

Ethics, legalities, and Open Intelligence

The world of economic intelligence is confronted with legitimate questions from their prospects and clients regarding the legal and ethical aspects of the profession: if I use your services, which utilize open intelligence, will I face legal and ethical problems?

The answer is negative... if the rules are set and respected. Open source intelligence involves gathering intelligence from sources that are accessible to everyone. However, they are not necessarily free. There are three types of intelligence:

- Open intelligence: sources are free and accessible to anyone.
- Closed intelligence: sources are accessible only with accreditation... or by illegal means. Collecting intelligence from closed sources without authorization is punishable by imprisonment.
- Semi-open intelligence: this enters a very gray area; it involves information that is difficult to obtain.

Before embarking on an investigation using open intelligence, several questions need to be posed:

- Can I legitimately access the data I am going to collect? Do I have a mission letter that covers me?
- Are the data I am going to collect legitimate? Is it a data leak?
- Can I copy and use the information? This also raises questions about terms of use, intellectual property rights...
- Can I source each element? Additionally, it is important to note that in a report given to the client, intellectual honesty involves sourcing each piece of information. One piece of information = one paragraph = one source.

In conclusion, it's not a jungle. It should be remembered that intelligence (at least in economic intelligence) is not intended to find evidence in a legal trial, at least not yet. The principle of intelligence in the business world is to inform the decision-maker to find market opportunities, protect the company (including employees and company information), or influence to protect the company's interests.

Regarding ethics, it is worth noting that there have been some cases where ethics in certain economic intelligence practices have been compromised. This is why a charter exists in France. The French Economic Intelligence Syndicate has established a charter. In France, the Federation of Economic Intelligence Professionals has thus issued an 8-article charter that notably calls for:

- Not harming the fundamental interests of France.
- Informing the client if the requested mission could be harmful.
- Respecting confidentiality and intellectual property.
- Refusing any mission contrary to ethics.

In conclusion, economic intelligence, when practiced within legal and ethical guidelines, is a major asset for companies. Based on open intelligence, it allows access to crucial information to inform strategic decisions without breaking the law or compromising the integrity of stakeholders. However, it is essential to remain vigilant and ensure that every step taken respects the ethical principles established by professional charters.

Economic intelligence professionals must ask the right questions before starting an investigation and must always act within a legal and moral framework. Adopting transparent and responsible practices strengthens client trust and contributes to the positive reputation of the profession.

Finally, by adhering to ethical charters and respecting current legislation, economic intelligence experts can not only avoid legal and ethical pitfalls but also enhance their role as strategic partners for companies. The future of this discipline relies on a harmonious balance between information exploitation and respect for ethical standards, thus guaranteeing a positive contribution to economic development and corporate competitiveness.

L'article est unique et a été rédigé par un bénévole expert de chez ADESS, ayant une grande expertise dans sa thématique de prédilection. Il a accumulé une expérience professionnelle significative et des diplômes qui lui sont associés.

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