



© Comintelli Content Assessment eWorkbook

A guide to selecting external content sources that are relevant for you.

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Introduction from Comintelli

How do you select relevant content sources for your Intelligence system? Based on years of experience and feedback from our customers, we know that finding and evaluating external content for an intelligence system is something that is very important for the success of an Intelligence system, but still something that many struggle with.

Therefore, we partnered with research firm **Jinfo** (www-jinfo.com) who are experts on information sources and strategy and co-developed this e-workbook to provide guidance and support for intelligence workers in this process.

It has been written by Jinfo's Director of Research, Robin Neidorf. Assessments were developed based on characteristics highlighted by research participants, following models using checklists and worksheets that Jinfo has used with hundreds of information teams and organizations.



Checklist:

Where can you find content?

Getting the right external content sources into your intelligence platform is fundamental to success. But sometimes it's hard to know where to look to find relevant information.

If you're unsure of where to start, use this checklist to identify potential sources and types of sources to investigate further.

- Who would care about this type of information?** Information can be found through professional or industry associations, government agencies, regulatory bodies, and other organizations that have a stake in collecting and publishing information. Consider who else cares about the information you care about and search their websites and resources for options.

Note here your ideas:

- When you have found relevant information in the past, what types do you tend to find and use?** Your best sources might be conference presentations or papers, videos, podcasts or transcripts, in addition to or instead of text-based sources. If useful sources are in non-text formats, include sites, search engines and resources that specialize in those formats (i.e., YouTube in addition to Google).

Note here your ideas:

- Ask an expert.** Find someone (or several someones) who is an expert in your area of interest. Ask them what they read and monitor to stay informed.

Note here experts you might speak with:

- Ask a source specialist - aka, a librarian.** If you have an outdated notion of what a librarian does, you're in for a good surprise: Today's librarians are source specialists - they are experts in knowing what sources are out there, the pros and cons of each, and how to turn business problems into researchable questions. Your organization might have an information resource centre, research centre or similar department that can help you; if not, contact a local business school's library, or the business librarian at your public library.

Note here where you can find a source specialist:

As the world of available information expands, new sources crop up all the time, and sometimes old sources become less valuable. Keep this checklist handy so that you can refresh your source portfolio periodically.



Worksheet:

What type of content is relevant to your needs?

To select and manage the sources that will support an effective intelligence system, you need to analyze:

- What is important to you
- Sources already in use

Table: What's important to you?

Complete this worksheet for a better understanding of relevant content. If you have several implementations, or different topics for different use cases within the platform, complete a new worksheet for each use case.

Variable	Consider...	Your notes
Specialization	Are your topics customary to the business world? The consumer world? Or are they niche topics that have fewer sources of useful information?	
Timeliness	Do you need up-to-the-minute data, or are you more interested in long-term views based on older information?	
Archive	Do you need ingestion of the archive of data in order to get the insights you need?	
Brand names	Are there particular authors, influencers or thought-leaders whose insights are particularly important? What about specific publication brands - will users trust the system if it doesn't include a particular source?	
Languages	Do you need to consider foreign language sources? Will translated versions of those sources be available and trustworthy?	
Format	Is critical information available through multimedia sources, like video or audio files?	
Other considerations	Any other considerations that may impact the relevance of a source for this use case.	

Now assemble a list of sources that are already in use - these may already be incorporated into a platform, or they may be accessed and managed manually.

A table is provided, but you may find it easier to work in a spreadsheet so that you can add to it over time. The first row under the header provides a brief explanation of what belongs in that field.

Source	URL	Format	Areas of coverage	Unique features	Cost and restrictions on use
<i>Name of the source</i>	<i>URL for site, publication, publisher, etc.</i>	<i>Indicate website, RSS, newsletter, database, etc.</i>	<i>Describe what's included, including availability of archive and frequency of updates</i>	<i>Note any unique features that add to its relevance/value</i>	<i>Note if there is a cost associated with the source, and/or any other restrictions on how you can use it</i>

You may find it easiest to collect this information from people who are or will be using the platform by providing them with a copy of the table or spreadsheet and asking them to add their sources to it. Then you can compile and dedupe the lists.

Now, review the current sources in use, and compare it to your notes from Table 1. Then answer these questions:

01. Which of our requirements needs further attention in our collection of sources? For example, are we missing areas of specialization or relying too heavily on one type of source?

02. What patterns, if any, appear in our list of current sources? For example, are we leaning towards certain formats or brand names?

03. How much are we spending on these sources today? Would additional budget make an exponential difference in the impact of our system?

Make a list of additional sources that, if it were present, would strengthen your intelligence environment. Do not worry right now whether you can find or afford the sources - simply create your initial wish list.

You now have a target universe of sources relevant to your intelligence system. The next step is to research sources and determine value.

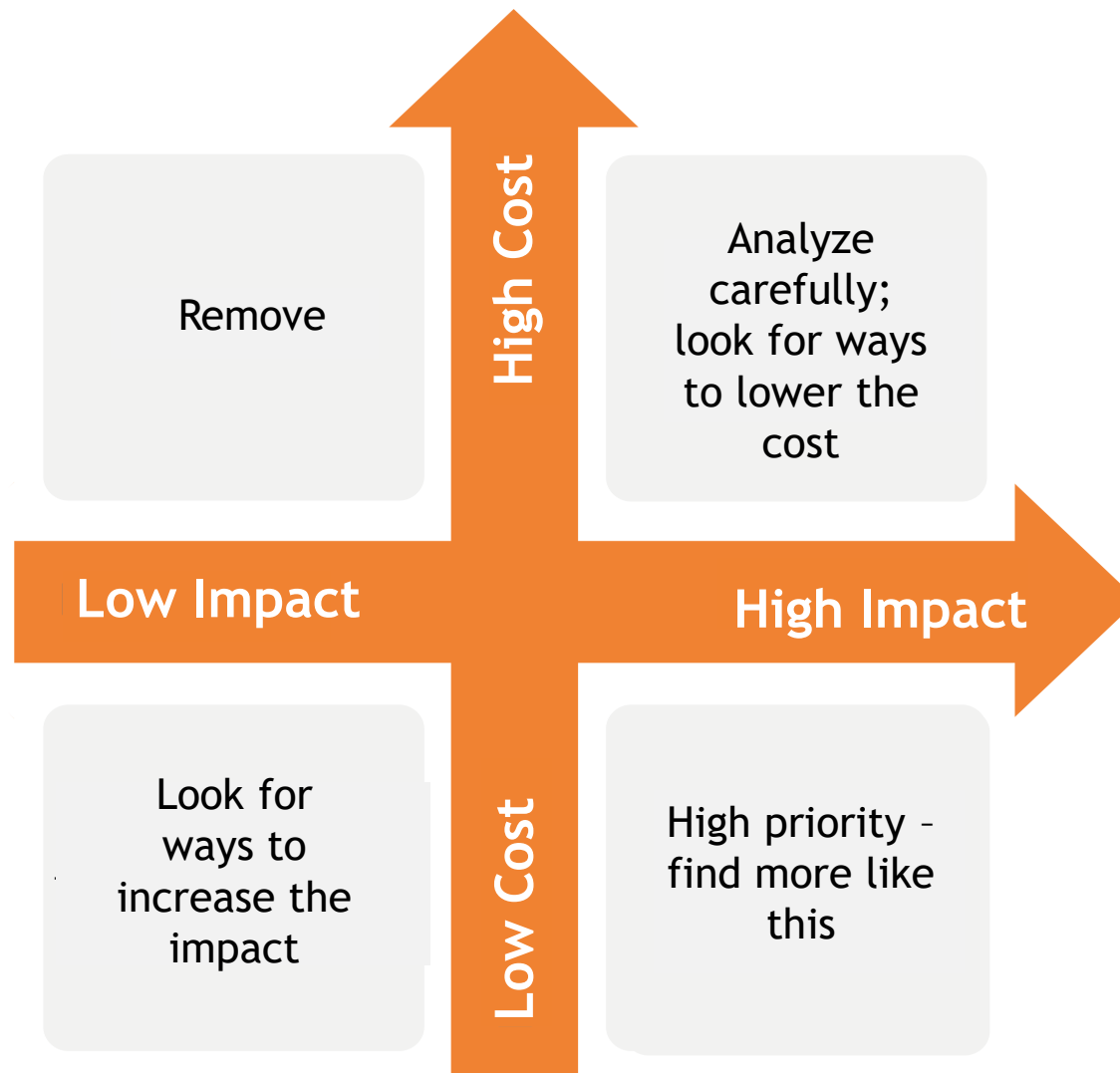


Worksheet: Balancing total cost of ownership of sources

Even free sources have costs associated with them - staff time to find and manage them, as well as fixing things when problems come up (keeping URLs up-to-date can keep you VERY busy).

This figure looks at Total Cost of Ownership, or TCO, of external sources you might incorporate into your intelligence platform.

To analyze TCO and get a better understanding of how to balance your costs, impact and overall value, you need to review all elements of cost and impact.



Cost analysis

The basic cost components are:

01. Direct cost for any sources you pay for - i.e., what is the contract value?
02. Staff time to manage those supplier relationships, including contract renewals.
03. Staff time to research and validate free sources you incorporate - note that this is more than a one-time activity, as sources change; needs to be done annually at minimum.
04. Staff time to troubleshoot problems - of particular concern with free sources, where URLs can break, feeds can stop working, and you don't have an account manager who can help you sort it out.

Some organizations also incorporate risk factors as a cost - for example, what's the relative cost of NOT having a particular source, or does this source present some risks around accuracy? However, to get started, you can stick with costs that are more easily quantified.

Use a table like the one below or create a spreadsheet to review TCO of your sources:

Staff time					
Source name	Direct cost	Managing supplier relationship	Researching and validating	Troubleshooting	TCO
	<i>Enter the contract value per annum or "none" if a free source</i>	<i>Estimate the number of hours per annum, and then multiply by the value of an hour of staff time</i>			<i>Add up direct costs and staff costs</i>

If you are using both paid-for and free sources, you might find it easiest to work through your paid sources first, then your free sources. Once you complete this exercise, you'll have a meaningful overview of the TCO of the content in your intelligence platform.

Impact analysis

Analyzing impact is usually a bit harder than analyzing costs. It can be difficult to determine precisely how a specific source has contributed to the creation of actionable intelligence. Some metrics you can review, however, include the following:

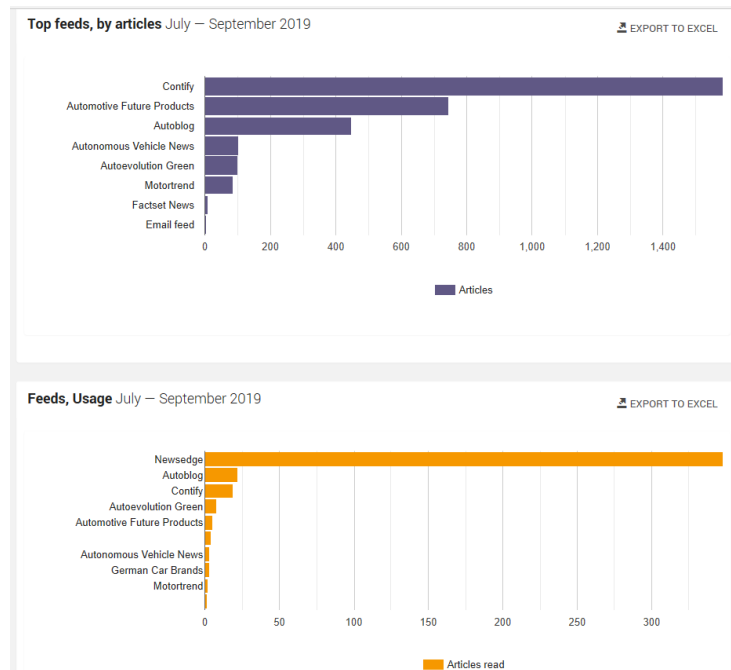
01. Frequency with which items from this source are used, reused, commented on, or shared.
02. Number or percentage of unique items from this source.
03. Overall percentage of the total available data this source represents

Talk with your Intelligence2day® consultant about the types of reporting that might help you measure impact.

Balancing the equation

With a clear view on cost and impact, you can see where sources fit on your TCO grid, and adjust accordingly:

01. **High cost, low impact:** Get rid of this source, even if it's free!
02. **High cost, high impact:** Find ways to reduce the costs. For paid-for sources, you may not have much flexibility on direct costs, but both free and paid-for sources can benefit from attention to reducing the staff costs. Are there ways to reduce the amount of management you need to do for this source?
03. **Low cost, low impact:** This is another category you might consider getting rid of, but the alternative is to look for ways to increase the impact. Would tweaking your keywords help? Working with a curation service? Finding additional applications for this source material elsewhere in the business?
04. **Low cost, high impact:** The perfect combination - how can you replicate the success of this source?



Examples of source usage analytics from Intelligence2day®



Checklist:

Manage your portfolio of external content

Your portfolio of external content requires ongoing management. Use this checklist to create a management system that keeps you on top of quality, cost and impact:

Weekly

- Monitor usage reports
- Troubleshooting

Monthly

- Validation research on a selected group of current free sources to ensure they are still valid, accurate and functioning - divide up your portfolio of free sources to ensure you cover each one at least once a year
- Research on new sources as needed

Quarterly

- Produce cost and impact report on sources to monitor TCO
- Review any upcoming renewals for paid-for sources

Annually

- Negotiate renewals for paid-for sources
- Survey users on emerging or unmet needs
- Create research and management plan for coming year's content strategy

About Comintelli

Comintelli (www.comintelli.com) is a Swedish software company which develops and provides Intelligence Software that converts unstructured Big Data content into organized, digestible information for decision-making.

About Intelligence2day®

The award-winning solution Intelligence2day® (www.intelligence2day.com) is an Insight Engine for Mmarket and Competitive Intelligence that helps customers make faster and more confident decisions. Founded in 1999 and with extensive intelligence experience, Comintelli continues to develop user-friendly solutions that shortens Time-To-Insights.

What's Next?

To learn more about how to acquire the best external content for you, please contact us and one of our intelligence experts will reach out to help you. We have worked with hundreds of different content providers and can facilitate the content selection process for you.

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