners on subjects such as how to find cool toll-free numbers, free counseling, **competitive intelligence**, low-cost Web sites and payroll help. 'BizBest names top 100 small business resources.' HispanicBusiness.com, Dec. 3. <http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/news/newsbyid.asp?id=13872>

Look at the some of the fundamental information you collect to guide the strategic market planning process: customer intelligence, **competitive intelligence** and market intelligence. Marketers use this intelligence as insight into the types of strategies that are likely to be successful. Bringing financial intelligence into the mix offers new insight into the potential value of strategic and tactical alternatives and also leads to a disciplined approach to marketing campaign development. Jim Lenskold. 'Financial intelligence for strategic planning.' MarketingProfs.com, Dec 2. <http://www.marketingprofs.com/3/lenskold1.asp>

What are you going to do better than your competitors that really matters to your customers? Do you even know for sure what does matter to your customers, or what your competitors are doing? Do some research. It doesn't have to cost a fortune. Do it yourself, hire a research company or, even better, if you have a business college or university anywhere near you, use marketing students to do **customer and competitor research** for you. They need projects, you'll get valuable information - and it's probably free! Do this on an annual basis. Build relationships with these schools. They are one of the most underused resources in business today. Donald Cooper. 'How to find and keep the best staff.' Electrical Business, Dec. <http://www.ebmag.com/EBDEC03/contracting.html>

One of the most novel—and important—blog users is the Western States Information Network (WSIN), a federally funded agency that collects, analyzes, and shares crime information. WSIN maintains a **criminal-intelligence** database and has a pool of analysts who collect and make sense of incoming information. In December 2002, Aumond attended a homeland security conference, where she discovered **Traction Software's** TeamPage Enterprise Weblog software. Immediately, she saw how blogging technology could help WSIN in its mission. Alan Cohen. 'Blogging for business.' PCMagazine, Dec. 30. <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,1401424,00.asp>



Happy Holidays from Thomson Delphion!

The Thomson Delphion team wishes you happy holidays and a prosperous new year. www.delphion.com