

# The Intelligence Analysts: Explaining Their Relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in a Technology-Driven World

Zems, Mathias

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**Abstract:** This paper proposes a view of the intelligence analysis process, at the individual analyst level, based on the concept of multiple mental models 'running' concurrently during the development of an intelligence product, (Martin 2003). However, intelligence is an intellectual process. Regardless of the means by which it is collected, the ultimate product is the result of smart people pondering what is known, what is unknown and trying to determine what it all means, (Lowenthal, 2003). Analysis is the breaking down of a large problem into a number of smaller problems and performing mental operations on the data in order to arrive at a conclusion or a generalization. It involves close examination of related items of information to determine the extent to which they confirm, supplement, or contradict each other and thus to establish probabilities and relationships, (Mathans, 1995). There are a wide variety of analytic disciplines used in intelligence, such as those from the political, social, and behavioral sciences, and the natural and military sciences. In addition, there are intelligence specialties such as counterintelligence, infrastructure protection, and target development and tracking, (Lisa, 1999). Each discipline has its own vocabularies, experts, and analysis methods which are constantly developing and advancing. The analyst may learn her discipline expertise in school or during a training period, but she must constantly keep abreast of advances in her field and of the ways they can be applied in intelligence analysis.

**Keywords:** Intelligence, Intelligence Analyst, Role, Function and Its importance.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of advanced technology, especially in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sub-sector, technical capability, in which greater emphasis is often focused on the modes of collection and physical tools of analysis, is increasingly displacing the importance of the analyst and his or her role in the intelligence system or cycle. Indeed, this raises some concern, particularly within the intelligence community. In this brief treatise, efforts are made to briefly examine who an intelligence analyst is, his role, functions, and importance to the intelligence system as a whole.

In order to discuss the complexities of intelligence analyst, it is first necessary and paramount to provide a cursory definition of the key words 'these include: information, intelligence and analyst. This is because the definition is a problematic due to its context, tradition and the different use of language by specialist, generalist and lay person. Before, defining intelligence, it's essential to understanding the meaning of information and analysis in the context of this process.

Some definitions of these key terms include the following:

- **Information:**

It is defined as pieces of raw, unanalyzed data that identifies persons, evidence and events. Information is the data that we use as we refine our forecasts, predictions and estimates. Moreover, information is data usable or applicable to the current context. In other words information is what remains after everything that is irrelevant is discarded. Therefore, to gather information requires senses or sensors and the ability to attach labels to the sensed perceptions and manipulate these labels to make predictions or forecasts, (algorithms thinking). There are many reasons for the collection of information, some of these reasons are for national security, law enforcement, protective operations and business or economic competition.

- **Analyst:**

It is someone or expert with special knowledge or ability who skilled in analyzing data or raw information. If an intelligence analyst were an abstract artist then the data would be the canvas, paints and brushes; therefore, information would be the painted image, while the description of the finished image becomes the intelligence. This is because analyst does create intelligence; he or she interprets the information and provides an analysis as to its meaning. Intelligence analysis is inherently an intellectual activity that requires knowledge, judgment, and a degree of intuition. Analysts are the voice of the intelligence community. It is pertinent to note that, analysts must absorb information with the thoroughness of a historians, organized it with the skill of Liberians, and disseminate it with the zeal of journalists.

- **Intelligence:**

It is the combination of credible information with quality-analysis. It is information that is capable of being understood. At its simplest, intelligence might be desired as the process of interpreting information to give it a true meaning. Intelligence, it is the product resulting from the collection, analysis, processing, integration, evaluation, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or events, criminality or areas of actual or potential operations. The term is also applied to the activity which results in the product and to the organizations in such activity.

- **Intelligence Discipline:**

A well defined area of intelligence planning, collection, processing, exploitation, analysis and reporting using a specific category of technical or human resources. There are seven major components of disciplines for which an analyst will solely depend upon to carry-out his practicum and empirical experience: human intelligence, imagery intelligence, geospatial intelligence, measurement and signals intelligence, communications intelligence, electronic intelligence, and foreign instrumentation signals intelligence, open-source intelligence, technical intelligence, and counterintelligence.

## 2. WHO AN INTELLIGENCE ANALYST IS?

An intelligent analyst is the individual who is employed by the government (federal, state or local) and or organization to deploy his or her analytic competencies such as knowledge, skills, and expertise acquired through practicum and empirical experience to collect information in the form of criminal intelligence or national intelligence from diverse sources, evaluates or analyzes such information and prepares objective threat assessments in the form of written reported or oral briefings used by the law enforcement and security agencies for detection and prevention of crimes against the society and external aggression against the state. A corollary of this is that a good intelligence analyst is therefore, one with high intelligence quotient (IQ), creativeness, critical and analytic skills, great **communication and presentation skills, planning and organizational skills, and, above all, disposition for great detail and good memory.**

Intelligence analysts are skilled subject matter expert who study and evaluate information from many sources. Nevertheless, information flows in from around the world, including satellite surveillance, local, foreign newspaper and broadcasts, and human contacts. This information however, varies widely in terms of reliability, and often it is conflicting or incomplete. An intelligence analyst works both in the office and field (which is usually made up a unique environment at times of dangerous or hazardous surroundings) where he or she handles both unclassified and classified public information to complete investigations and prepares assessments on given targets. In a such working environment, therefore, necessitates that the intelligence analyst must have the requisite experience, expertise, and training on crime, and intelligence analysis functions; tactical, operational, and strategic products; and intelligence community oversight of the use of data from sensitive sources.

There are typologies of intelligence analysts which are grouped into the following categories of expertise:

- Intelligence Collection Analysts- these are expertise on intelligence collection systems capabilities, processes and policies to drive the flow of intelligence information.
- Counterintelligence Threat Analysts- collect, study, and interpret a range of reports to identify and prevent foreign intelligence operations that threaten the Nigeria government, intelligence community and society at large.

- Intelligence Medical and Health Analysts- they are physicians who analyze and assess global health issues, such as disease outbreaks like (Ebola), and who follow the health of foreign leaders
- Counterterrorism Analysts- help warn of terrorist threats by assessing the leadership, motivations, plans and intentions of national and foreign terrorist groups (Book Haram insurgents) and their state and non-state sponsors.
- Military Analysts- it help Nigeria and world at large policymakers stay on top of threats by following national or foreign military and technical developments that affect another country's ability to wage war or threaten regional or international stability.
- Crime and Counternarcotics Analysts- do follow international narcotics trafficking and organized/transnational crime groups to detect emerging trends and patterns that will affect a country national security.
- Economics Analysts- it uses their specialized skills to analyze and interpret national economic trends and developments, assess and track foreign financial activities and develops new econometric and modeling methodologies.
- Analytic Methodologists- develop and apply new or established approaches to analysis such as statistical, polling, econometric, mathematical, or geospatial modeling methodologies, to add rigor and precision to the DI's overall intelligence analysis and collection
- Crime Pattern Analysts- a process that looks for link between crimes and other incidents to reveal similarities and differences that could be used to help predict and prevent future criminal activity.
- Flow Analysts- the review of raw data to determine the sequence of events or interactions that may reflect criminal activity. It can include timelines event-flow analysis, commodity-flow analysis, and activity-flow analysis. It may show a missing actions or events that need further investigation.
- Targeting Analysts- it uses network analysis techniques and specialized analytical tools to identify and detail key figures and organizations who may pose a threat to nation interest, etc.

### 3. THE ROLE OF THE INTELLIGENCE ANALYST

The intelligence analyst plays very vital role within the intelligence cycle or system. First and foremost, it is the intelligence analyst that does the critical thinking, critical analysis and production of assessment reports which are the very foundation upon which the intelligence cycle rest. He does this by diligently collecting relevant information from various sources critically analyzes it and then produces objective and timely assessments free from any bias. This intelligence product usually appears in the form of written reports or oral briefings for use by his employers or law enforcement agencies.

The intelligence analyst's role is to develop meaningful and usable intelligence assessments from all of those sources. Often it is like putting together the pieces of a puzzle, received at different times from different places, to form a picture that is complete enough to comprehend even when some pieces are missing. Intelligence analysts apply their expertise in intelligence collection systems capabilities, processes, and policies to drive the flow intelligence information and provide colleagues the data needed to understand and analyze issues. It is the responsibility of intelligence analyst to collaborate with representatives from other government and intelligence agencies to share information or coordinate intelligence.

An intelligence analyst should have psychological knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, etc. It is expected to have philosophical basic principles, values, ethics, ways of thinking, customs, practices and their impact on human culture. It is also imperative that intelligence analyst should have knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules and other democratic political process.

There is need for intelligence analyst to have relevance and importance sociological knowledge of group behaviour and dynamics, trends, influences, human migrations, ethnicity, societal cultures and their historical events and origins. It is duty bond to any intelligence analyst to have foreknowledge of criminological etiology, trends, patterns, criminal activities and people's reaction to crimes. This is imperative, because it provide analyst with necessary background, scientific knowledge, skills of critical thinking and their application in criminological intelligence, analysis, evaluation, assessments, and intellectual pursuit.

Finally, intelligence analysts provide specialist advice and assess trends with which to help decision-makers and or managers decide on future priorities, (strategic assessment). An intelligence analyst will need to have the following skills and qualities:

- excellent research and analytical skills
- creative problem solving skills
- a good eye for detail and a good memory
- excellent communication and presentation skills
- the ability to adapt quickly to changing priorities
- excellent planning and agency skills
- good teamwork skills
- the ability to work to deadlines
- good timekeeping and a willingness to work flexibly
- an understanding of data security and confidentiality issues
- the ability to build good working relationship with other departments and agencies

#### 4. FUNCTIONS OF THE INTELLIGENCE ANALYST

The intelligence analyst performs five cardinal functions in the process of discharging his or her responsibilities and duties. These functions are as follow;

1. Critical thinking within the intelligence system
2. Information sharing (networking) and collaborating
3. Welding intelligence and law enforcement tactics in the local security environment by using analytic methods, techniques and tools.
4. Converting analytic observations and judgments into analytic product.
5. Converting concepts and principles into action.

These functions could be further elaborated by highlighting their respective definitions and action indicators as follows:

Function	Definition/specification	Action indicators
Critical thinking within the intelligence system	Apply logic analysis, synthesis, creativity, judgment, and systematic approaches to gather, evaluate, and use multiple sources of information to effectively inform decisions and outcomes. Dismember problems into meaningful parts and use logic and judgment to determine accuracy and relevance of data. Identify and reconcile gaps, uncertainties, and key assumptions of data. Identify a needed for and known where or how to gather information, obtain, evaluate, organize, and maintain information. Identify and use principles, rules, and relationships to construct arguments or interpret facts, data, or other information. Develop new insights into situations and apply innovative solutions to improve processes.	Framing critical issues and difficult questions whose resolutions and answers well help protect the country and Designing analytic approaches and collection plans and priority information needs for homeland security issues that balance short-term responses with long term value. Identifying, tasking accessing, and evaluating sources of information for validity and relevance in reducing uncertainty and filling knowledge gaps. Exploring open sources, accessing sources, searching the internet, using public and commercial database, and assessing validity and value. Identifying, relating, interpreting, and referencing data and data sources. Generating and testing multiple hypotheses and conclusions.

		<p>Systematically challenging key assumptions.</p> <p>Structuring logical arguments that have clear and meaningful conclusions are supported by logical claims and relevant data, and account for inconsistent data.</p> <p>Overcoming mental mind-sets and avoiding common fallacies in selection and use of data and development of argument and conclusions.</p> <p>Forecasting change and seeking new insights and innovative solutions through creative use of data and imagination techniques.</p> <p>Evaluating the quality of thinking and analytic processes through comparisons with established standards.</p> <p>Managing projects, time, and competing priorities.</p>
Information sharing (networking) and collaborating	<p>Share information and knowledge to achieve results, applying appropriate legal and security guidelines and restrictions.</p> <p>Develop collaborative information and knowledge sharing networks and build alliances with colleagues and counterparts within area of professional and technical expertise.</p> <p>Maintain effective working relationships, especially when defending or critiquing a position. Persuades others, build consensus through give –and- take, and gain cooperation from others to achieve goals.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to increase information sharing, as appropriate with customers, colleagues, and others.</p>	<p>Establishing trusted networks of key contributors within the homeland security and law enforcement community to share information and analytic insights that will lead to action on critical issues.</p> <p>Storing and maintaining information for maximum use, including ensuring that documents are appropriately marked.</p> <p>Applying legal, privacy, and security guidelines, restrictions, and operational information sharing, storage, and analysis.</p> <p>Operationalizing the global principle of “responsibility to provide” within applicable laws and regulations and implementing best practices in collaboration.</p> <p>Exploiting available technologies to exchange, collaborate, and publish content.</p> <p>Maximizing transparency within applicable laws and regulations and dealing with sensitive issues.</p> <p>Collaborating across organizational and functional boundaries to share the work, avoid duplication, and increase analytic impact.</p> <p>Deconflicting analytic positions. Professional methods, techniques and tools</p>
Welding intelligence and law enforcement tactics in the local security environment by using analytic methods, techniques and tools .	<p>Integrate evidence/information, evaluate priorities and alternatives, asses similarities and differences in data to develop findings and conclusions.</p> <p>Seek out, evaluate, and integrate a variety of perspective. Seek to increase own and others understanding of an issue based on new information and alternative perspectives. Listen to and show appreciation for alternative ideas and approaches.</p> <p>Apply tools and methods to substantive discipline, domain, or area of work adapt existing tools and/or methods or employ new methodological approaches required for substantive discipline, domain, or area of work.</p> <p>Maintain awareness of changing conditions, current events, and cultural and historical contexts as they affect one’s work.</p> <p>Demonstrate conscientiousness, diligence,</p>	<p>Analyzing homeland security, law enforcement, and other non-law enforcement data and trends.</p> <p>Crime analysis</p> <p>Demographic analysis</p> <p>Financial analysis</p> <p>Association links and process flows</p> <p>Geospatial analysis</p> <p>Using structures analytic techniques.</p> <p>Data visualization</p> <p>Idea generation including techniques such as morphological analysis indicators, and scenarios.</p> <p>Hypothesis generation and testing</p> <p>Assessing cause and effect</p> <p>Challenge analysis, including techniques such as the Delphi method.</p> <p>Conflict management</p> <p>Decision support, including techniques such as SWOT analysis.</p> <p>Using software tools to analyze information, such</p>

	and thoroughness.	as: Spreadsheets and matrices Flowcharts and Gantt charts Social network and link analysis tools ACH and other structured techniques software Quantitative software Data management and storage software Evaluating the quality of the application of analytic techniques through comparisons with established standards. <b>Threat and Risk Assessments</b> Producing threat and vulnerability assessments. Assessing risks, using qualitative and quantitative methods Communicating risk Anticipating threat and risk. Making recommendations to mitigate risks. <b>Suspicious activity reports (SARs)</b> Exploiting SARs as sources for identifying and monitoring significant friends and patterns Using analytic techniques to identify trends, patterns, or other linkages. Evaluating and disseminating SARs as appropriate according to information's sharing environment SAR standards.
Converting analytic observations and judgments into analytic products.	Express concepts, facts, or other information effectively to individuals or groups, taking into account the audience and nature of the information (technical, sensitive, controversial), Communicate information (i.e. facts, ideas, or messages) in a succinct and organized manner in the proper form. Produce written material that is appropriate for the intended audience. Recognize and use correctly grammar, Make clear and convincing oral presentation using the proper briefing protocols listen to others, attend to nonverbal, and respond appropriately. Develop, receive, and convey information using computers, software application and other technologies and techniques.	<b>Analyst perspective</b> Transforming customer needs into intelligence requirements. Proposing the product to match the issue, customer, and purpose. Products will range from tactical to strategic and include commonly used formats, such as: Bulletins Intelligence report Assessments Intelligence briefings Analytic reports to support Investigations of prosecution Scripting the product. Using presentation and publisher software. Reviewing the product Coordinating the product Marking and dissimulating the product Briefing the product Following up on the product, seeking and incorporation feedback, and measuring its impact.
Converting concepts and principles into law enforcement actions.	Produce outcomes and product that highlight the interrelationships among organizations and components of the homeland security community and maximize its ability to protect and defend the homeland. Strive for excellence and demonstrate commitment to protect the homeland. Ensure individual actions meet mission needs and protect sensitive information. Adapt behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing	Analyzing homeland security issues with a nexus to homeland security, including but not limited to; Terrorism UMD proliferation Borders Critical infrastructure Public health and safety Emergency management Strategic criminal threat, as defined by the all crimes approach.

	<p>conditions, or unexpected obstacles.          Anticipating change and seeking new insight and innovative solutions for challenges.          Evaluating the quality of analytic performance and management through comparisons with established standards.</p>	<p>Assessing legal parameters and criminal predicates to protect the homeland.          Protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.          Sharing best practices in homeland security and law enforcement intelligence output and impact.          Adjust rapidly to new situations warranting attention and resolution. Be open to change and new information.          Question conventional approaches and support an environment that encourages new ideas. Participate in the design and implementation of new or cutting edge programs and processes.</p>
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Source: The Present Writer's Own Conceptualization, 2015

## 5. THE IMPORTANCE OF INTELLIGENCE ANALYST

Obviously on account of the vital role the intelligence analysis plays in the intelligence system, he or she is of great importance and held in high esteem in any nation. The intelligence analyst's great importance arguably and inexorably derives from the critical role, the intelligence system plays in the efforts aimed at providing both domestic and national security in any given nation. Think of it, it is the intelligence analyst who first and foremost thinks out the potential sources of information and goes out to collect the relevant information, then evaluates or critically analyzes such and produces threat assessments from which analytic products are generated in the form of reports, oral briefings among others. The point of departure here is that it is these reports, oral briefings etc that emanate from the exertions of the intelligence analyst that the law enforcement or national security agencies rely on in the concerted and onerous task of providing security both at the domestic and national levels. That is to say, without the diligence and hard work of the intelligence analyst which find expression in the intelligence reports and briefs, he or she produces, other actors in the security system of any national can do little or nothing in the process.

The great importance attached to the intelligence analyst could be illustrated with two recent instances in Nigeria, a leading black nation on the African continent firstly, sometime in 1976, a mysterious disease known as *ebola* was first diagnosed in Congo, obviously coming from the *Ebola* River in that country. For years, the disease had silently spread across many neighbouring countries in the West African sub-region including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote D'Ivoire, to name but a few, killing many persons.

It came to pass that sometime towards the tail end of 2014; one Patrick Sawyer from Liberia visited the Nigerian city of Lagos on a diplomatic assignment and was reported dead after testing positive to the notorious disease. Not long, the disease began to spread among Nigerians and later killed over nine persons and at that point intelligence analysts in the medical and health fields swung into action. Before long, medical and health analysts collected relevant information, evaluated same and generated medical and health intelligence reports and briefs and made such available to President Goodluck Jonathan and other government officials. As it were, it was these reports that the government and health officials heavily relied on in the successful fight that quickly wiped out the notorious ebola disease from Nigeria. The point being made here is that without the said reports coming from the exertions of those intelligences analysts in the medical and health fields, the said ebola disease would have ravaged the Nigerian population as it did in her neighbouring countries.

Again, in early 1980s, sectarian violence had broken out in the northern parts of Nigeria, no thanks to the fundamentalist activities of the Maitstine Islamic sect. It took the quick intervention of government law enforcement and criminal intelligence agencies to fight the sect to a veiled submission.

In 2001, the same sect re-surfaced in Maiduguri and finally transformed into the present ferocious Boko Haram sect that has imported terrorism and insurgency into Nigeria, particularly in the northern parts. In the face of this development, the nation; s intelligence analysts had since swung into action which gave rise to a number of high profile intelligence reports and briefs now being used by the nation's military and other security apparatus in the on-going successful routing of the Boko Haram insurgents, leading to restoration of normal life in parts of northeast Nigeria, here lies the importance of the intelligence analyst (Criminal Analyst or Military analyst) in the life of a given nation.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In this treatise, we have been able to identify who an intelligence analyst is, specifically noting those core and essential competencies such as skills, knowledge, expertise and experience which he/she should possess for a successful discharge of his or her responsibilities and duties. This paper however, has been able to provide a cursory definition of the complexities of the key words such as information, intelligence and analyst in the context of its process. It is also the finding of this study that the intelligence analyst plays very vital role in the intelligence system or cycle. As it is he or she that first and foremost initiates the intelligence discipline or cycle by collecting the relevant information with which he or she generates the all-important intelligence reports or briefs without which the law enforcement and national security agencies cannot discharge their respective duties in the security system.

Again, this study also identified the five cardinal functions of the intelligence analyst and also sketched out details of the respective definitions and the analytic skills behavioral indicators of these functions. Finally, the study also highlighted the great importance nations attach to the intelligence analysts in the security provision system. This was corroborated with two instances that took place in Nigeria, a leading populous black nation in the West African sub-region.

### About the Author:

**SP. Zems, Mathias** PGD, MSc. Crim. (PhD in View), an Author, Publisher, Facilitator, Instructor, Advisor and Criminologist. He is a criminal intelligence analyst and investigative professional with over thirty year's practical and empirical experience.

He held several positions which include: Intelligence Coordinator, Field Officer, Operation Officer, Security intelligence Analyst and Criminal Intelligence Analyst. The scopes of his investigations include: Bank Fraud; Wire Fraud, Cyber-Crime, Militancy, Kidnapping, Homicide, Cultism, Terrorism, Narco-Terrorism, Robberies, Surveillance and Undercover investigations, evaluating and analysing intelligence, etc.

He facilitates at National Open University of Nigeria, (NOUN) on professional studies. He is also a guest lecturer at the Novena University Ogume-Nigeria at the Department of Intelligence & Security Studies.

The author's area of academic competencies include Criminology, Intelligence and crime correlation, Spy and Espionage, Victimology, Penology, Security Studies, Cyber-Criminology, Criminal Investigation, Corporate Investigation, Undercover and Surveillance Investigations, Policing & Crime Prevention, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism, Crime & Punishment, etc.

He has authored several journals and books such as: *Understanding Crime: Analysis for Intelligence, Investigation and Security*, *Crime is Normal*, *Understanding Principles, Practice of Crime and Criminology*, *Understanding Criminological Theory and Terminology*, etc.

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