SCIP Prague 2023 – Academic Track: What is the future direction of competitive intelligence

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1. INTRODUCTION

The last few years have seen changes in the competitive intelligence landscape which collectively could signal a potential evolution in the thinking about the definition of the field and for academic's new research opportunities and directions. The recent SCIP Prague conference, in particular the academic stream along with a special issue of Foresight in 2020 exemplify what is happening. This paper uses primarily the presentations that were part of the SCIP Prague 2023 academic track to examine were the field could be going and, in many ways, represents a call to all academics in CI and related fields about emerging opportunities.

2. METHODOLOGY

Examining conference presentation as a method to identify trends within a discipline is not new. Andersen (2016) and Gano (2015) used presentations and special issue journal articles arising from Future Oriented Technology Analysis (FTA) conferences to identify trends within the Foresight field. Mikova (2016), used five years of Global TechMining (GTM) conference to identify trends in technology mining. As SCIP

Prague 2023 is the first CI academic conference in over 10 years, doing a trends approach at this point is not possible. Rather, the following looks at the academic presentation as well as selected keynote addresses to identify themes. It is hoped that this article not only serves as a summary of SCIP Prague 2023 academic track but also will be the base for a future article that will look at trends in CI using this and future CI academic tracks and the themes established in this paper. The goal of this effort is to contribute to the ongoing discourse on CI by providing valuable perspectives to improve business strategies and decision-making processes Cekuls (2023) and Cekuls (2022).

The start of the conference – Defining Competitive Intelligence and its Evolution

The opening keynotes for the conference while not being academic per se (not part of the academic track) did send a message to the field regarding expert opinions about the evolution and the future of the field.
Tanja Schindler Vice Chair of Association for Professional Futurists and Foresight Advisor to the EU commission opened up the conference with a talk titled "The

Convergence of Futures and the Intelligence Ecosystem. With the renaming of SCIP focusing on consortium of intelligence professionals, this talk reflected the concept of intelligence ecosystem rather than just competitive intelligence. Similar to Calof and Bishop (2020) this talk brought together many fields that collectively are focused on developing intelligence on the external environment including futures thinking, futures literacy, and business intelligence.

Tanja presented a look at the evolution of the intelligence ecosystem positioning the evolution as starting with the emergence of competitive intelligence as a discipline in the 1970s with its early focus on using public data to anticipate competitors moves. She saw the next stage of evolution as being a shift to Market Intelligence in the 1980's and 1990's expanding its look from just competitors to the entire market. She saw the 1990's and 2000's as the emergence of

business intelligence – a discipline that focused on data-driven decisions with what she saw as the 2010's to present being futures intelligence which focuses on anticipating scenarios and shaping the future. Figure 1 presents Tanja's summary graphic. Her approach sees the broader intelligence ecosystem as the product of the combination of competitive intelligence, market intelligence, business intelligence and now futures intelligence. The model developed by Tanja is based on extensive experience within the ecosystem.

This is complimentary to the anticipatory systems concept developed by Calof and Bishop (2020) in which each of these as well as other organizational functions that looks at the external environment are integrated into one cohesive system.
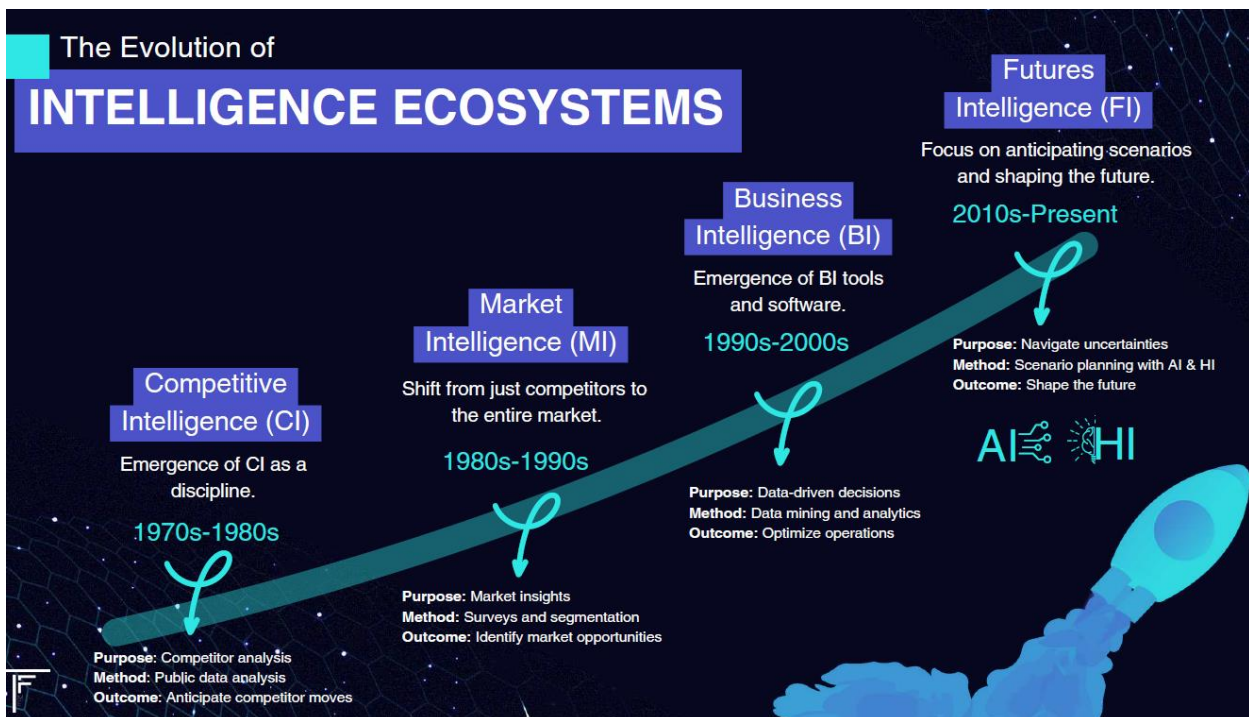
Figure 1 Intelligence Ecosystem Evolution by Tanja Schindler
Reprinted by permission of the Presenter (Tanja Schindler)

Luis Madureira, one of the organizers for the academic track made the second keynote "CI Manifesto: Past, Present and Future". While Tanja's presentation recounts her experiences and observations, Dr. Madureira looked at defining the intelligence ecosystem using extensive analysis of the literature. In

defining what competitive intelligence is, how it has evolved and the possible future of the definition of CI. Luis looked at the literature surrounding terms associated with the ecosystem (for example marketing intelligence, counter intelligence, and so forth) and a clustering of the terms by years.

This produced an evolution map of the field using scholarly research. Looking as well at a timeline of competitive intelligence starting in the 1940's Madureira looked at the evolution of the field and of the definition: 1947-1959 Origins and first steps focused on informal and tactical competitive data; 1960-1969 emergence of CI as a discipline; 1970-1979 expansion of the conceptual scope; 1980-1990 systematisation and structure of CI; 1990-1999 CI as a strategic asset for decision-making and competitive advantage using quantitative and qualitative data; 2023 CI empirically validated scientific definition .

Based on the evolution within the field and the analytics of topics, the term competitive augmented intelligence (CAI) is proposed which was defined as ""Competitive Augmented Intelligence is the integrated process and forward-looking practices used in augmenting human with machine intelligence to producing knowledge on the competitive environment to improve organizational performance." Dr. Madureira has published extensively on using a scientific approach for developing a definition of CI (e.g. Madureira et al 2021 and Madureira aet al 2023).

Both opening keynotes (academic and practitioner) point to a similar view of the past, the present and to a large extent the future of competitive intelligence which involves working with and integrating within an intelligence ecosystem. Both also suggest a challenge to the field both to identify all elements of the intelligence ecosystem and to further examine emerging definitions.

The Academic Presentations

The academic presentations themselves appeared to fit into three categories: Note that the categories developed are subjective and reflected the authors perception of presentation topics.

1) The intelligence ecosystem
2) CI applications – extending the use of intelligence
3) CI evolution – new tools and skillsets.

Madureira, Sergeenko and Zaimenko (2023) looked at how competitive intelligence can assist in the international business development strategy for multinational enterprises in an industry in the midst of geopolitical turbulence. The fast-food industry is examined in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This research shows how CI can help with international business development (a use extension) within a geopolitical turbulent environment (a situation for CI extension). The primary presenters (Sergeenko and Zaimenko) are MSc students who conducted this research as part of their program. The paper based on this presentation is in the current issue of Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business.

The Soilen (2023) presentation which was assisted by OpenAI focused on artificial intelligence and its possible role within the intelligence field. In particular the emergence of new skillsets were identified. The presentation was titled "A review of the knowledge worker as Prompt engineer: How good is AI at Societal Analysis and Future Predictions?" The following is taken from the paper's introduction: "AI with good prompts is as good as or better than senior intelligence analysts at Societal Analysis and Future Predictions. From the literature and analysis, it's clear that the role of the prompter must be divided into two parts, prompt engineering and Information Quality Control (IQC), The idea of information control quality control is needed given the poor quality of much data being gathered and then analyzed using today's AI systems.

Chinyavada and Sewdass (2023) reported on a survey done by Chinyavada as part of his PhD thesis that looked atf competitive intelligence practices for Agro-food processors in Limpopo province in South Africa. Looking at competitive intelligence practices of firms is not unique nor is the South African context however the presentation distinguished between the competitive intelligence practices of CEO'S versus Managers showing very different practices including different information sources used, types of decisions made and so forth. This represents a deepening of our knowledge; segmenting intelligence use and practice within the same firm. The paper arising from this presentation is included in this issue of the Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business.

Madureira (2023) in his second presentation within the academic track examined the link between competitive intelligence and innovation in the automotive industry. In

particular the research question for this study was "What role does CI play in the innovation of the automotive industry towards electrification?" The presentation reported on interviews held with nine industry executives in which several roles for CI in innovation were identified as well as pivotal roles of CI in this process including for example anticipating market direction. While prior studies have looked at the relationship between innovation and competitive intelligence (Calof and Sewdass 2020 for example), the Madureira presentation represents an extension of the CI and innovation literature stream in that it focused on a single industry and showed specific innovation projects that can be assisted by CI.

Mashego and Sewdass (2023) presented the results of PhD candidate Mashego's research looking at how competitive intelligence can help innovativeness of SME's in emerging economies. The article arising from this presentation is included in this issue of the Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business. The study noted a causal relationship according to those interviewed between competitive intelligence practices and improve sales, improved customer visits and improved profits. This paper and presentation extend CI in several ways: 1) It looks at innovation something that has not been extensively researched in the CI literature and 2) It focuses on small and medium sized firms, again something that has been noted as a weakness in the literature (Calof 2021).

Calof and Bisson (2023) presentation looked at the relationship between organizational agility and anticipatory systems showing a statistically significant relationship between many of the agility and anticipatory system variables. This presentation and its research contribute to intelligence ecosystem research and extension of the field. The study looks at both competitive intelligence and foresight organizational variables. These are two elements of the intelligence ecosystem being looked at simultaneously in the same study. By finding a relationship between these two elements and organization agility the study suggests expanding the concepts to include agility as well.

Shita and Sewdass (2023) looked at the effect of market intelligence on marketing mix decisions in Ethiopian Brewery's finding that market intelligence played a crucial role in market mix decisions. The study was done for Tekalinga Yalew Shita's PhD thesis. The paper arising from this is also contained in this issue of the Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business. The focus on market intelligence includes yet another element of what was described earlier as the intelligence ecosystem. Along with other presentations in the academic track this says that competitive intelligence, market intelligence and foresight were examined.

Conclusions and the future

The presentations described above demonstrate that scholarship in competitive intelligence is in alignment with the integrated intelligence and intelligence ecosystem concept that is also reflected in the SCIP name change. The academic presentations were also consistent with the two opening keynotes. Future researchers are encouraged to further examine the intelligence ecosystem researching each component as well as how the ecosystem can work together.

There will be more SCIP academic conferences over the coming year, one as part of the SCIP USA conference (April 2024) and one in 2024's European conference. This will hopefully lead to more presentations which can be used to confirm if the observations described above do in fact reflect a trend.

Those reading this paper are encouraged to share it with their colleagues within what has been described in this paper as the broad intelligence ecosystem. It is hoped that those from this ecosystem will be encouraged to submit their research to the upcoming conferences and in this way build research relationships and knowledge across the intelligence ecosystem.

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8

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