Search

PRACTICAL COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE

Standard & Non-Standard Competitive Intelligence Resources

A rich palette of powerful resources will allow you to answer a wider range of CI questions and write more powerful reports.

BY KEVIN MILES

C ompetitive intelligence (CI) professionals utilize resources that run from free to fee-based, depending on the complexity of the question and the operating budget. Many of us are familiar with some of the standard resources, such as Capital IQ, D&B, Hoovers, LexisNexis and its Lexis family of resources, and Westlaw and its family. Some of the non-standard resources may include Bloomberg Law, Corporationwiki, LinkedIn, Martindale, Reorg Research, Relecura, Credit Risk Monitor, and other company websites.

Standard Vs. Non-Standard Resources
The difference between standard and non-standard resources includes a matter of choice, frequency of use, familiarity with features, and emerging resources (e.g., vendors). Here are four facets to consider when selecting standard or non-standard resources.

1. A matter of choice may dictate using non-standard resource Relecura over a standard one, such as Lexis's TotalPatent One for patent searching.

2. Based on frequency of use, Corporationwiki or PitchBook could be a standard resource in one firm, but a non-standard resource in another.

3. Familiarity with features may create a preference for Lexis's Intelligize or Lexis Securities Mosaic. CI professionals very familiar with the features of both may rely on Intelligize for deep dives, or Mosaic for "low hanging fruit."

4. Emerging resources. Traditional vendors have been around for 10 years or more. Emerging vendors have been around for less than 10 years and were formed to satisfy a market niche. Bloomberg Law, Reorg Research, and Relecura are examples of emerging or non-standard resources.

Seven CI Scenarios

Although simple questions may be answered through Google or LinkedIn, many others require accessing well-developed databases. Below, a typical CI scenario or question is posed, followed by range of resources for answering that question. The list of resources will not be extensive or complete since this is a column and not a book. Apologizes in advance if anyone feels slighted or overlooked, or if your favorite non-standard tool is not mentioned.

SCENARIO 1: You need to know if a person has an active bar license, but a state bar association was not mentioned.

RESOURCES: Martindale is a solid first choice, then once the person is identified, go to the state bar website for additional information. Another approach would be to use Google before going to the state bar website.

SCENARIO 2: You need to know if a person is on a board of directors.

RESOURCES: There are several approaches here. Use Google to search the person's name with "board member." Corporationwiki, LinkedIn, and PitchBook may be useful as well. Capital IQ, Lexis (Intelligize and Lexis Securities Mosaic) and Westlaw all have similar resources. Company websites also list officers and board members.

SCENARIO 3: You need to know how many subsidiaries a public company has.

RESOURCES: 10-K reports include Exhibit 21, and can be found on the following websites: sec.gov, Intelligize, Lexis Securities Mosaic, or the company's website. Sarbanes Oxley requires public corporations to have an investors page on their websites that includes filings. D&B and Hoovers are also useful here.

SCENARIO 4: I am looking for specific bankruptcy information and I don't want to go PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records).

RESOURCES: Credit Risk Monitor has a useful database and early warning announcements using FRISK® scores, and Reorg Research covers large bankruptcies. Reorg Research collects and organizes all relevant documents in large bankruptcies, making it easy to locate documents in one place. Capital IQ and Debtwire are also useful for finding this type of information.

SCENARIO 5: My report needs to list the patent families of this one patent. Where do I turn?

RESOURCES: TotalPatent One and Relecura can answer this question very efficiently. TotalPatent One belongs to the Lexis family. Relecura is a tool for patent prosecutors to discover new information.

SCENARIO 6: I need to gather information about the patent and trademarks of a company for an M&A transaction competitive intelligence report.

RESOURCES: Relecura is good for patent information, allowing you to focus on different classifications and filter by country. ktMINE, via Wolters Kluwer Cheetah, provides valuable information about licensing, buying, and selling trademarks and patents. ktMINE has advanced searching via SIC codes, CPC (Cooperative Patent Classification) classifications, and company name.

SCENARIO 7: Who has reasonably sufficient information about private companies?

RESOURCES: Bloomberg Law and PitchBook both provide accurate information, as do D&B, Hoovers, Capital IQ, Lexis, and Westlaw.

Join the Conversation!

It is easy to fall into the comfort zone of relying on Google for everything. However, you need to consult other standard and non-standard resources to bolster your research. Flexibility in using the best tool for your report is significant. The use of these resources will provide more value to your CI report.

If you have additional resources that should be included and would like to share your ideas, please consider contributing them to *On Firmer Ground* at bit.ly/JF20OFG. We would love to hear from you! ∎

R·A Research + Analytics

IM Information Management

READ
Practical Competitive Intelligence "Breaking Down the Basics," in the September/October 2019 issue of *AALL Spectrum* at bit.ly/SO19Miles and "The Power of CI Checklists," in the November/December 2019 issue of *AALL Spectrum* at bit.ly/ND19Miles.

ATTEND
AALL's CI Strategies & Analysis, May 7-8, 2020, in Chicago.

AALL2go EXTRA
Listen to the 2016 webinar "Advanced Competitive Intelligence: Best Practices in Conducting CI Research," at bit.ly/AALL2go0616CI.

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