

The 8<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference  
eLearning and software for Education  
Bucharest, April 26-27, 2012  
10.5682/2066-026X-12-169

**SECURING COMMUNITY, SECURING BUSSINESS! MANAGERS SECURITY  
AWARENESS THROUGH E-LEARNING**

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**Abstract:** *The contemporary approach of the intelligence domain is subsequent to substantial changes that the umbrella concept of security has suffered in postmodern society and to the fact that nowadays nations have to face an extremely diverse range of threats. By comparison with other countries, traditional Romanian academic programs for studying intelligence and security are undersized. I appreciate that one of the determinants of this situation is the lack of demand for specialized security and intelligence expertise in labor market. Also the priorities of the Romanian private sector are concerned especially about profit and neglect the security of both the business and the broader community. A strong security and intelligence cultures is beneficial for any area of society; still, such a culture of entrepreneurial environment can make the difference between poverty and prosperity, employment and unemployment, community inclusion or alienation. Therefore the main reason behind educating managers resides in the fact this category has a great social importance, as it is fully involved in the economic development of the society and is pertaining to employment by the numbers of employees they have. Providing security and intelligence expertise in areas such as the protection of classified information, combating cross-border threats, protection against terrorism meant the short and long term improvement of each person's civic behavior. But their involvement in the traditional type of education would be extremely difficult due to their responsibilities. Their lack of time can be balanced by using an e-Learning system that allows the specialization of human resources with maximum efficiency and limited valuable time. Based on the premise that one of the objectives set at European Union level is the foundation of the knowledge society, this paper represents an argument for implementing an e-learning platform to provide specific knowledge to substantiate the security and intelligence culture at managers' level.*

**Keywords:** *e-Learning, entrepreneurship, security culture, community security*

## **I. SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE TODAY!**

### **1.1. Security culture of the community**

While the rate of world change is exponentially soaring, human beings' adaptative capacity is often exceeded. Being confronted with unexpected situations, which may have catastrophic effects, individuals respond late and often in vain.

Given the characteristics of the contemporary threats that jeopardize the existence of the communities, which are especially of economic, social, educational and transfrontalier type (such as organized crime, drug dealing, people trafficking, prohibited substances trafficking), the concern of the European Union and NATO to develop the security and intelligence culture is meritorious.

Being influenced by specific social and historical contexts, the meanings of “security” have varied according to the period of time when it was defined. The differences consisted in the preference for one value or another or in the way authorities were interested in the security of the individual, the group or the nation. Generally speaking, almost any piece of information that describes contemporary

society may have the characteristics of information for security. Wilhelm Agrell [1] warned that „when everything is intelligence, nothing is intelligence”. Therefore, in the narrow sense of the concept, only the relevant information for ensuring the safety of the community is considered.

For a long time, the most important dimension of security was its military component. The recent global developments transformed this conception in an obsolete one and now, its political, economic, social and environmental aspects are considered to be more important [2]. According to [2], „speaking about security, the plot of the discussion is to assure community against threats. When this discussion refers to the international system, security endorses the ability of states and communities to protect their identity, independence and operational integrity”.

The current security scheme includes notions such as nation, identity, religion, terrorism, which are carried out in certain sectors of the social life (political, military, economic, social, environmental field), but also in the regional and global context. Nowadays, security threats are largely of non-military type such as government incompetence, corruption, organized crime, border insecurity, smuggling and illegal trade (of arms, drugs or people), illegal migration, ethnic and religious conflict, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, depletion of natural resources (e.g. water) and, of course, terrorism.

The security of the community is assessed on the basis of indicators such as economic security (access to resources, finances and markets to ensure or maintain an acceptable level of welfare and state power), the security of food, health, environment (climate change mitigation, loss biodiversity, natural resource depletion, pollution of any kind), community education, personal security, political (the stability of states, systems of government and ideology that legitimizes them), military (the state's ability to have an offensive and defensive military potential in a position to meet its defense needs and to ensure security while discouraging potential enemies), social (welfare protection and the preservation of cultural and religious traditions).

Intelligence domain was, at its turn, influenced by the substantial changes of the concept of security in the last two decades and by the fact that nations need to face an extremely wide range of threats [3]. According to [4], „defining intelligence is the first stage of the development of a theory of intelligence, of intelligence policy, of intelligence strategies and of an intelligence doctrine”. Mark Lowenthal [5], a former deputy director for analysis of the CIA, considers that intelligence „refers to information that is collected and refined in order to assist policy makers in the process of substantiating the decisions”. For the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), „in the simplest terms, intelligence is the knowledge and the way we (pre-)feel the world around us – a prelude to the decisions and actions of politicians”. Given the premise of the last definition, Fred Schreier notes that „intelligence is the strategic knowledge and information needed by the beneficiaries to fulfill their goals of international politics. Intelligence can be also defined as a set of activities undertaken by government agencies, which are operated mostly in secret”.

But none of the definitions of recognized experts in the field sufficiently covers the notion. As a rule of thumb, people generally discuss the meanings of the concept of intelligence from the perspective of their own specialties: military intelligence officers relegate to enemies and theatres of operations, those who collect information to intelligence work, analysts are less inclined to pay attention to raw material and method through which it is obtained etc.

## **1.2. Intelligence studies present-day**

The social importance of the intelligence was gradually accepted by most of the countries regardless of its welfare. The importance of being aware of the various threats and vulnerabilities that threaten the continuity of community life is already proven by the different moments in history when intelligence made the difference between peace and war, between stability and crisis.

Consequently, the intelligence services had to become more visible in public space. Their working hypothesis is that every citizen should be aware of the duties, responsibilities, and consequences of intelligence.

The objectives of this reconfigured paradigm belong to the policy of every modern state. The recent developments of the domain confirm the ideas expressed by Sherman Kent in 1949 [6], who had stressed the need to change the mentality according to which intelligence studies had been

designed exclusively for practitioners. From his point of view, ordinary citizen should have been included in the target group of this type of education.

Broadly, the security culture means the readiness of the society to defend their country by any means, to observe laws, national values, customs and traditions of the people in order to counter a potential internal or external enemy. But „security culture” may be also understood as a complex of rules, concepts, values, traditions, beliefs and ethical practices which make citizens ready to help the protection of national values, history and traditions against a potential adversary [7].

In order to establish the basis of security culture it is necessary to change individual and collective perception into a more interested and security-aware one, to change the attitudes and behaviors of citizens toward a focus on security.

So far the trajectory of intelligence studies is consistent with these assumptions: there are a lot of books, dictionaries, encyclopedias (including *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Spies and Espionage*), articles, magazines, movies, TV shows on this topic. The goal of many specialists to introduce intelligence in the nomenclature of the scientific disciplines is not random.

In more and more countries, the intelligence services established their own partnerships with universities and recognized educational institutions in order to set up curricula for intelligence and security. Even the Central Intelligence Agency conducted a lot of conferences and roundtables on such topics. The most important steps in this direction are found in the United States, Britain, Israel, Canada, Germany, which established real centers of education and research in security and intelligence.

Their programs are aimed at creating intelligence specialists in the field of public policy or corporate security. The main directions of study are varied, some focusing on providing a historical and theoretical perspectives, others on the development of information-gathering skills. Traditionally, study programs of security and intelligence have focused on explaining the intelligence theories and on describing its history, along with acquiring the necessary methods for intelligence collection and analysis. Unlike the traditional approach, contemporary intelligence programs include, in particular, detailing how to carry out intelligence collection, counterintelligence, covered operations, intelligence analysis etc. Practical applications in the field contribute to the importance of these programs.

With the fall of communism the Romanian intelligence field was re-theorized during several stages and aligned itself to NATO and EU mainstream paradigms of thoughts. The transition from a totalitarian police state type to democracy has been a challenge for the Romanian intelligence services. Lingering feelings of suspicion of people of Securitate, the lack of trust in state institutions, the selective and weak legal basis that were governing the intelligence activity and its lack of transparency have been major obstacles for developing and strengthening a sense of population confidence in secret services.

These may be some reasons behind the fact that Romanian security and intelligence studies are undersized. "Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy (ANIMV) is the leading provider of intelligence and security expertise in Romania and its curriculum is including academic bachelor, master and postgraduate courses that aim to base security culture among students, but also the skills and competencies specific to this domain such as intelligence analysis, information management to combat terrorism, to protect classified information or to ensure legality of the information security management. ANIMV and the Faculty of Sociology from University of Bucharest are also delivering a master program in the field of analysis of information [8].

Romanian security curriculum dedicated to security and intelligence can be also found in the "Carol I" National Defense University, the West University of Timișoara, the "Babeș-Bolyai" University, the "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian, the NATO Studies Center of SNSPA and the Romanian Association of Security Industry (who owns the franchise of UK Security Institute for Romania and Moldova).

The level and visibility of intelligence studies programs in Romania are conditioned by the current strategic interests in that area, but also by the financial strength and the importance of state policies attached to security and intelligence. Although orientation and curriculum programs of study in Romania are in line with those of highly developed countries of the world, there is a gap in terms of funding, methods of dissemination and the degree to which experts and research results are used by authorities.

## II. LABOR MARKET AND THE SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE EXPERTISE

The emergences of politico-military blocs or of supranational economic corporations are only a few examples to outline the accelerated decline of the role of the state in each segment of daily life. The welfare of citizens is still an important objective of every state, but the activities aiming at achieving this goal take place in the context of an increasing awareness of its tenuous authority.

The global international context has imposed a new approach to the relationship between the governmental and economic sector, so as to create the conditions to achieve the common good. Certain recent activities of companies belong to this approach and they are consequences of a higher level of corporate social responsibility.

Therefore, the present state interests may overlap with those of the business environment. Not incidentally, companies use in their own activities those tools once used only by the government. E.g. the domain of intelligence adapted its methods, techniques and procedures to the business objectives and became “competitive intelligence”, considered an essential tool for the survival of a company. Because economic entities are forced to change their traditional pattern of thinking and action to flexible, original and innovative standards activity, competitive advantage has become overwhelming.

Despite these international developments, the status of intelligence expert is rarely found in a Romanian organization and even when it is one, such a person has to complement it with other specialties, such as marketing, finance or human resources.

But such an approach does not mentally prepare employees to get involved in supporting competitive intelligence issues. Therefore, in Romania the competitive intelligence, if any, is considered a political or a managerial vision and not a common culture that every employee may assume.

The level every community internalizes the objectives of intelligence is reflected by the way it relates to equipment and public services, the degree of citizen involvement, the cautious behavior in case of information exchange and all these are optimizers of our collective competitiveness. Economic organization can be an important factor in the promotion and defense of collective interests and thus an optimizer of social cohesion by defining strategies and specific actions.

Therefore creating economic and social welfare of the community is a benefit wrongly underestimated and perceived as secondary in contemporary entrepreneurial mentality in Romania. The development of a national program for competitive intelligence would promote local and national interests, and can help the imposing of national actors on the international scene and the emergence of productive relations between government, educational institutions, research centers (public or private) and environment business.

### 2.1. Educating security culture of managers through e-Learning

Before establishing the foundation of security and intelligence culture of managers as a goal, it is very important to remember some of their very important specificities. This social category can be best described by the sentence “time is money”. Their most important resource is time. For this reason is a utopia to think of conveying information and education in a traditional brick and mortar classroom.

The only possible solution seems to be involving them in an eLearning system. Being rather a broad and diversified concept, eLearning represents a very efficient way of learning, especially for targets that lack the time resource. E-Learning essentially involves the transfer of knowledge and skills via computer and networks and lessons can be supplied via Internet, intranet/extranet, audio or video tape, satellite TV, and CD-ROM. E-Learning can be self-paced or instructor-led and includes media in the form of text, image, animation, streaming video and audio. Abbreviations like CBT (Computer-Based Training), IBT (Internet-Based Training) or WBT (Web-Based Training) have been used as synonyms to e-learning.

The implementation of an e-Learning system aiming at consolidating a culture of security and intelligence among managers of Romania is a complex process that must be aware of the variables specific to this social category. To approach such a project it is important to merge the contextual paradigm with the socio-constructivist one. The managers would be involved in active learning

through discussion forums, blogs, wikis and collaborative activities, without neglecting the specific social and environmental issues which can stimulate learning of this kind of knowledge.

The eLearning environment allows the combination of elements of formal and informal learning environments to provide basic skills and capabilities needed to implement security dimensions in their field, but also to promote inventiveness, creativity and problem solving capacity of managers.

The system should include a series of training modules, supplemented by external resources designed to enhance learning. The contents should be synthetic, coherent and accessible and include a manual of best practices, case studies (success stories and learned lessons), communication forums and platforms. Traditionally, such learning experience should include a digital library, containing all lessons and specialized resources, a library of self-assessment tests for each course, differentiated by the degree of difficulty, tests evaluation which involves an interaction between student and professor, virtual laboratories.

Of course, despite opinions that proclaim the end of traditional teaching method, using this system does not exclude face to face meetings, or workshops and seminars. The study and learning of security and intelligence culture can be synchronous (the virtual classroom, virtual meetings) and asynchronous (self-study, online courses).

The inclusion of "eLearning 2.0" is of a big relevance. This is a neologism that appeared with the emergence of Web 2.0. This virtual world becomes a means of learning: blogs, wikis, pod casts, ePortfolios, and games such as Second Life can depict such resources. Lawyers of social learning argue the best way to learn about something is to teach others. Social networks can become the place where communities of interest can be grouped and can share their experiences. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) also represents an important option to improve the performance of learning.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

As I underlined in this study the global international context has imposed a new approach to the relationship between the governmental sector and economic one, so as to create more conditions for achieving the common good. Therefore many of the activities developed by companies in recent years represent such examples, being consequences of a higher corporate social responsibility.

In order to assume such responsibility every managers should understand the role of intelligence and security in every society and the benefit of their improvement for the community and also for his company. Unfortunately, there are only a few educational programs aiming to mentally prepare them to behave this way.

In this study I pleaded for the necessity to run a national program dedicated to the education of managers in the field of security and intelligence in order to determine them to promote more local and national interests. I substantiated that the only feasible way to make such an intention a reality is through implementing an eLearning system, consisting of training modules, external resources designed to enhance learning, collection of case studies, communication forums and a dedicated platform, but, more important, the Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL).

**Acknowledgements: This work was supported by CNCSIS-UEFISCSU, project number PN II-RU 64/2010**

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