The 6 Steps in the Intelligence Cycle

Step # 1 PLANNING AND DIRECTION:
Establish the consumer’s intelligence requirements and plan intelligence activities accordingly. The planning and direction step sets the stage for the Intelligence Cycle. It is the springboard from which all Intelligence Cycle activities are launched and is the foundation for the entire process. This portion of the process includes determining the information need, deciding how to collect that information, and setting up a timetable for collecting the information. Generally, in such cases, the consumer has a requirement for a specific product. That product may be a full report, a graphic image, or raw information that is collected, processed, and disseminated, but skips the analysis and production step.

Step # 2 COLLECTION:
Gather the raw data required to produce the finished product. Data collection is performed through five basic intelligence sources: Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT), Human Intelligence (HUMINT), Measurement and Signature Intelligence (MASINT), Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), and Signals Intelligence (SIGINT). The sources of the raw data may include, but are not limited to, news reports, aerial imagery, satellite imagery, and government and public documents. Along with these five sources, information can be taken from law enforcement agencies, public safety agencies, and the private sector. The purpose of this collection is to meet the defined tactical or strategic goal.

Step # 3 PROCESSING AND EXPLOITATION:
Convert the raw data into a comprehensible format that is usable for production of the finished product. The processing and exploitation step involves the use of highly trained and specialized personnel and technologically sophisticated equipment to turn the raw data into usable and understandable information. Data translation, data decryption, and interpretation of filmed images and other imagery are only a few of the processes used for converting data stored on film, magnetic, or other media into information ready for analysis and production.

Step # 4 ANALYSIS AND PRODUCTION:
Integrate, evaluate, analyze, and prepare the processed information for inclusion in the finished product. This step transforms raw data into applicable products, separating “information” from “intelligence.” The analysis and production step also requires highly trained and specialized personnel (in this case, analysts) to give meaning to the processed information.
and to prioritize it against known requirements. Synthesizing the processed information into a finished, actionable intelligence product enables the information to be useful to the customer. The final result of this process should be information that will prevent terrorist attacks or other criminal activities.

**Step # 5 DISSEMINATION:**

Deliver the finished product to the consumer that requested it and to others as applicable. The consumer that requested the information receives the finished product, usually via electronic transmission in a timely and credible manner. Dissemination of the information typically is accomplished through such means as websites, email, Web 2.0 collaboration tools, and hardcopy distribution. The final, finished product is referred to as “finished intelligence.” After the product is disseminated, further gaps in the intelligence may be identified, and the Intelligence Cycle begins all over again.


**Step # 6 EVALUATION:**

Continually acquire feedback during the Intelligence Cycle and evaluate that feedback to refine each individual step and the cycle as a whole. Constant evaluation and feedback from consumers are extremely important to enabling those involved in the Intelligence Cycle to adjust and refine their activities and analysis to better meet consumers’ changing and evolving information needs. This step helps assess current and new information found, recognize weak areas and potential threats, and eliminate those identified weakness. Here is a sample of the feedback form used by DHS Intelligence and Analysis. Similar forms are used by many fusion centers.

For more information about the P/CRCL Officer Orientation visit [www.it.ojp.gov/PrivacyLiberty](http://www.it.ojp.gov/PrivacyLiberty)

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