



Information Management Training

Adeline du Toit

asadt@lw.rau.ac.za

Competitive intelligence, also referred to as corporate or business intelligence, is an emerging discipline, which has only become increasingly important in the business arena since the early 1980s.

For enterprises to compete effectively in the knowledge economy, they need to change their values and have a new focus on creating and using intellectual assets. To be successful in this environment individuals need to acquire a new combination of skills. In particular they need to learn skills that allow them to find, manage and share information and knowledge. The role of competitive intelligence has always been to create knowledge. Employees monitor, examine and analyse data in order to make critical business decisions. It is the implementation of knowledge management processes that captures tacit information coming out of competitive intelligence, makes it explicit by storing it and makes it available to be shared and reused by others in the enterprise.

For this reason, employers increasingly are demanding of new employees a minimum level of competence and understanding of competitive intelligence, and curricula are being altered in many academic institutions to respond to the demand for expertise in competitive intelligence.

The Acadia University in Canada offers a Web-based competitive intelligence programme to cater for this need. Founded in 1838, Acadia University has been consistently ranked as the best Canadian undergraduate university in annual surveys among business professionals by *Maclean's* newsmagazine. Providing world-class business education to students for more than 40 years, the business programme is one of the reasons why Acadia continues to receive such high rankings.

The School of Business at Acadia University is unique. A laptop-teaching environment places students at the forefront of technology-based business education initiatives. A tradition of innovation is reflected in The Acadia Advantage, an academic initiative that integrates the use of notebook computers into the undergraduate curriculum. All students are issued an IBM ThinkPad computer as part of tuition. The aim of the Competitive Intelligence Program is to develop business analysts who add value to employers through their abilities to effectively use electronic online resources for competitive advantage.

Course offerings such as Organization Theory and Business Policy serve as platforms for the training of students in the practice of competitive intelligence. The courses train students to use electronic information sources to effectively resolve important business concerns. Using the industry value chain or system as an intellectual platform, students assess the strategic behaviour of a publicly traded corporation, acquire competitive intelligence skills, and do so with the aid of Acadia Advantage technology. Teaching them to match relevant online information sources with a series of analytical frameworks develops the interpretive abilities

of students.

In the programme, online information sources, theories, communication technologies and analytical frameworks are used to develop graduates capable of resolving important business concerns such as:

- Identifying a firms' competitors;
- Profiling an industry or competitor;
- Assessing the legal situation surrounding a corporation;
- Assessing the degree to which an enterprise's behaviour is socially responsible;
- Identifying individuals within a company's hierarchy who are true corporate power holders;
- Identifying signs of impending, significant organizational change; and
- Performing due diligence prior to entering into important business relationships.

Further information is available at www.acadiau.ca

Disclaimer

Articles published in SAJIM are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editor, Board, Publisher, Webmaster or the Rand Afrikaans University. The user hereby waives any claim he/she/they may have or acquire against the publisher, its suppliers, licensees and sub licensees and indemnifies all said persons from any claims, lawsuits, proceedings, costs, special, incidental, consequential or indirect damages, including damages for loss of profits, loss of business or downtime arising out of or relating to the user's use of the Website.

ISSN 1560-683X

Published by [InterWord Communications](#) for the Centre for Research in Web-based Applications,
Rand Afrikaans University