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Technical Intelligence Units: use of competitive intelligence within Academic Environment in Iran

Abstracts:

In 1998, an ISIS funded research indicated that investments should be made in development of techno-commercial information assets by major Iranian universities and research institutes. By the end of 2005, almost none of the 71 LIS departments operating in various Iranian universities developed any syllabi addressing issues such as knowledge management, economic intelligence, legal information and patent analysis. The present paper offers the preliminary results of an ongoing research to address the issue. Based largely on Iranian Military Research Agency's experience (1980-1988), the paper indicates that given the current business situation, the technical libraries within the Iranian Academia need to adopt a new business model that is swifter in responding to patron need, more capable of developing an entirely new value chain, and more attuned to the synergetic nature of interfaculty research. One key enabling aspect to embed the libraries within the research process is to employ competitive intelligence techniques within the academic environment. The research indicates that by re-inventing and repackaging technical library assets (whether human or organizational resources) into highly trained technical intelligence units, the technical libraries could prove attractive to high-end research as well as corporations. The problem here could be the secrecy or non-disclosure requirement which often runs counter to the Iranian belief that an academic environment should be a place for free flow of and free access to information. However, there are several trust building measures available. The authors believe that university researchers would be more inclined to this high end service based on their past experience with SDI. However unlike SDI, in this case the technical library staff are required not only to monitor and acquire the information but to provide a synthesis of it tailored to customer taste and information behavioral pattern. Thus when observed as an empowerment tool, such technical intelligence units could serve as a tool to embed the libraries more firmly within the academic learning and research process. The paper discusses the possible forms such technical intelligence units may take within an academic environment.