

Course: Digital Economy & Strategic Watch

# Introduction to Strategic Watch

## The Art of Seeing Tomorrow, Today

In a world of infinite information, how do you find the few pieces that matter?

"The goal is to turn data into information, and information into insight." – Carly Fiorina

# Agenda & Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- 1 Define **Strategic Watch** and distinguish it from random information gathering.
- 2 Explain the critical difference between **Information** and **Intelligence**.
- 3 Identify and describe the four main **Types of Strategic Watch**.
- 4 Apply these concepts to a **real-world scenario**.

# The Information Tsunami: The Modern Business Reality



## The Problem

🕒 **2.5 quintillion**

bytes of data created daily

📄 **Millions**

of news articles, social media posts, and reports published hourly



## The Consequence

💡 **Information Overload:** The inability to process everything

➡ **Signal vs. Noise:** Critical opportunities and threats are hidden in the noise



## The Business Impact

📉 **Missed market shifts**

📊 **Lagging behind competitors**

🔊 **Reactive, instead of proactive** decision-making

# Case Study: The Cost of Ignorance

**Blockbuster**

Once a \$5B company

VS

**Netflix**

Now worth over \$200B



## The Signal (What Blockbuster Missed)



**Rising broadband adoption**  
enabling streaming



**Improving streaming technology**  
and user experience



**Consumer frustration** with late fees and limited selection



**Failure to monitor the external environment is a direct threat to survival**

# What is Strategic Watch? The Formal Definition

”

"The continuous and systematic process of monitoring the external environment for relevant information, analyzing it, and disseminating the resulting intelligence to decision-makers."



## Continuous

Not a one-time project, but an **ongoing function**



## Systematic

Follows a **structured process** (not ad-hoc)



## External Environment

Looks **outside the organization**



## Intelligence

The final, **valuable product** for decision-makers

# The Radar Analogy



## Your Business as a Ship



### Sailing in the fog

Navigating through the **uncertain market**



## Strategic Watch is your Radar System



### Scans the horizon

Monitors the **external environment**



### Detects other ships

Identifies **competitors**



### Identifies storms

Recognizes **market threats**



### Finds clear passages

Discovers **new opportunities**



**Without it, you are sailing blind**



# Core Concept: Information vs Intelligence

| 🔧 Feature | 📄 Information         | 🧠 Intelligence                                |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Nature    | Raw, unprocessed data | Analyzed, contextualized, synthesized         |
| Answer    | "What?" or "Who?"     | "So what?", "Now what?", "What does it mean?" |
| Action    | Informs               | Enables decision-making                       |



## Information

"Competitor X just hired a new VP of **Renewable Energy**."



## Intelligence

"Competitor X is likely launching a new **'green' product line** within 18 months to capitalize on new government subsidies. We should **accelerate our own sustainability projects**."

# The Intelligence Cycle (A Preview)

Strategic Watch follows a structured cycle. We will explore this in detail next session.

1

## PLAN & DIRECT

What do we need to know? **(The most important step)**

Define the Key Intelligence Topic (KIT): "Assess market opportunities for our smart farming solutions in Algeria within the next 12 months."

2

## COLLECT

Where will we find it?

Gather information from multiple sources: Algerian government reports, news sites, competitor websites, and social media groups for farmers.

3

## ANALYZE

What does it mean?

Turn information into actionable intelligence: Perform a SWOT Analysis to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in the new market.

4

## DISSEMINATE

Who needs to know and in what format?

Deliver the intelligence to decision-makers: Create a concise report for the CEO and Marketing Manager with clear recommendations (e.g., "Join the Tunisian Agricultural Expo," "Find a local partner").



It's a continuous feedback loop, not a linear path

# Type 1: Competitive Intelligence



**Focus:** Understanding the **strategies, capabilities, and intentions** of your competitors



## Products & Pricing

- New features
- Price changes
- Discounts & promotions



## Marketing & Sales

- Advertising campaigns
- New partnerships
- Sales channels



## Financial Health

- Annual reports
- Stock performance
- Investment patterns



## Human Resources

- Job postings
- Executive hires
- Organizational changes



**Algerian Example:** Monitoring the feature rollouts and pricing strategies of Yassir vs. other ride-hailing apps

# Type 2: Technological Watch



**Focus: Tracking the evolution of technologies, innovations, and research**



## Emerging Technologies

- AI & Machine Learning
- Blockchain
- Internet of Things (IoT)



## New Research

- Academic papers
- Patent filings
- R&D announcements



## Industry Trends

- Tech blogs (TechCrunch)
- Developer forums (GitHub)
- Conference proceedings



**Why it's crucial for CS Students: You will build and manage these technologies**



**Algerian Example: Tracking the adoption of cloud services (like Algeria Telecom Cloud) versus on-premise solutions**

## Type 3: Market & Commercial Watch



**Focus: Understanding your customers, market trends, and the regulatory landscape**



### Customer Behavior

- Shifting purchasing habits
- New needs expressed on social media
- Customer feedback patterns



### Market Trends

- Demographic changes
- Economic shifts
- Industry growth patterns



### Regulations

- Data privacy laws
- Import/export rules
- Investment regulations



**Algerian Example: Monitoring announcements from the Ministry of Industry regarding new "Startup Acts" or investment funds**

## Type 4: Reputational Watch (e-Watch)



**Focus: Monitoring your organization's online reputation and public perception**



### Brand Mentions

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Reddit



### Review Sites

- Google Reviews
- TripAdvisor
- Specialized forums
- Industry-specific platforms



### News & Blogs

- Online newspapers
- Influential bloggers
- Industry publications
- YouTube channels



### Sentiment Analysis

- Positive mentions
- Negative mentions
- Neutral discussions
- Trending topics



**Algerian Example: A local university tracking student discussions about its programs on social media to address concerns quickly**

# Interactive Scenario: "EduTech Dz"



## Your Role

Founder of an Algerian startup, "**EduTech Dz**", building an online platform for university entrance exam prep



## Your Mission

Use **Strategic Watch** to de-risk your venture



## Questions for You



For **Competitive Intelligence**, what would you look for?



For **Technological Watch**, what is relevant?



For **Market Watch**, what regulations or trends matter?



For **Reputational Watch**, how would you start?

# Summary: Your Strategic Watch Compass



The "Why": To avoid blindness and make **proactive decisions** in a complex world



## The "What"



**Competitive:** Your rivals



**Technological:** The tools of the future



**Market/Commercial:** Your customers and rules



**Reputational:** Your public image



## The "How"



A systematic process



The Intelligence Cycle



Plan & Direct



Collect



Analyze



Disseminate

# Key Takeaways & Next Steps



## Strategic Watch

A **disciplined process** for converting external data into **actionable intelligence**



## Core Product

**Intelligence** (the "so what?")  
Not just  
**Information** (the "what?")



## Framework

Four types of watch provide a **comprehensive scan** of the entire business environment



**Next Session: We will master the Intelligence Cycle—the step-by-step process for planning, collecting, analyzing, and disseminating intelligence**



**Reflection Question: What is one thing in your personal academic or project work that would benefit from a "strategic watch" approach?**