

Targeting Corporate Intelligence by OSINT of Kroll Inc.

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Introduction

With the rise in Global Internet-ization, world is filled with information that may be useful for some, while not so useful for the other. There are a lot of individuals, organizations, agencies and government units who would like to know what they do not know, such as: is our future partner in Cuba, a terrorist? This is where detective instincts are utilized to analyze information from the data gathered which are then shared with the clients for a receipt of fees. However, little is known about the private investigators for security and confidentiality reasons since they secretly work on projects assigned to them. These corporate investigators gather information from open sources and classified reporting to serve the purpose of finding truthful information for the clients. The best known in this regard is Kroll Inc. that was established in 1972 as a corporate investigations and risk consulting firm in New York City. Open Source Intelligence or OSINT is critical to the development of strategic intelligence not only for the government but for small scale business and academia as well because of the mass sharing of structured information. OSINT though has been around for many years, but with the advent of information technology there is conflict between government, military, individuals and organizations about the ways to gather the load of intelligence.

Corporate Intelligence

Business opportunities and business risks goes hand in hand. In an uncertain environment of today, it is vital for the investors to protect their investments and make informed decisions to gain higher returns. Some require market entry information about the potential demand needs of

niche market; some require competitor intelligence to evaluate their strengths and vulnerabilities in terms of competition; due diligence is required to assess risky projects for future income streams including mergers, acquisitions, ventures, public offerings and hostile takeovers; and other types of corporate security information is needed to survive in the market. There is a comprehensive list of business intelligence and due diligence information service providers who are deploying techniques and technologies to help corporate clients gain competitive edge; Kroll Inc. is the most prominent among them.

Kroll Inc.

Kroll Inc. was established in 1972 as a corporate investigations and risk consulting firm in New York City by Jules B. Kroll with a focus to improve corporate operations by identifying various types of corruptions such as fraud, money laundering, and kickbacks. Over the time span of forty years Kroll Inc. is serving various clients dispersed over wide array of locations, until eventually got bought out in 2010 by a security group, Allegriety. Kroll Inc. is one of the leading risk and security consultancy firm (Kroll, 2013) with around 55 offices across 26 countries. It deals in functions including due diligence, background screening research, financial investigations, business intelligence, security consulting and On-track and electronic data recovery. It has employed over 2300 multidisciplinary personnel, ranging from former military recruits and cops to investigative journalists and accountants, working at various levels and locations, devoted to discovering the truth that is of importance to their clients.

Kroll Inc. Functions of Corporate Intelligence

Kroll helps the corporate clients in gaining deeper information than what is available from public sources. The range of corporate intelligence and risk security functions performed by Kroll include Market Entry, Competitor Intelligence, Due diligence, Corporate Contest Advisory, Corporate Frauds, Money laundering, etc. such of which are discussed below:

Market Entry

When entering new or unfamiliar markets, critical competitive and regulatory information is required to assess decision making factors such as:

- Identification and evaluation of potential partners
- Assessment of economic, political, operational, societal and infrastructural risks
- Benchmarking competitor performance
- Profiling regulator's attitudes toward outside investment
- Identification of associated potential threats or issues

Competitor Intelligence

A firm's success depends hugely on the relative strengths and vulnerabilities of the competitors. Kroll provides corporate clients with diligent services and market information related to strategies of the competitors, their future projects, and buying trademarks on behalf of big companies before launching of new brands, in order to identify market gaps, gain competitive edge, and identify opportunities in reassessment of own strategies. For example: Kroll helped Apple to trademark names similar to iPad (The Economist, 2013). Kroll also helped a foreign investor to open a coffee shop in Vietnamese Market by formulating its strategies

according to the information given by Kroll about the local competitor's financial, market, historical background, professional, personal reputation, and key strategic information not available in open sources (Kroll, 2013).

Corporate Contest Advisory

Assignments related to hostile takeovers, business ventures, mergers and acquisitions require more insight than mere information. Kroll with its technical multidisciplinary team provide corporate clients with analysis, details, tactics, and defensive measures that are associated with the creation of corporate associations including workers, investors, shareholders, and other business partners.

OSINT Implications for Horizon Scanning

Intelligence is crucial to national security, it aims to serve the purpose of providing an insight and foresight, in dealing with any intelligence issues such as financial crime, cyber crime, drug smuggling etc. (RJG, 2012) To conduct horizon scanning, which refers to the dynamic trend identification, can be done in following ways:

- GPRS provides a good source of information regarding the location and mobile phone data
- OSINT fusion with other SIGINTT and HUMINT will provide rich capability of Multi-INT
- Social media and community information is available on open source of websites, which could reduce the physical surveillance

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