Aalto University
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Utilization of Media Monitoring

Marketing

Master's thesis

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Summary:

The objective of the study is to discover the role of media monitoring in companies. In more detail, the utilization methods of the media monitoring results will be examined. This information will be portrayed on a three leveled information processing cycle of "the knowing organization" to discover how deep the information is processed in reality. Knowledge and intelligence are often represented as an aid for decision making and this research will broaden the scope by evaluating the utilization of information in different functions inc. marketing, communication, R&D and business intelligence, in addition to executive insight. The theoretical framework used will categorize the actions taken on the basis of this media monitoring into three levels: sense-making, knowledge creation and decision making. In addition, the utilization of social media monitoring will be glanced at.

Method: Three companies are researched from differing industries. 12 people from these three companies were interviewed. The research is qualitative by nature and the interview is semi-structured by form. A media monitoring provider, M-Brain, is the commissioner of the research.

Findings: The findings portray that information from media monitoring is used always in sense making. The second level, knowledge creation does not occur on every instance and decision making may truly be based on media monitoring on a few accounts. This said, the level of utilization of media monitoring outcomes is related to the job description or function of the employee. Social media is still a difficult concept to approach and guidelines in companies for social media monitoring seem to lack. The main benefit of social media monitoring is providing a new channel for feedback, but due to anonymity this information is hardly reacted to.

Keywords: media monitoring, social media monitoring, sense making, knowledge creation, decision making and intelligence.

Tiivistelmä:

Tutkielman tavoitteena on tutkia mediaseurannan hyödyntämistä yrityksissä. Tarkemmin määriteltynä hyödyntämisen syvyyttä tutkitaan mediaseurannan tulosten osalta. Informaation hyödyntämistapoja tutkitaan teoreettisen viitekehyksen kautta, jossa selvitään minkä prosessin läpi informaatio menee, kun se vastaanotetaan. Usein informaatiota ja tietoa tutkitaan suhteessa päätöksentekoon ja johtajuuteen, joten aihe-aluetta laajennetaan huomioimalla eri funktioiden erot hyödyntämistavoissa. Mediaseurannan hyödyntäminen siten määritellään ylettyvän yhdelle kolmesta ”tietävän organisaation” tasosta: ymmärryksen luomiseen, uuden tiedon luomiseen tai päätöksentekoon. Tutkielmassa tutkitaan niin teoreettisen kuin empiirisen osion kohdalla rinnakkain informaation prosessointia ja mikä prosessoinnin tulos on. Sosiaalisen mediaseurannan hyödyntämistapojakin tarkkaillaan.

Metodologia: Tutkielmaa varten valitaan tutkimuksen kohteeksi kolme eri alojen yritystä. 12 henkeä haastatellaan yhteensä näistä kolmesta yrityksestä ja jokaisesta otetaan mahdollisimman kattava otos eri osastoilta. Tutkimus on kvalitatiivinen luonteeltaan ja haastattelut muodoltaan semi-strukturoituja. Tutkimuksen toimeksiantajana toimii mediaseurantapalvelujen tarjoaja M-Brain.

Tulokset: Tulokset kuvaavat millä tasolla ”tietävä organisaatio”-sykliä mediaseurannan tulokset ovat. Tutkimuksen mukaan, mediaseuranta luo aina ymmärrystä. Toiselle tasolle, eli uuden tiedon luomisen-tasolle, eivät kaikkien informaation hyödyntäminen yllä. Päätöksentekoon yhä harvempi käyttää mediaseurantaa, verrattuna aiempaan tasoon. Hyödyntämisen taso on riippuvaista henkilön toimenkuvasta ja mediaseurantaa päätöksentekoon käyttää ainoastaan johto sekä viestinnän henkilöstö. Sosiaalisen median kanssa työskentelyyn ei selkeitä linjoja yrityksissä ollut havaittavissa ja sosiaalisen median seurannan hyödyntämiseen ei rutiini toimintamalleja tullut esiin. Sosiaalisen median seurannan hyödyntäminen oli verrattavissa asiakaspalautteeseen, mutta harvemmin tiedon pohjalta reagoitiin.

Avainsanat: mediaseuranta, sosiaalisen median seuranta, ymmärryksen luominen, tiedon luominen, päätöksenteko sekä liiketoimintatieto

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1.Introduction

1.1.Background

Companies need to follow changes in the external business environment continuously and the pressure to change along with it will only grow. This pressure to grow derives from increasing amounts of information, globalization, the progress in information technology solutions and the swift pace of technological change. (Kahaner, 1996, 28; Törmänen, 1999; Menon & Varadarajan, 1992) Organizations face challenges of the changing nature of competition, customer empowerment and the complexity of the environment (Dimitriades, 2005) Businesses can take nothing for granted— except the certainty of change. Companies need to be faster, more agile, and crucially, more intelligent. (Liautaud, 2001, 3) Intelligence is the capacity to know or understand (Liautaud, 2001, 3), thus a prerequisite for intelligence is receiving essential information.

In the modern society, the significance of information grows and the management of information emerges as one of the key factors in all organizations. Information may be referred to as a strategic success factor only once it is used properly and one is able to create new business opportunities on the basis of information. Sadly, in many organizations data management and exploitation is rather problematic, due to receiving only commensurable information for executives from the operational systems instead of useful information. (Törmänen, 1999) Companies ought not only process information efficiently, but simultaneously create new information and knowledge (Nonaka, 1994).

From the growing masses of information, companies need to find the most important information and further analyze it efficiently to gain value from it. (Bose, 2008) After the amount of digital information has grown tremendously, managers may spend several hours a day searching for information, later realizing that a majority of the information they acquired has little true relevance. Companies typically spend more resources in gathering the information needed than they do processing, analyzing, and exploiting it. Studies have revealed that practitioners would rather spend time on processing, analyzing, and exploiting data than gathering it. (Fleisher, 2008)

A majority of large Finnish companies have outsourced some functions relating to business intelligence, which refers to the information that is essential in managing an organization, and the actions taken in order for this information to be transformed to support decision-making (Vuori & Hannula, 2009). The most often outsourced function of business intelligence is media monitoring (Vuori & Hannula, 2009). Media monitoring refers to the following and analysis of media discussion (Kuutti, 2008, 107) in conventional and social media (Rappaport, 2010). These media monitoring reports are outsourced to free internal sources for functions, where a higher level of expertise is required and this outsourcing is often cost-efficient due to a large supply of media monitoring providers. (Vuori & Hannula, 2009)

The position of media monitoring in the business intelligence process is collecting the information. Then it is the responsibility of the receiver of the media monitoring to analyze the information, meaning that the information will be given a deeper significance. (Bose, 2008)

Intelligence has been broadly researched, but media monitoring as such has not gained grounds in the arena of theoretical discussion or research. The reason for a lack of research may lie in the old-fashioned vision of media monitoring, as it being purely information about the self-publicity of an organization in traditional media (Kuutti, 2008, 107) Recently, research on social media monitoring has been conducted, due to the rapid growth of the Internet consequently moving to social media.

The research has been conducted due to a discovered gap in research. The understanding of how information is used within organizations is less than adequate. (Menon & Varadarajan, 1992) Thus this research aims to define how information, received from media monitoring, is used in an organization. The closest research to this one is one conducted in Finland every few years about business intelligence in large Finnish companies, but as it studies business intelligence the scope is broader. (Vuori & Hannula, 2009)

1.2. Research Questions and Objectives

The objective of this study is to define how external information is used in organizations. More specifically the area of interest is the usage of media monitoring results and what type of information it provides to the company in the arena of intelligence. The actions taken on the basis of

this external information will be investigated in several departments to compare the information needs between for instance marketing, communication and R&D. In addition the exploitation methods of social media monitoring will be looked into.

The main research question of this thesis is:

-***How do companies use media monitoring****?*

The additional research questions, which will support and broaden the main research question, are:

- *What does media monitoring include*?

- *Do the usage methods of media monitoring results differ between different departments*?

- *Which departments benefit the most from the media monitoring results*?

- *How are social media monitoring results used*?

The findings of this thesis will be portrayed on a theoretical framework discovered by Choo (2006, 3) presented on page 30. The empirical research was conducted as a qualitative research. 12 people were interviewed on the basis of a semi-structured interview form. The interviews took place between February and March of 2011.

The research is conducted for a media monitoring provider, M-Brain. The researcher works in the company, which may affect the research findings, but this is not depicted to affect reliability of the findings as the work history at M-Brain was short at time of conducting research.

The scope of the research is rather narrow due to scarce resources, such as time. The results and findings of the research are not sufficient to be portrayed on as self-evident in every company using media monitoring, as only 12 people were interviewed. Also, all interviews were conducted in Finland and thus duplicating the research in other settings may present different results. This said, the research is a forerunner in the arena and hopefully would provide some insight to a rather novel arena of research.

1.3 Definition of Key Concepts

In this section the most relevant key concepts will be briefly defined. Further on in the thesis these concepts will be looked into with more emphasis.

Business Intelligence: Information that is essential in managing an organization, and the actions taken in order for this information to be transformed to support decision-making (Vuori & Hannula, 2009).

Media monitoring: Media monitoring refers to the following and analysis of media discussion (Kuutti 2008, 107) in conventional and social media (Rappaport, 2010).

Social media monitoring: Monitoring refers to the following and analysis of discussion and social media (Rappaport, 2010).

1.4 Structure of the study

This thesis walks the reader through three steps of a cycle (see Figure 1 below) referred to as the intelligent cycle or the information management cycle (Choo, 2002, 24 ; Skyrme 1989). First, the information needs will be looked at in chapter 2 and various information types will be introduced. Second, the collection of information will be studied in chapter 3. Third, the actual processing of information will be discussed in chapter 4. The final step of dissemination will not be looked into in-depth as the internal distribution of information is outside the scope of this research.

Figure 1: The Intelligence Cycle (Skyrme, 1989)

2. Information needs

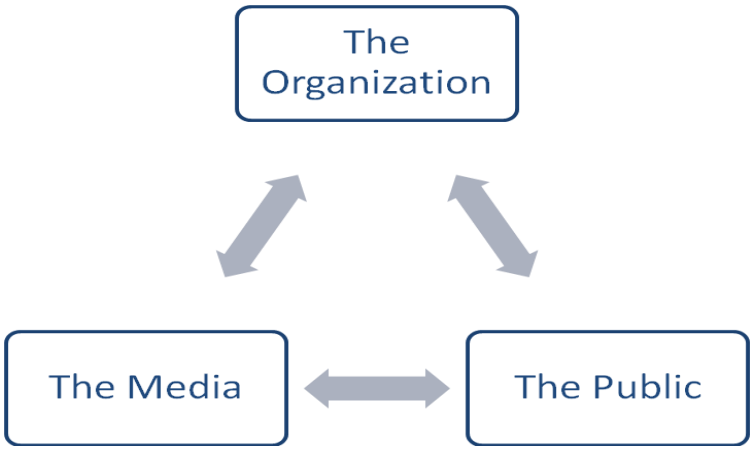
In this chapter the various types of information a company monitors will be discussed. First, media monitoring will be introduced. In the second sub-chapter social media monitoring will be presented. In 2.3 the concepts of data, information, knowledge and intelligence will be clarified. After, the scope of media monitoring will portray the links between media monitoring and different intelligence efforts. Finally, the chapter will be concluded with a strategy of media monitoring needs.

2.1. Media monitoring

Media monitoring refers to the following and analysis of media discussion (Kuutti 2008, 107). According to Kuutti (2008, 107) self publicity monitoring is to be emphasized.

There is a three-way connection, such as the one presented in Figure 2. below.

Figure 2: The actors connected to publicity (Kuutti, 2008, 9)



This refers to the fact that the public has a two-way connection to both the media and the organization. So in order for a company to succeed in publicity, it needs skills to follow and analyze especially the conversation that relates to the company (Kuutti, 2008, 9).

According to Kuutti (2008, 9) the benefits that may result from media monitoring are the follow-up of success in PR- activities, the building of the company's brand and finally the marketing, knowing the competitor's actions or even the whole industry's actions. Also through media monitoring, a company may be able to find new markets or potential customers.

Companies ranging from media monitoring providers to market research companies provide various types of solutions for other companies to ease monitoring of the external environment. These "listening solutions" are divided into four segments (Rappaport, 2010): Search engines and media monitoring offerings, text-analytics software companies, full-service listening platform vendors and private branded communities. As said earlier, this thesis will concentrate on media monitoring, although other types of external environment scanning are inherently linked and thus cannot be completely dismissed.

Media monitoring services are based on search functions, which follow both traditional and social media using alarms or "dashboards" that signal as something emerges. Media monitoring services automatically follow sources on the Internet, using certain agents or "bots". According to the agents or bots, the service provider receives a signal on occurrence of a certain word, name, or expression is sensed in articles or conversations. (Rappaport, 2010)

The most interesting areas of media monitoring for a company (Kuutti, 2008, 107) are:

a.) The scope of publicity

b.) The topics

c.) The manners of handling issues

According to Rappaport (2010) media monitoring services have some special features that need to be acknowledged, in order for the customer to receive the most relevant information. Rappaport (2010) looks into five features more deeply and they are:

- *The media universe*. The media universe refers to the in-built criteria, on the basis of which the used media are chosen. These criteria, and accordingly these medium followed, differs

tremendously between distinct service providers. So the strengths and weaknesses of each vendor need to be understood in monitoring both domestically and internationally. Certain vendors allow modifying the sources, in order to make the results as relevant as possible. In addition this, some end-users may be able to add some amount of custom URLs.

- *The agent or "bot" setup*. The customer needs to carefully consider the used agents or "bots". The most important elements of media monitoring include the detecting of fundamental concepts and expressions that are affiliated to the brand. Usually these are found in the language used by consumers, concepts related to the brand, names of competitors, advertising or marketing programs or general interests. They may include an array of concepts, from key actors to sport teams. These may be specified in words or according to Boolean search logic. Boolean search logic is a basic means of search in online databases where simply searching is expressed by means of keywords that may be combined with certain Boolean operators.

- *The reports and analysis*. The results of media monitoring range from lists of URLs for individual queries, to abstracts of articles, to complete texts. Analysis of media and reporting range from basic information to more advanced knowledge. Basic results include information such as counting of hits in media, number of mentions, sources, volume trends and reach. This type of basic information can be computed. More advanced information include share of voice (relative portion of ad inventory available to a company within some defined segment), sentiment, key messages and prominence for both brands and competitors.

- *The frequency, distribution and integration of the reports*. The frequency is usually up to the customer to decide, but the prevailing frequencies are "as it happens"-frequency to daily or weekly reporting. The ideal interval for a company depends on the monitoring requirements in question. Email is often used in distributing reports, but also news feeds or XML feeds are used. News feeds and XML feeds can be integrated into Web pages or dashboards. Depending on the distribution format, companies provide centralized storage and archiving of results.

- *Deployment*. Media monitoring services range from full service to self-service providers. Most media monitoring companies purely run the searches and distribute the results on

behalf of the customers. Some service providers go further and provide additional capabilities, such as managing queries, search terms, and centrally manage the results.

2.2. Social media monitoring

The digital environment in itself has a broad array of arenas, where the public may be heard. (Rappaport 2010) For instance the release of free blogging tools from such service providers as Blogger and WordPress, the creation and deployment of customer feedback and ratings systems for products (Bazaarvoice), video and photo sharing (YouTube, Flickr), social bookmarks (Digg), and social networks such as Facebook have helped transform the Web from static pages to a dynamic conversation. The internet provides a source for consumers, to become writers, publishers, producers, commentators, reviewers or conversationalists and for instance negative feedback may reach an incredibly large audience. (Rappaport, 2010). Monitoring is concentrated on harvesting social media sources, where people actively communicate and often information may indicate popularity, virality and reveal influencer profiles. Service providers may provide tools for analyzing and reporting on several aspects of social-media conversations. These aspects include volume of conversation, source, mentions of key actors (e.g. brands or people), rankings and trends over some period of time. (Rappaport, 2010)

For some people it has become routine to broadcast their voices in digital media, as they feel no longer restricted to "letters to the editor" that hold no promise of being published or feedback to the company that hold no promise of being acted upon. (Rappaport, 2010) As a result of these new feedback channels, companies can scan and listen to masses of people with knowledge of their products, have conversations with these consumers and actually take action according to this feedback.

Probably the most reviewed sites in terms of a company's own publicity are discussion forums, blogs and organization's or consumer's home pages. (Kuutti, 2008,11-13) According to Kuutti (2008, 11-13) open conversation on an electronic publication's message board may be extremely detrimental to an organization. On these message boards, conversation is hardly filtered in advance and negative feedback is easily spread, without knowledge of the information's reliability. This

said, mass communication does hold greater reliability among people than anonymous messages. (Kuutti, 2008, 12)

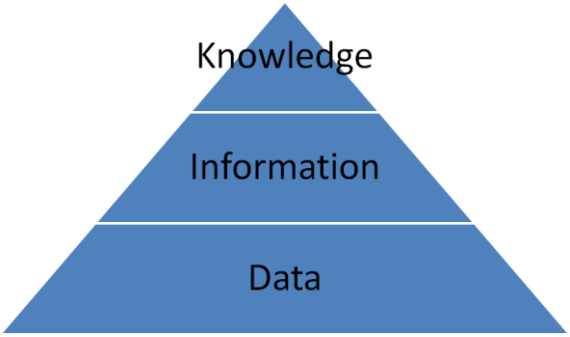
Discussion forums are meeting places, where people interested in the topic covered by each forum can exchange messages and information. Joining a forum provides analysts with the facility to observe what is going on within it, obtain information and ask questions. These channels provide primary knowledge of consumers. (West, 2001, 83)

2.3. Data, Information and Knowledge

Data, information and knowledge need to be separated from each other by definition. Data is raw and unadorned. (Liautaud, 2001, 5) Information is data with some degree of business context and meaning added. (Liautaud, 2001, 5) It is data that has been filtered, synthesized, and aggregated. Professionals take raw data and, using their knowledge of the business, filter, sort, prioritize, and present it, transforming it into information. (Liautaud, 2001, 5). According to the first presumed person to distinguish between data, information and knowledge, Nicholas Henry; information and knowledge is data that changes us (Henry, 1974). The distinction between knowledge and information is done often through the inherent closeness of knowledge to action (Tsoukas & Vladimirou, 2001; Choo, 2002, 1) whereas data and information are described as things. Information is described as a flow of messages, while knowledge is created by the flow of information. (Nonaka, 1994)

Knowledge is a widely discussed topic and the center of several distinct research traditions. These traditions include knowledge management organizational learning, the management of technology, and managerial cognition (Grant, 1996). An abundance of research in the arena of the knowledge-based view of the firm has been conducted on what is the locus of knowledge; the individual or the collective (Felin & Hesterly, 2007; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995, 13) and organizational knowledge is "much talked about but little understood" (Tsoukas & Vladimirou, 2001). This diversification of concepts is alike to the famous data-information-knowledge hierarch below (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Data-information-knowledge-model (Ackoff, 1989)



This traditional model refers to the process of data turning into knowledge, but intelligence is not included and thus needs to be discussed separately. According to Dutka (2000, 4) the difference between data and intelligence is that data is collected, but intelligence is disseminated. The process of analysis is said to turn raw data into intelligence and this analysis refers to explaining the significance of the information collected. (Bose, 2008) Thus, the media monitoring provider sends pure information and the company receiving the information may turn it into intelligence through analysis.

2.4. Defining the scope of media monitoring

As outlined earlier media monitoring as such is scarcely researched. This provides the study an opportunity to pursue to identify what type of information it includes and where is it used. This sub-chapter will clarify the link between media monitoring and different types of intelligence. Media monitoring has traditionally been the monitoring of self-publicity (Kuutti 2008, 107) and thus an organizations self-publicity monitoring will be first discussed. Media monitoring has since grown to include collecting information on competitors and the industry, so after self-publicity is discussed the relation between competitor information and information will be discussed. Finally, the new comer in media monitoring, social media monitoring, will be looked at.

As noted in the previous sub-chapter of 2.1, media monitoring refers to the following and analysis of media discussion and the information followed especially is *self-publicity* (Kuutti 2008, 107).

Self-publicity of a company can be evaluated in terms of its publicity strategy's successful implementation. A company's publicity strategy is a part of its communication and media plays a certain part in this. (Juholin &Kuutti, 2003, 90) According to Juholin and Kuutti (2003, 91) a media strategy usually includes:

-The foundations; the company's strategy in terms of what it is aiming for and evaluating the meaning of media publicity. Sometimes benchmarking occurs.

-The present state; the present state of media publicity and the image in publicity of the company. This includes evaluation of weaknesses and strengths.

-The essential medium and journalist groups; in terms of the medium and journalists, which can be categorized.

-Objectives; definition of motives for publicity management, such as where company wishes to be visible and the contexts and subjects it wishes to bring public

-Organization and responsibilities; who represents the company in which topics and who plans, leads and implements media communication.

-Resources; resources allocated to media communication at the moment and in the future.

For many organizations a positive media image is something to pursue for (Kuutti, 2008, 9) and organizations often have a tremendous interest in controlling their self-publicity (Kuutti, 2008, 19). Some companies take self-publicity even further and analyze publicity of individual people in a company. This probably results from the fact that executives are nowadays assumed to have to have strong personal communication skills, though they often do receive aid from internal communication professionals (Juholin & Kuutti 2003, 95).

Competitors

Organizations often utilize external sources to receive daily updates on news, competitor activities and changes to competitor web sites (Bose, 2008) and also media monitoring may include the monitoring of competitors. The collection activities on competitor information according to Bose (2008) includes identification of all potential sources of information and then the right data is gathered legally and ethically from all available sources and put it in an ordered form.

As discussed earlier this gathered information is not intelligence, and the same principle applies to competitor information. So for information on competitors to become intelligence on competitors, analysis takes place (Bose, 2008). Thus, the media monitoring provider sends information and the company receiving the information may turn it into intelligence. *Competitive intelligence* refers to a systematic program for gathering and analyzing information about your competitors' activities and general business trends to further your own company's goals. (Dutka, 2000, 4; Kahaner, 1996, 16) Some definitions, such as the one of The Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals emphasize the ethical prospect of gathering information of competitors (Johns &Doren, 2010).

A concept close to competitive intelligence is market intelligence. *Market intelligence* is a process of knowing what the competitors are up to and staying one step ahead of them, by gathering actionable information about the competitors and ideally, applying it to short and long-term strategic planning (Tan &Ahmed, 1999). Thus market intelligence rather tries to predict future activity of competitors whereas in competitive intelligence the information analysis past information.

Business environment

In addition to self-publicity and competitor monitoring, media monitoring may also be done on the business environment. The relevant environment for an organization to scan is very broad, ranging from social to technological forces. Yet the key aspect of the firm's environment is the industry in which it competes, because the industry structure influences the competitive rules of the game and strategies (Porter, 2004, 3). On a broad perspective, companies gather information about market signals, also signals on the market about one's own company. According to Porter (2004, 75) a market signal is any type of action taken by a competitor that provides a direct/indirect indication of its intentions, motives, goals, or internal situation. Changes, events, and trends in the environment continually create. These signals may also be bluffs. In order to know how to position itself, the company needs to know where competitors are, so an environment analysis including the industry, the competitors and social factor is basic in planning and decision making (Fletcher & Donaghy, 1994).

Business intelligence refers to the information that is essential in managing an organization and the actions taken in order for this information to be transformed to support decision-making (Vuori & Hannula, 2009). Business intelligence was formerly synonymous with competitive intelligence, as

can be seen from many early writings on the subject, but competitive intelligence is nowadays often defined with an orientation towards the competitive environment (Ettore, 1995; Vuori &Hannula, 2009) and business intelligence includes internal intelligence about one's own company, and competitive intelligence is external intelligence about the competitors (Bose, 2008)

Finnish companies, which have knowingly produced activity to gather and analyze information concerning their own business or business environment, most often refer to the activity as business intelligence. (Vuori & Hannula, 2009) The term a company uses to describe this activity is most often based on the fact that the term has been institutionalized over years of usage in the company and provides one reason for why business intelligence has been chosen as the term cannot be often given. (Vuori & Hannula, 2009)

To summarize these intelligence concepts and their link to media monitoring, a figure (Figure 4) is provided below.

Figure 4: Summary of the information media monitoring provides

Concept	**Focus**	**Media monitoring provides**
Media Analysis	Image in media	Information on self-publicity
Market Intelligence	Competitors; proactive	Information on competitor activity
Competitive Intelligence	Competitors; reactive	Information on competitor activity
Business Intelligence	The business environment	Information on market; competitors and self-publicity

2.5. The strategy of scanning

In previous sub-chapters media monitoring and intelligence involved are introduced. In order for an organization to begin collecting information, the needs of information need to be defined. According to these needs, be it the need for self-publicity or competitor information, the information collection may begin and no earlier.

Every company needs to have a strategy for monitoring and recognizing the needs of scanning is a difficult task in itself. The strategy is highly affected by the uncertainty of the environments in which the company operates, which in turn influences company strategy. Also, the state of business strategy within the organization influences the scope and format of monitoring. A company's interest in the environment depends partially on where the organization is at the moment and where it seeks to go. So, the level of investment in monitoring and the choice of specific monitoring activities are elements of managerial judgment which, because of their impact on firm value, have strategic direct content. (Stoffels, 1994, 57)

Stoffels (1994, 57.-74) divided the strategy of scanning into five distinguished, yet linked groups:

1.) Environmental focus

2.) Scanning range

3.) Environmental collection format

4.) Scanning input processing methods and

5.) Managing and communicating within the scanning system.

Setting the environmental focus means deciding about allocation of scanning resources across environmental dimensions and within each dimension. This said, it has been argued that management can only concentrate in-depth in half a dozen issues at a time (O'connell & Zimmerman, 1979, 19). Even so, scanning all dimensions should be sought for assuring that the firm will make at least some scanning investments in every dimension and thereby increase the

chances of capturing cross-dimensional implications. Aguilar discovered already in 1967 that over half of the information executives received from the environment came from the competitive sector.

The second element of the strategy of scanning is setting the appropriate range of scanning (Stoffels, 1994, 57-74.) including the time range, and geographical range. The geographical range is to be evaluated according to the importance of the region and the country risk.

The third element is the environmental collection format, which determines the continuity of scanning and the method. Continuity of scanning ranges from irregular to regular and continuous. Continuity is determined in relation to its costs and benefits. The chosen method of scanning varies tremendously and unstructured observing can be said to occur in every organization due to its inexpensiveness. (Stoffels, 1994, 57-74).

The fourth element is the method of processing inputs of scanning. Techniques range from quantitative to qualitative methods and again, the needs of an individual case need to be assessed so needs are fulfilled with justified expenditures.

The final element of the strategy of scanning is managing and communicating within the scanning system (Stoffels, 1994, 57-74). Scanning is often in a disadvantageous position against more formal information reports, and because of this effective scanning communication needs to be highly specialized and individualized. (Stoffels, 1994, 100)

3.Information collection

In this chapter the information collection will be discussed. As the Figure 1 on page 9 illustrated, the information collection can be begun once the information needs are clarified. As the previous chapter unfolded the concepts of differing information needs, here the information collection process will be depicted. First the state of information collecting will be revealed and then in 3.2 the theory of how information ought to be collected is looked into. Finally, the sources where the information for media monitoring is found is looked at.

3.1. Information collection- in reality

Research on monitoring the external environment is surprisingly shallow with few reportable researches conducted. One of the first known researchers in viewing the environment as a source of information was Dill in 1958, who implied that the best way to analyze the environment is not to try to understand it as a collection of their systems, but rather to treat the environment as:

"*information which becomes available to the organization or to which the organization, via search activity, may get access. It is not the supplier or the customer himself that counts, but the information that he makes accessible to the organization being studied about his goals, the conditions under which he will enter into a contract or other aspects of his behavior*".

(Choo, 2002, 3)

Several trends in gathering external information in large Finnish companies have uncovered. A study by Vuori and Hannula (2009) concentrating on business intelligence found evidence that despite of the recession taking place during the study, investments in the arena of business intelligence were growing or stayed the same. In a time of recession, the importance of information is conceived extremely high, and thus business intelligence is not reduced. Another important finding was that business intelligence procedures and tools will be broadened and made more efficient. The study also proves the popularity of information gathering in large Finnish companies. All of the 50 companies interviewed, knowingly gathered and analyzed information concerning

their own business or business environment. 59% of these companies had appointed a person to be in charge of this information. (Vuori & Hannula, 2009)

Information about the environment may be gathered and analyzed by the company itself or it may be outsourced. It is justified for an organization to outsource, at least partially, the information acquiring. Media monitoring and reports that are by nature routine, are wise to outsource in terms of resources. (Vuori & Hannula, 2009) After the amount of digital information has grown tremendously, managers may spend several hours a day searching for information, later realizing that much of the information they acquired has little relevance or value toward meeting their need. Companies typically spend more resources, mainly time, in gathering the information needed than they do processing, analyzing, and exploiting it. Studies have revealed that a practitioner would rather spend time on processing, analyzing, and exploiting data than gathering it. (Fleisher, 2008) Once timely routine reports are outsourced to companies specializing in it, the internal resources are free for other BI operations where more expertise is of need. According to the study by Vuori and Hannula (2009) mentioned earlier, a majority of Finnish large companies, 69% in total, have outsourced some of their Business Intelligence operations. Mostly these comprise of media monitoring and other reports including market, brand and customer research. (Vuori & Hannula, 2009).Outsider sources, instead of internal sources, for external information are used for two reasons. First, to assure that internal values and preoccupation do not create barriers to the view of the world and second to remove barriers for acquiring intelligence the organization would otherwise overlook (Stoffels, 1994, 79). Also it is noted that selectivity and distortion can enter the scanning process at some level. (Aguilar, 1967, 15)

3.2. Information collection- in theory

The amount that a firm can affect to external events is very little. So a firm thus needs to anticipate, and importantly, understand them. In a situation, where monitoring enhances the predictability of an event or the opportunity for strategic responses to an event, a firm has incentives to spend resources on scanning. The efforts that are aimed at scanning need to be balanced, between the needs for information and the "capacity" to scan. So costs should be weighed in relation to the gains of scanning, but due to the difficulty in measuring these variables, it seems impossible to calculate the amount that of scanning effort that ought to be made (Aguilar, 1967, 34). Though according to

Kelley (1965) there is a point, for every department, at which the marginal cost of an additional unit of information is equal to the marginal utility. The utility could be measured in enhanced tactical or strategic power on the market, more efficient operations internally leading to cost reduction. Kelley did conclude in the article, dated to 1965, that methods for this were still unavailable. Monitoring exposes circumstances that show opportunities and /or may impose threats. So monitoring provides value through the firm's strategic adaptation, and the anticipated benefits of environmental scanning exceed its costs in present value terms (Stoffels, 1994, 2)

The *relevance* of information is an obvious requirement, because information will not be useful unless it is recognized to be relevant to some particular purpose. Recognition of relevance is critical. Aguilar (1967, 14) states that for scanning and communication, companies rely on people and always the human element is highly unreliable. So, in the case of deciding on the relevance of information, people play a critical role. A person's recognition for relevance is affected by at least two factors: awareness of issues of possible importance and ability to comprehend the information. The ability to comprehend is linked to a person's relative familiarity with the information and also the language in itself. Time pressure and motivation have also been recognized as affecting the recognition of relevancy. Finnish employees recognize regular reports and briefings from the external environment to be the most important information acquired (Vuori& Hannula, 2009).

The *amount* of information is important to keep under surveillance. It has been argued that management can only concentrate in-depth in half a dozen issues at a time. (O'Connell & Zimmerman 1979,19)

In collecting the information for media monitoring the information is open source information. Open source information refers to unclassified, non-secret, and "grey literature" sources. (Fleisher, 2008). In the process of collecting this open source information listing of guidelines has been created by Fleisher (2008):

-The information needs to be ***reliable*** and come from authoritative, edited and reviewed sources

-The system where the information is, should provide timely access to the most recently ***updated*** information as well as extensive archiving ability

-Sources should be ***gathered*** and searchable in within one interface

-***Access*** needs to be easy via laptops, mobile phones etc. and covered 24/7

-Analysts must have access to ***vast array of media***, many being free, but better intelligence sources need to be bought for some expenditure

-Information ought to be in an ***integrative*** form that may be easily downloaded

-Use of electronic clipping services, ***"Alerts",*** and other automated updating capabilities are highly recommended, because this alerts of potentially important changes

3.3. Sources of collecting information

In collection of media monitoring the sources of collecting information need to be decided on, before the actual collection begins. According to Franco et al. (2011) organizations need to be broadly aware of events in the environment. This broadness of sources, on the basis of which information is collected, is to be based on elements discussed in this sub-chapter.

According to Kuutti (2008, 10) the elementary arenas of external information are:

- articles provided by the media
- the self-publicity of companies, in terms of their own published publications or websites
- the conversations held between the public in the message boards and other forums of discussion

These all arenas are inspired by the three-way connection of the public; the media and the organization (see Figure 2 on page 10). This interaction is further emphasized by the regular actions taken by the media and the need to produce continuously new media content to the public. (Kuutti, 2008, 10).

The news media is a secondary source containing raw material that usually contains analysis. Journalists and media are factors in the process and in gathering and analyzing information and they may portray certain bias to information (Juholin & Kuutti, 2003, 45). This said, the quality of media varies dramatically according to the source. For instance, surveys have shown that Japanese

companies use their nation's newspapers more than any other single source of information in competitive intelligence, because Japanese business newspapers contain much more in-depth information than anywhere else. (Kahaner, 1996, 65) Interestingly enough, the Japanese have one of the most sophisticated intelligence networks. (Ettorre, 1995)

The information used in media monitoring is gathered mainly from open sources. Companies have long been relying on open sources for intelligence sources (Fleisher, 2008). This traditionally has included books, journals, magazines, pamphlets, reports, etc. Also by combining information gathered from wealthy material in multiple sources, marketing analysts better perceive diversity in viewpoints (Fleisher, 2008).

The Internet delivers both advantages and disadvantages in collecting information. The internet on its own presents a wide array of sources and it is efficient in accessing any information that is published in the press (West, 2001, 76). On the other hand, the growth in information amounts has made it exceedingly difficult for a company to find the accurate and meaningful information from this abundance of information (Törmänen, 1999). In 1999, the Internet contained more than 800 000 pages of content, but even the most efficient search engine covered only 16 percent of this content. (Fleisher & Blenkhorn, 2003, 17)

No universally accepted way of classifying information sources for scanning has been discovered (Franco et al. 2011) and so the most used published information on the Internet will be provided as a list (West, 2001, 76) instead of categories:

-Press articles

-Newswires

-On-line databases

-Market reports

-Company news

-Financial data

-Company websites

-Recruitment

-Research Reports

-Industry statistics

-Economic and demographic data

-Other government data

-Conference and trade shows

Electronic publications have made large amounts of content easily accessible for analysis (Rappaport, 2010). Most of the major national newspapers now have a website that hosts the current and former issues of their publication and some newspapers have even broadened their business base to include major on-line databases that can be searched by subscriber. (West, 2001, 77) This said information is not always accessible free-of-charge, so even though the service provider buys access to some electronic publications and provides links of these to the customer companies, they do not necessarily have access to these. In addition, the latest information of a company is not found online as news articles and company announcements are known to have a time lag. (Bose, 2008)

In terms of competitor information, a wealth of information is found in annual reports, news releases, advertising, and briefings to the financial community, and other communications. Also competitor's advertising, for example, may concentrate on specific product benefits or focus on general company image. Thus, the message may be targeted to narrowly define demographic or psychographic groups. Understanding how a competitor communicates information about products, services, and markets is critical to the competitive intelligence process (Dutka, 2000, 123)

4. Information processing

In previous chapters of the study, the two first steps of "The Intelligence Cycle" on page 9 were reviewed. This chapter looks into the information processing. Finally the theoretical framework will be presented in this chapter, which combines the benefits of media monitoring and information usage method. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the adequate information to gain a deeper understanding of the forthcoming findings of the empirical research.

4.1. Use of external information

Numerous studies show that following the environment improves organizational performance (Dollinger, 1984; Choo, 2000). In a study by Newgren et al in 1984, it was recognized that scanning firms significantly outperformed non-scanning firms. Miller and Frisen (1980) found in their research that successful archetypes of companies had "substantial" or "concerted" intelligence activities, whereas failing firms had scanning systems that were described in terms such as "weak". So it seems as information about the environment is needed in order for a company to succeed, but how is this information really used for it to become a vital element in the performance of a company?

The most discussed area of information use is definitely strategic planning and, finally, decision making. The scanning and analysis of the external environment is said to be a necessary early stage of the strategic planning process (Choo, 2002, 116), because companies may modify strategy to meet changing external circumstances, helping organizations to succeed and, finally, survive. (Stoffels, 1994, 3) Consequences of scanning also include shaping the firm's internal structure and sensitize managers down to the project level to the needs and benefits of adaptive strategies. (Stoffels, 1994, 3) Strategy evolves from unique strengths of the firm, from identifying weaknesses in competitors and from finding new markets, new customers, new technologies and other new forces in the environment (Stoffels, 1994, 3) So indeed external information is used to reveal trends and illuminate potential threats and opportunities. Then managers use this information to create a

cognitive framework to make decisions and respond. External information may provide warning signals early on from emerging issues from the environment. Another arena where Auster and Choo (1994) found managers using external information was in the initiation of new improvement projects and strategies.

Systems, where scanning is used according to Camillus and Datta (1991) are a strategic planning system (SPS) and strategic issues management system (SIM). An SPS can be viewed as a set of organizational task definitions and procedures for ensuring that relevant information is obtained, forecasts are made, and strategic choices are addressed and evaluated. A typical framework of an SPS consists of an environmental analysis.

Camillus and Datta (1991) conclude a SIM on the other hand to refer to a set of organizational procedures, routines and processes devoted to the perceiving, analyzing, and responding to strategic issues. The SIM process includes: continuous monitoring of the environment, identification of issues, assessing issues, judging their likely impact and establishing priorities. SPS relates often to periodic analyzing of the environment, whereas SIM is more continuous in nature and closer to the external information studied in this thesis. (Camillus and Datta, 1991)

Some outcomes that Fleisher (2008) has gathered that competitive intelligence analysts aim for are:

Figure 5: Plausible outcomes of competitive intelligence (Fleisher, 2008)

Predicting future developments to decision makers
Helping decision- and policymakers in avoiding surprises
Making data more meaningful and sensible to decision makers
Keeping decision makers informed

This figure (Figure 5) of plausible outcomes of competitive intelligence highlights the direction of literature, as each of the usage method is aimed at decision makers. This thesis will look into the utilization of information also in the case of employees, not just executives as previous studies have often done. External information is often distributed to a variety, if not all, employees. This said, according to Vuori and Hannula (2009) employees believe that the utilization of business intelligence is in proportion to the organization level, meaning that the information is gathered for the use of executives. Thus the employees do not portray themselves, but rather top management as

the core users of intelligence. A detail to be noted is that the "core user groups" were measured by Vuori and Hannula (2009) according to how important this type of information is to them. Other groups of key user groups are law departments, investment activities and relations, strategy development, financial communications.

The third core user group was studied to be in the marketing and/or sales department. (Vuori&Hannula, 2009) Also according to Rappaport (2010) media monitoring is used as a tool for marketing support or reputation management.

4.2. Theoretical Framework

This sub-chapter will reveal the theoretical framework of the research. The framework depicts information utilization on three levels, where information reaches a continuous cycle of sense making- knowledge creation- decision making. The framework portrays what happens to the information on every level of the three-level-cycle.

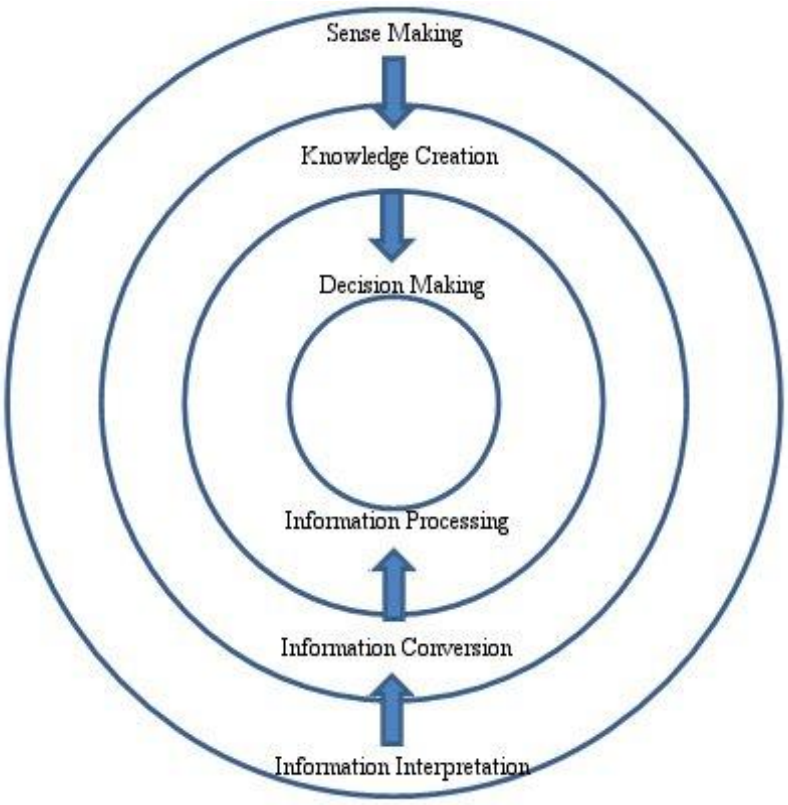
The theoretical framework, used in the research at hand, presents an information-based view of organizations, depicting a model of how organizations use knowledge. (Choo, 2006, 1) This information-based view provides a clarifying perspective on the issue of media monitoring usage in a company. According to Choo (2002, 1) an organizations strategic resource is information, with the external environment providing a broad information arena. Competition is actually the consequence of unequal distribution of information amid organizations and competition can even be portrayed as an information race (Choo, 2002,1).

The frameworks' emphasis on information is by definition closer to the knowledge-based view of an organization than the more traditional resource-based view. The resource-based view of an organization perceives an organization as a unique bundle of resources and capabilities where the primary task of management is to maximize value through the optimal deployment of existing resources and capabilities (Grant, 1996). These resources comprise of both tangible and intangible assets (Dimitriades, 2005). The knowledge-based view extends the resource-based theory by valuating knowledge as the most strategically important of the firm's resources (Felin & Hesterly, 2007 ; Grant, 1996)

In the studies of organizations three arenas, in which the use of information play a strategic role, have been emphasized. These three arenas are: *sense-making, knowledge creation and decision making* (Choo, 2006, 3). So these are the arenas where information is used, but the other area of interest in terms of this research is how the information is actually processed for it to become a strategic player. For this information gap Choo (2006, 3) envisioned a continuous cycle, where the information process is explained alongside information being sent from the external environment, gradually moving to decision making. The cycle is continuous, because a decision implies an action, which finally moves back into the external environment (e.g. as news). (Choo, 2006, 3)

As the figure 6 visualizes information moves from the outside (the environment) and step by step if processed it will turn into organizational action.

Figure 6: The Knowing Organization (Choo, 2006, 3)



4.2.1 Sense making

The first arena in which organizations use external information is to *make sense* of changes in their environment (Choo, 2006, 1). Sense making literally means making sense. Louis (1980) describes the situation of sense making in relation with its counterpoint, the situation of not making sense. Sense making is retrospective by nature occurring only if something unbalances the state of equilibrium. (Louis, 1980) All sense-making is done indeed retrospectively, since one cannot make sense of events until they have occurred and thus we look back on historical events to construct their meaning. (Choo, 2006, 5)

Literature on sense making broadly involves what people construct, why and with what effects. Research in the field of sense making usually interprets that stimuli is placed into some kind of framework. This is done, because people find it easier to comprehend issues when a general point of view can be used to direct interpretation (Weick, 1995, 4).

Today's global and dynamic surroundings make organizational sense making obligatory in order to know what is happening in its environment. One simple reason for this is that at all times; an organization must secure its supply of resources. Market forces, fiscal and legal structures affect organizations in several ways. Societal norms, public opinions and changes in the environment continuously generate signals and cues for companies. (Choo, 2006, 3)

In sense making, information is *interpreted*.(Choo, 2006, 5) Information is carried out through three phases.

The first phase is commenced once an ecological change takes place, and it is called *enactment* (Choo, 2006, 6). In this phase people construct information in two ways. The first process consists of bracketing information, paying attention to some cues from the environment and ignoring others. This chosen information is categorized and connected with information about events and outcomes. The next step in enactment is intrusion into the environment, by creating new features to aid in making sense of the environment. Thus, the result of enactment is a smaller, though still being confusing, set of data.

The second step in sense making is *selection* (Choo, 2006, 5). In this second phase, people try to understand the information, which they have enacted. The new data is compared with past interpretations, which have been efficient in explaining similar situations in the past. Then,

interpretations that best fit past understandings are selected. The result of this selection- process is a set of cause-and-effect explanations.

The third, and final, step in the sense making process is *retention* (Choo, 2006, 6). Retention is simply the phase, where the outcomes of a successful sense making process are conserved for future use.

The benefits of sense making may be seen as necessities in for an organization's very existence. According to Maitlis (2005) sense making activities such as environmental scanning are key tasks for top managers that significantly influence organizational decisions and strategic change and for other stakeholders, sense making powerfully affects how they "construct" their identities, preserve their organization's image, and respond to organizational crises. Choo (2006, 2) recognizes the short-term goals of sense making to be the construction of shared understandings that allow the organization to continue to function. The longer-term goal is for an organization to ensure adaptation and success in a dynamic environment. Choo (2006, 2)

What media monitoring enables?	What happens with the information?
Sense making	Information is interpreted

4.2.2 Knowledge Creation

An organization dealing with a changing environment should not only process information efficiently, but also create knowledge. Analyzing an organization in relation to its capability to process information from the environment is obviously an important approach to interpret some aspects of the organizations activities. This said, some may argue that the organization's interaction with its environment, combined with the methods by which it creates knowledge, are more important in terms of building a dynamic understanding of an organization. For instance innovation, a fundamental form of organizational knowledge creation, cannot be explained purely by terms of

information processing, but rather as a process, where the organization defines problems and develops new knowledge to solve them. (Nonaka, 1994)

An organization has knowledge on two levels: personal and organizational knowledge. Personal knowledge is hidden, that grows through experience. Organizational knowledge, on the other hand, comprises of beliefs of the organizations identity, purpose, its capabilities, and its environment. This type of knowledge turns into actions and the whole reason for a company's existence. For an organization to grow its must refresh its knowledge and extend its capabilities. Organizational knowledge creation is the process of making available and strengthening knowledge created by individuals as well as crystallizing and connecting it to an organization's knowledge system. (Nonaka & von Krogh, 2009)

According to the knowledge-creating view of the firm, knowledge is created through a well-known spiral, which goes through the four steps of SECI- cycle, socialization, externalization, combination and internalization. This cycle contains both tacit and explicit knowledge. (Nonaka et al. 2000) Explicit knowledge is knowledge expressed formally by a system of symbols, whereas tacit knowledge is personal knowledge used by members and learned over time (Choo, 2000) This research emphasizes on the explicit knowledge, as the information examined is delivered from an external source, documented. The two phases of the SECI-cycle that use explicit information are internalization and combination.

The information is *converted* in knowledge creation, meaning that members share their personal knowledge through discourse. (Choo, 2006, 4) In more detail, in the process of *combination*, explicit knowledge is created by bringing together explicit knowledge from a number of sources. In this process, individuals combine their explicit knowledge through e.g. conversations or meetings. New explicit knowledge is also created by categorizing or sorting existing information in computerized databases. (Choo, 2006, 9) In the process of internalization explicit knowledge is embodied into tacit knowledge and the experiences gained in the other three modes of knowledge creation are internalized. (Choo, 2006, 9) In the case of internalization all other modes, even the one's containing tacit knowledge, are combined, so internalization cannot be researched in terms of explicit information.

Commitment is one of the most important factors in promoting the creation of new knowledge in an organization. Three components induce individual commitment and these are: intention, autonomy and environmental fluctuation. Intention to create knowledge is evidently internal to the individual. This said, knowledge creation at the individual level does involve continuous interaction with the external world. Discontinuity can generate pattern of interaction between an individual and its environment. Fluctuations from the environment cause individuals to recreate their own systems of knowledge to take these changes into consideration.(Nonaka, 1994)

What media monitoring enables?	What happens with the information?
Knowledge creation	Information is combined

4.2.3.Decision making

A decision may be defined as a set of actions and dynamic factors beginning with the identification of a stimulus for action and ending with a specific commitment to action (Mintzberg, 1976). Decision-making in an organization can often be described as chaotic, information hard to find and decision-makers being biased. In theory decisions should be made keeping in mind all of the organizations goals, plausible alternatives, and the outcome of every plausible alternative. Some go as far as referring to decision-making as being synonymous to management and in order to understand organizational behavior, one must analyze an organizations' decision making. (Choo, 2006, 2)

Decision making may be characterized in a large firm as complex. Decision making gets more and more complex as the size of the business grows (Lackman et al. 2000). Good relevant information is rarely at hand from the plethora of data available when needed. It is widely accepted in organization science that the purpose of information use is to reduce or to remove uncertainty, as the decision behavior of individual members are constrained by their cognitive capacity, information and values. (Choo, 2006, 13) The type of information that external information provides to decision making is related to the factual premises. These determine what the decision maker perceives as factual

information. Certain types of factual information are thus needed in order for a decision to be made (Choo, 2006, 12).

During decision making, the key activity of information is *processing* the information. (Choo, 2006, 4) This implies that the information of possible alternatives is processed in order to select an alternative which achieves the desired objectives. (Choo, 2006, 4) This said, a company is hardly realistically able to have adequate information on plausible alternatives and their supposed consequences in every decision making situation. Certain limitations need to be condoned and decision making can be harshly divided into two: data-driven and judgment driven. In the case of data-driven decision making the historical information on which to base decisions on is found and uncertainties are reduces. The problem with this type of decision making is the excessive amount of information and the time-consuming task of finding the information. On the counterpoint, in the case of a judgment driven decision making situation, there is no or only indirect historical information on which to base the decisions on. Then, the decision makers face the challenge of processing judgment, be it their own or others.(Borison & Hamm, 2010)

A majority of firms say that market intelligence has a heavy impact on their tactical and strategic decision making (Lackman et al. 2000) and a market intelligence system can be said to be a driving force in meeting strategic objectives. (Lackman et al.2000) In decision making an environment analysis is characterized as basic information. (Fletcher & Donaghy, 1994) The aim of good business intelligence is to drive the continuous strategic planning dialogue at the top of the organization. (Ettorre, 1995).

Information usage is often linked with decision making and the ideas of intelligence have come to guide much of the research of decision-making processes. The intelligence associated with decision making processes is seen as explicit and tangible (Brännback, 1996, 43).

What media monitoring enables?	What happens with the information?
Decision Making	Information is processed

5.Methodology

In this chapter the empirical research will be discussed and the chosen research methods will be reasoned. In the first sub-chapter, qualitative research and the research position will be presented. After the research method will be discussed. Then the reasons for using semi-structured interviews will be stated. After data collection methods will be discussed, and the companies partaking the research, are presented. In 5.5 data analysis will be presented. The chapter will be concluded with the research methods evaluated.

5.1 Qualitative research and research position

The research conducted for this empirical section is qualitative by nature. The subject of the research is broad in scope and it is rather examined as a phenomenon, exploring how people act in organizations, thus quantitative research would have been challenging to execute. Qualitative research emphasizes on understanding by examining people's words, actions and records. (Maykut &Morehouse, 1996, 17) Qualitative research is especially relevant when prior studies about a phenomenon under examination are modest (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 5). Also, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008, 35) argue that one advantage of qualitative research is that it is possible to integrate the remarks the interviewee makes into a broader context. According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008, 21) qualitative research aims at interpreting phenomena in certain contexts and understanding the viewpoints of various actors.

Qualitative research derives from humanistic sciences and the research approach is hermeneutic (Hirsjärvi &Hurme, 2008, 22). Qualitative research is often characterized in accordance with its contrast, quantitative research (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998, 13; Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2008, 21).

The qualitative research method chosen is semi-structured interviewing. The questions will be quite the same for all interviewees, but the research will benefit from explanatory answers, rather than a simple yes/no. Questions pursue to encourage interviewees to answer in a lengthier manner, by indicating to "describe" certain situations, "tell in own words what has been done" etc. The analysis

section will be done by counting. This way the continuity of certain elements will be discovered and the primary actions done with the information will be recognized.

The research position for this research is a realist position. As Sobh and Perry (2005) nicely concludes the issue of the realist view: "..realists believe that there is a real world out there to discover. However, that real external world is only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible." These two sentences approach perfectly the way I personally view research, and this approach is highly visible in the upcoming thesis. The purpose is not to pursue to simplify the whole arena of information usage in companies into one theory, but rather to portray certain, individual events or personal approaches and once there are 12 of these, to conclude how these 12 interviewees sees the situations and compare these findings to previous studies and the theoretical framework at hand.

5.2. Research Method

In qualitative research patterns are sought for, which emerge from the data rather than creating hypotheses in advance, so qualitative research can be characterized to be content-based analysis (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998, 19 ;Maykut & Morehouse, 1996, 13).This is a strict assumption and the differences between deductive research and inductive research needs to be examined further in this research. Deductive research, the prominent method in building theoretical knowledge base, rests on the thought that theory is the first source of knowledge. One or more hypotheses are thus created on the basis of what is known theoretically. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 97; Eriksson& Kovalainen, 2008, 22) Inductive research pursues to find the outcomes from the empirical research, rather than vice versa (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 95; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, 22). In this research, no hypothesis is done before-hand, but empirical research is done through the lenses of a theoretical framework, so this research is executed through an abductive research logic, which can be seen as a combination of induction and deduction (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 97; Eriksson& Kovalainen, 2008, 23) In this research, the reader will not be convinced to believe some hypothesis set before-hand, but rather the empirical findings are to be viewed through the lenses of prior theories on external information.

In qualitative research the researcher counteracts with the interviewees, whereas in the positivistic approach relating to quantitative research, the interviewee is pursued to keep separate of the

interviewer. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2008, 23; Eskola & Suoranta, 1998,21) In qualitative research the researcher accepts that there are subjectivities and a researcher's reflections are data on their own (Flick, 1998, 6).

5.3. Semi-structured interview method

The type of interview chosen for this research is a semi-structured one. As became apparent throughout the interview process, the information amount received by the interviewees was not a stable variable nor was it known in advance by the researcher. Information that an interviewee does not receive can hardly be questioned about. Thus, certain themes were created and information gaps concerning them needed to be fulfilled, as is the case in semi-structured interviews. Eriksson and Kovalainen (1998, 82) describe the process of semi-structured interview by taking a pre-prepared outline of topics, issues or themes to the interview, but holding the possibility to vary the wording and order of questions in each interview. In this research, the researcher took notice of the specific terms favored by the interviewer from the beginning (such as "rapsa" (report) or "kooste" (synthesis)) and used these throughout the interview to create a connection with the interviewee on some level and to gain detailed depictions of situations.

As every interview method has certain pros and cons, so is the case with semi-structured interviews. In this research, the challenges are taken as a given and rather through accepting these and minimizing their negative effects, the challenges will not have a disrupting effect on the findings. The challenges are inherent to the semi-structure interview's relatively liberated form. The most challenging issue is covering all topics on the outline while simultaneously being prepared to probe for more in-depth responses. This said, following the preplanned questions in too much detail may prevent important topics from being raised. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 1998, 82)

The questions are created keeping in mind that even if an interviewee claims that something has a meaningful effect on their work; this effect will be evaluated deeper and actual situations are asked to be depicted, in order to see a truer picture of the usage. As the intention is to surface descriptions of real-life usage situations, questions where a simple yes/no-answer will suffice, are brought to a bare minimum. In qualitative research "what", "how" and "why" questions are typical. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 1998, 39).. "What" questions are descriptive by nature, focusing on exploring and

describing states, situations and processes. The questions will include various "what" questions as the research aims to dive deep into situations encountered in external information usage and also some notions to: "describe a situation, where…" are included. "What" questions can be researched through semi-structured interviews. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 1998, 39).

5.4. Data collection

Three companies were chosen to be interviewed for this thesis. The companies were chosen to be companies, which receive external information reports on a regular basis from en external service provider. Three companies were chosen among the customers of M-Brain, the commissioner of this thesis. The companies were chosen in unison with M-Brain. Requirements for these companies were that they: received reports regularly, were sufficiently large (in order to represent the average customer) and each company would be representatives from differing industries to create a broad perspective on the phenomenon of external information usage.

Only three companies were chosen and 15 people was pursued to be interviewed, 5 of each company. The aim of the study is to expand the knowledge on how employees, not just executives, use external information. The second most obvious user group of external information is marketing, so they were also interviewed. The third group of external information users is the communication department. The fourth group, who has a special relation towards external information, is business intelligence- representatives. Finally, the R&D- department's relationship towards this type of information was researched.

The companies, which took part in this research, are Phone, a telecommunications company, Drink, a company in the food industry and Wood, a company in packaging, paper and wood products industry. The names of the companies and interviewees have been changed to protect confidential information being discussed in the interviews.

I studied the external information used by the companies on a broader scale, not asking purely about the media monitoring provided by M-Brain. This said, all detailed examples asked of the interviewee to sketch out, where asked to be related to the M-Brain reports, because the researcher has access to these reports used and thus could re-enact the mentioned situation.

M-Brain- the service provider

M-Brain is a business intelligence company specializing in media monitoring and analytics. The company provides its clients information using a hybrid approach that combining BI-optimized technology with human expertise. The company has 52 employees in Finland, four in Sweden and four in Germany.

The Drink

Drink has a strong mix of brands and they offer enjoyable drinks for all occasions. According to Drink they succeed together with their customers and their pledge of top quality to steer the way they work. Their products are: beers, ciders, long drinks, bottled waters, soft drinks and a growing variety of specialty drinks. Drink has around 900 employees. The vision of Drink in 2008 was that it is an innovative trend-setter in the drink's industry. This vision is, according to Drink, a driving force in the company and its employees in all operations.

The Drink-company gathers information about the environment through media monitoring reports, which are delivered three times a day via email. The emails (own publicity and main competitors) are sent to approximately 50 people. These reports come from two companies, the other being M-Brain. The areas, which Drink receives information is own publicity, main competitors and a broader industry monitoring. In addition to these traditional media reports, Drink receives a report on social media daily. In addition, a portal gathering information of own publicity is in use. In addition, Drink invests a lot in market research and consumer research and has their own research center.

The drink does not have an appointed person in charge of business intelligence operations for the time being.

The Tree

The Tree is in the industry of packaging, paper and wood products industry. The international Tree has approximately 26 000 employees and 85 production units worldwide. The Tree is a publicly traded company listed in Helsinki and Stockholm. The Tree's mission pinpoints their efforts towards environmental responsibility by saying that their mission is to use end develop their

expertise in renewable materials. Their products aspire to provide their customers with a climate-friendly alternative.

A large amount of employees receives two English media monitoring reports from M-brain daily by email and it is available for every employee in the intranet, this covers mainly own publicity and some information on competitors. One report is received at nine a.m., which covers shortly issues and a smaller amount of media and the report in the afternoon has a broader scope. In addition, they receive business intelligence from another company. This business intelligence of the industry is knowledge on a broad scale. Also Tree has an internal 10 person unit of business analysts/information analysts, who provide information, when asked for and departments buy also information from other external sources for their needs. Social media monitoring is not done very broadly at the moment and the meaning of these reports were either non-existent or small to the interviewees.

There is an atmosphere in the Tree, that media has a negative attitude towards them. Also the Tree seems to be a discussed subject in the media.

The Phone

The Phone is in the industry of telecommunications. The company operates internationally with services in the Nordic and Baltic countries, the emerging markets of Eurasia, including Russia and Turkey, and in Spain. They provide network access and telecommunication services that help people and companies to communicate. The Phone employs 31,000 employees in 20 countries. The company's vision is "to be a world-class service company, recognized as an industry leader and they are proud of being pioneers of the telecom industry, a position we have gained by being innovative, reliable and customer friendly."

The Phone's employees do not all receive the same external information. Mostly the employees have access to lots of external information. From M-brain a fixed amount of people receive social media monitoring and several other information providers are used, also traditional media monitoring providers. Some of the information is found on the intranet for employees, but all employees do not seem to be aware of this. The type of information received is highly connected to the employee's position/department in the Phone. Nearly every business unit has an appointed person in charge of business intelligence. The employees of the Phone seem to believe that the company has a bad media image and are working on it.

5.5. Data analysis

Data analysis is often seen as the most difficult phase in qualitative research (Eskola &Suoranta, 1998, 137). The method chosen for analysis in this research is thematizing (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998,174;Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2008, 173) Thematizing describes the analytical process where certain elements arise from the text in the phase of analysis and they may be based on the themes of the interview structure (Hirsjärvi &Hurme, 2008, 173). In this research the themes were:

- the person's department/job description
- the information received
- the actions caused by the information
- ideas for the future arising from current deficiencies

After the transcripts were read, they were read through, and important/ interesting notices were pinpointed from every interview. After this, an Excel-sheet was created to portray these answers in a clear manner. This was done in order to simplify the process of thematizing. In addition, surprising themes occurred and usage methods between different departments as well as companies were compared. In this case the themes that were used on the basis of the semi-structured interviews were modified, but the main themes stayed the same. The main modification was leaving out the theme of further analysis of information and this was done due to the interviewees seldom portraying further analysis. It is indeed probable that the basic themes arise and some fresh themes arise through the analysis, once other arena of information is found more interesting (Hirsjärvi &Hurme, 2008, 173)

5.6. Validity, reliability and limitations

This sub-chapter will portray the reliability and validity of this qualitative research and document the limitations involved in this thesis.

Reliability and validity derive from quantitative research and are difficult to use as such in qualitative research. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2008, 186) One of the main features of qualitative

research is the possibility of the researcher to document how this presentation or categorization of reality has been created. The researcher needs to be able to justify the methods in a reliable manner, even though another researcher may conclude in another outcome without the research being necessarily weak. (Hirsjärvi& Hurme, 2008, 189)

Reliability in terms of qualitative research implies to the researcher's activity rather than to the answers of interviewees. Reliability may be described as receiving the same outcome for the research once a person is interviewed on another occasion. (Hirsjärvi &Hurme, 2008, 186-190) In this case, if the same people were to be interviewed again after a period of time, the answers would be similar. This media monitoring examined has been used by the interviewees for several years and certain activity routines have been created, which will be used also in the future.

Construct validity means that the research describes the phenomenon it is supposed to describe. This refers to the concepts, which portray adequately the phenomenon researched (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2001, 187) in the theoretical background of this thesis these concepts have been clarified and media monitoring has been situated into the area of external information. The interviewees were given the chance to use their own term for this external information received, so as to portray true to life situations of usage. Every interviewee named the information received from M-brain as media monitoring, although one interviewee referred to the information as "M-Brain", he revealed it to include media monitoring results. Once the interviewees contacted in terms of this interview, they were notified of the fact that the information is about M-Brain, and thus were well acquainted with the service before-hand by having used their services. The validity to predict refers to the situation of being able to predict on the basis of one research the outcome of future researches and it is difficult to evaluate qualitative research on this basis (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2008, 186). The thesis is supported by previous research on the matter and the theoretical background may be reflected on these research findings. For instance, the report on business intelligence of 50 Finnish companies does have similarities with the findings of this research.

One limitation of this research is the fact that 11 interviews were conducted face-to-face, but one was conducted via email. The reason for this was the long distance between interviewer and interviewee and the lack of time. This deficiency was filled by receiving thorough answers via email and the interviewee provided the possibility to complement answers through a phone interview, which was not even needed due to adequate findings from the email.

Another limitation in relation to the interviews was the researcher being an employer of M-Brain. This limitation refers to the notion of interviewees portraying possibly more positive image of this information usage and their relation to it. The fact that anonymity was granted for all interviewees eased the situation. In addition, an interviewee saying to use information in decision making was not accepted as a true activity based on the information, but rather a situation were this information was used in decision making was requested for.

6. Findings

The findings will be divided into four segments according to the themes used in the semi-structured interview. The sections will be analyzed in terms of the theoretical framework. In other words, the main results will be concluding this chapter in terms of how deep the external information is truely used. The findings are analyzed in accordance to the company the interviewee works in as well as the position the interviewee works in.

6.1. Information collection

The Tree

In the Tree the amount of external information an employee receives is connected to one's job description and their own initiative. The most "informed" employees receive reports covering own publicity, competitors, certain appointed themes and industry news. Employees receiving the reports pursue to read these reports, but one confesses to occasionally direct them to their own folder, where they remain unread. Interestingly m-brain sends two individual, though including overlapping information, reports in the morning and one in the afternoon. Additionally, once needed business units will provide information. Some people also receive information about social media monitoring, but none of the four people interviewed in this research received these reports. Also on a broader scope of information, internal information is sent to some, such as Business Intelligence and individual competitor analysis. The intranet is tendered with lots of effort to provide relevant information and organize it to be found efficiently in the intranet. These internal information analysts work on issues similar as media monitoring providers.

The information sent from external information providers, such as M-Brain, is called media monitoring reports or "daily media monitoring summaries".

The Phone

In the Phone the amount of media monitoring reports or other information received of the external environment is directly connected to the receiving employee's function and job description in the organization. There are large amounts of information about the external environment in the company and this information is provided both from external service providers as well as from internal sources. A majority of the information that comes from outside the company are standard reports about the company's visibility in public. Ad hoc- reports are done when needed. Own publicity is deeply scanned and reports include even in-depth analysis on individual executives publicity. Own publicity and tone of voice are profoundly scanned. Competitor activity is followed actively, and appointed people receive notices of activity instantly. Employees do not receive as much information on industry affecting news. Social media is monitored daily by M-brain and this report gathers mainly information on issues that consumers have accounted whilst using some of The Phone's product or service or have some commenting on customer service.

In terms of information of the external information, the terms used range from M-brain "social media monitoring" to market intelligence, which is reflected to include market monitoring, market knowledge, research on customer satisfaction and information on customer needs.

The Drink

The amount of information received by the employees about the external environment is a constant and under control. The M-brain reports, including the social media, are sent to 50 executives and also marketing and communications departments. In addition some employees receive a report on the news of the business branch. So the standard information of the environment is delivered by an external source. Additionally separate brands of the drink are monitored and product x's publicity is calculated on certain time spans. Also in a time of launching a new product, the "hits" are counted to calculate the success of the launch in terms of media visibility.

The drink's information needs seem to derive from the consumers and much research is provided by the internal research center. Own publicity, competitors and the branch of business are monitored daily and also the "public" is followed via the social media monitoring, mainly on message boards. These social media reports include conversation on consumer's usage of the drinks as well as a broader scope including events affiliated with the Drink.

In terms of information of the external information provided by an external service provider, M-Brains service is called media monitoring or social media monitoring according to the source of information. One interviewee did refer to these media monitoring reports as "M-brains", concluding that colleagues use the same term. The monitoring efforts provided of the industry is known as industry monitoring.

6.2 Information usage

The Tree

A majority of Tree employees recognized as the most important type of news to be news concerning their own publicity. Also competitor information was conceived as important and information affecting the company strategy. The type of information, which is observed to induce most action, is indeed own publicity. For one person the m-brain report works as a channel through which internal notices, such as appointments, become acknowledged. One employee pinpoints the early report, delivered at 9.a.m, to be crucially important.

"*So the early edition is the most important one. So if something emerges it's there straight away. When I leave home, I may not have time to even read the morning news. The earliest is maybe 5 past 6 a.m that YLE has reached me in relation to some news in Hesari. Because basically you should know straight away.*" Executive interviewee

A majority does see media monitoring efforts as civilizing, becoming familiar with other issues than just own departments. The reports provide facilitation for awareness of articles and leads to read some articles, that would otherwise gone unnoticed, in case the summary does not cover the article as broadly as one would need. The facilitation stems from the fact that somebody goes through a massive amount of information and writes summaries with clear headings, of the most important news. The usage in this case may be calculated in own working hours. The tone in which the Tree is spoken about in the media is of interest. The media has a negative connotation of the Tree as a company, due to its industry. The tone of own publicity is interesting to discover. For one

interviewee, the reports provide a social dimension and actually one of the actions induced by reports is enquiries from colleagues whether they noticed some new article from it. Also the reports occasionally provide a rewarding feeling for one interviewee.

"*or it's nice to see if I've been in some kind of a notifying process, then it's especially nice to see how your own case is visible in the media, how much it's seen and which publications. It sort of rewards your own work. And it's fun to see if, for instance, some detail has been worked on for hours for a notice and it comes out word-for-word. Then it's nice to see that the key messages perhaps got through*." Communications interviewee

Two interviewees use the reports as an aid in preparation for upcoming Question & Answer-interviews. Articles about main competitors often arouse the interest of journalists and even when it is not own publicity, need to be aware to answer questions. In one of the cases an action induced is telling a colleague about an article and cautioning of the type of questions that will be asked. One employee finds reports beneficial, where a competitor has experimented on something that has proven to be a failure. This information can be used to exclude this business or technology from own future experiments.

One interviewee's job description includes that akin to a police, where the comments of employees need to be scanned, so no employee announce information that ought not be common knowledge. This is one situation, a rather rare one, where action is induced. The Tree has limitations, where certain information is kept secret before publishing certain financial information. During this time everything that is commented by employees is kept under surveillance and on one occasion information was leaked into the media that was secret for the time being. In this situation actions are taken to pursue to salvage the situation.

The Drink

The most important news for the people interviewed was own publicity and competitor information. All interviewees claim to read the information sent and if something important finds the printed article. The information about the industry is usually skimmed through and it does not induce any action, it is considered to be targeted for experts. This said, at least the R& D –specialist does not

mention benefitting from this information. For one interviewee the social media monitoring is of most use. Of these three interviewees none were able to describe re-occurring situations, where information would be used. One interviewee finds a social dimension to be presented by the reports by asking if colleagues have noticed some news article. Only one situation, when a report induced action was characterized, and it was an uncommon one.

"*The main thing is that one knows, maybe if something emerges, something very surprising, like some energy drinks, even though they are discussed all the time, but if some cutting edge arises that we have not prepared ourselves for, then we reflect on how to answer*." Communications interviewee

The external information, at least in terms of traditional media, has a facilitating role in the daily work life. One situation, where information may induce action is if incorrect or negative information is in the public, than the situation is pursued to be redeemed. Even though an interviewee described such a situation, it cannot be counted as a taken action, because this was a fictional situation. One situation where external information is needed is crisis communication. Even though the information hardly induces action, for one of the three interviewees these reports are the most awaited emails of the day and she read them intensively. She describes them as a barometer of success, because one sees how broadly the information has spread and also whether the printed information is correct.

"…huge meaning, it's a work tool. So how well the things we announce, how well they go through and of course it's critical for people in communications that we like know what is written about us and where. " Communications interviewee

Social media monitoring is critized to produce either too few, or not relevant for the user, results. This said for one of the three social media monitoring was a more important means of acquiring information relevant to his work. Another person, whose drink category hardly emerges in social

media in relevant contexts, describes mostly situations in which he benefits from social media monitoring, rather than traditional media monitoring.

"*Of course it's interesting to see that there is some feedback conversation basically. People discussing a lot on message boards about what they feel about certain products. Somewhere on youtube has been a clip. Then I'm like "oh look" and find the clip through it. You are more up-to-date on what is happening and what people talk like about your products. I do not have time to surf on the web and see what's happening*." Marketing interviewee

The social media monitoring may be competing with the information from the internal research center, although it is mainly consumer research. For instance, one situation where differing information of consumers is found through social media monitoring than from consumer research, is described.

"*Like in my case they are done on the target group of drink x, which is like 16-24 year old and now it's especially difficult to segment consumers purely according to age. Like I don't know, it could be that there's a lot of 40 year old men drinking a drink x. So it's always nice to know if something comes up via this that hasn't been noticed in own researches. Here can be found subjects that could be further looked into. You kind of bump into some phenomenon partially by accident*." Marketing Interviewee

The Phone

The most important type of news for The Phone is competitor information, even though investments have been made on scanning own publicity. The second most used information is information about the market. This said, information about the Tree's own publicity does inflict action, often on a fast pace. One positive feature noted in own publicity is the depth of scanning.

"*For me it's been really important to see the "tone of voice", meaning how much positive and negative has been written, also in relation to competitors*." Executive interviewee

For none of the interviewees do reports induce action on a daily basis, but rather on a regular basis such as once month and once every two weeks. Everyone who receives the reports claim to read them. Only one interviewee of the five says that social media monitoring has resulted in action on their part. One interviewee believes that if more people were interviewed from various business units, more active users would emerge. Social media monitoring is nice to read, but the only action

that it provokes is a situation, where something that has not been fixed, arises in message boards negatively.

"*I read that someone has noticed something wrong and I send it to employee, saying like "shouldn't this be fixed already?"... and I read to see when something new is launched, what do people say about it.* " Executive interviewee

The action that information on the environment usually ignites is conversation among others, issues may be highlighted in executive groups or some enquire their colleagues whether they read the new report. One type of action that is caused by media monitoring efforts on own publicity is the pursuit to effect inaccurate information in the media. The rare and unfortunate case, is that inaccurate information is sent by STT about the Phone's press conference relating to provinces. This article by STT is then copied into all province magazines in less than 30 minutes. In this case, the journalist needs be contacted and the situation pursued to be rectified. These reports work for some people as reminders of past news and for some it directly gives content to their own, monthly or quarterly, summaries or market planes. Also sporadically they are used before events or campaigns to find interesting topics at the moment.

The Phone's employees follow the media unprompted a lot, and the facilitating effect of environmental scanning by external sources is not seen fundamental. External sites that are followed include event technology forums, they attend webinars and events, and mostly employees would be aware of media activity without reading reports. This said the usage of the reports varies from supporting decision making to being "the fuel of work". A majority of the interviewees see the reports as important or extremely important in relation to their work.

6.3. Deficiences

This sub-chapter concludes deficiencies the employees portrayed in the information utilization methods.

The Tree

A deficiency in the information management is the issue of internal notifying. The Intranet is full of information, so often email seems to be more confided in and read more often. On one occasion internal appointment news were said to be read through an external media monitoring report. The problem is not the source of information, but rather the delay of information as it takes some time for information to pass through media and the service provider. One deficiency is in the translation errors of the media monitoring efforts, which occur in the concepts that are industry-related. This said, employees would not wish to lose the human touch from these reports.

In the Tree, employees would wish to read the entire article at times. The obstacle of not reaching all digital sources plays a role in this action sequence. In addition, some summaries are based on print media and PDF's are not linked. So access has become an issue for some employees.

One person wishes for more cooperation between marketing, business executives and research groups.

The Drink

The results of social media monitoring are not broad enough and it is heavily focused on certain product categories, such as alcoholic beverages. This is due to the fact that alcoholic beverages raise more discussion, than non-alcoholic ones. An interesting observation is that even discussion on sodas may be connected with alcohol.

" *And there may be message boards, that "I mixed product x with booze and it tasted good", which doesn't really give me much information*" Marketing interviewee

Traditional media monitoring has deficiencies in scope, as none of the monitoring efforts provide global coverage. Also media monitoring covers only the main media and no longer specialty magazines and editions, even though these would be of use. The content of the information received is wished to contain more Business Intelligence-information. In the situation of the Drink, traditional media monitoring can be seen mainly as a tool of communication.

The Phone

The Phone's employees have sufficient amounts of media monitoring, but they do have other expectations in terms of future alterations. Interviewees crave for more information on the customers, even though some information is gathered internally. The type of information that is not gathered in sufficient amounts is information on how a campaign succeeded in a market; this could

be used to avoid repetition of former mistakes. Although one interviewee did say that this type of analysis is conducted. The other type of information wished for is the primary information of consumers and why The Phone succeeds in one market and wins in the other. The other type of information required is large-scale and industry-related news. This type of information could involve changes in the industry, regulations and others affecting the profitability outlooks.

The level of analysis is considered to be adequate by a majority of interviewees; though for one additional visualization would be desired and one is not content with the amount of analysis and comments that there could always be more.

"*if today you analyze what happened on the web 2 weeks ago, you are too late*" Communications interviewee

6.4. Information for decision-making

The Phone

The amount of information available for the employees in the Phone, is perceived to be enough by the employees. The Intranet and portal seems to be filled with information and if something is not found, employees can ask for ad hoc- reports and analyses internally. The amount of information usually surpasses the level of the information needed. In terms of documentation, the information is documented in the information databases. The problem seems to be the laborious process of finding the information.

"*We have too much information. We like have so much information that we are not able to, or even know how to, process the information into such a form that it could be used to support decision making*." Executive interviewee

One interviewee acknowledged the decision-making to be based on intuition, rather than actual information. This said the Phone is a large company operating in several countries concluding in the inertia of decision-making. The interviewees do not envision the decision-making as being inefficient, yet several conclude that there is always room for improvement.

The Drink

Decision-making in the Drink is described to be rather straightforward. There is by no means too much information in the case of the Drink. Decision-making is based on information available in the company. Decision making may even be characterized as rational, but these decisions are seldom based on external information, but rather historical information gathered, such as sold litres.

"*We have it pretty straightforward, 'cause it depends on the litres…especially 'cause we have a good research center, where a lot of market research and consumer research is done. So we always have something to base our decisions and somewhere to get aid for the decision making*." Marketing interviewee

Albeit, decision-making, which is connected to launching products and communication efforts, the historical information is found through archives of media monitoring. Decisions made purely on efforts of social media monitoring were not come across during this interview.

The Tree

In general the amount of external information that reaches an individual is on a decent level. There is a lot of information in the company and the intranet is full of information, but the information analyst seem to keep the organizing rather well in order, though information is not always easy to find. This said, information that is crucial to execute one's work is findable. It is not intentional for everyone to receive every report, but rather inquire even further who has use for which type of information and this ought to be e-mailed. Excessive information needs to be in the Intranet (or somewhere archived, if needed for further use), but as e-mail they are simply deleted.

Due to the large size of the Tree, decision making could always be enhanced. Surprisingly decision making is described as fast and information is adequate for proper decision making.

7. Empirical results

This chapter ties together the theoretical framework and the findings, which were outlined in the previous chapter. To summarize the three levels of information utilization are listed below

What media monitoring enables?	What happens with the information?
Sense Making	Information is interpreted
Knowledge Creation	Information is converted
Decision Making	Information is processed

7.1 Results

The utilization of information will be looked through the lenses of the theoretical framework. According to the analysis based on the interviews, the 12 interviewees' utilization processes of external information will be labeled as: sense-making, creation knowledge and decision making. For future reference, decision making will be the highest level of usage even though in reality the framework did originally include to result in organizational action. This because the action referred to in the framework is organizational action and this research is conducted from an individual's perspective.

The distinctions between the differing levels of usage are clarified and information needed to be processed in certain way for it to be recognized to belong to one of these three levels and these information processes are documented.

Sense making

- For the recipient of the media monitoring to reach the first level of usage, sense making, information needs to be *processed*. An interviewee reads these reports, but additionally finding something not expected from these reports. Thus, if no change

has happened in reference to the former situation, e.g. all news was well known ahead, no sense making occurs.

Of the twelve recipients, all did claim to pursue to read information sent. This said, one interviewee does not always read them and one skims through the headings and usually deletes. In the first level, though information income is rather excessive, a vast majority reads reports every day. Information excessiveness does result in that for some the information, sent from external providers, is hardly new information. Sense making in terms of some change in the environment being processed is not fulfilled by executives or communication employees. They follow media on their own time and thus the reports provide hardly information that needs to be processed. This said, communication departments do use this information in retrospect. In communication, people need to often refer to historical information and combine it with new ones, for instance for upcoming Q&A's so sense making does occur on their behalf. For executives, external information (e.g. competitor news) is so linear with their main duties, that the reports hardly provide new information. One executive, who describes a detailed situation where, he uses these external information reports, the information is vital to the future of the company. When further inquired, this information was not received through reports, but directly from the media. The sense making efforts for executives are rather derived from additional information, in this executive's situation; he receives new information from the analysis of the external information. For him, the sense making plays a role once receiving information of the tone of voice, how positively or negatively his company is viewed.

Social media monitoring does provide new information (a change) for every group (who receives this type of information), so sense making is fulfilled on the part of social media monitoring efforts.

Everyone in this research can be said to process the information adequately to be referred to as making sense of the reports.

Making sense of the external information may be said to be rather linear with reading the information and though everyone interviewed is categorized as making sense of the information, this is done poorly in the Phone in terms of the information usage in retrospect. In several interviews, information on historical information is said to be poor and lacking. The case may be

that it is inefficiently documented and difficult to access and the essential information is buried in the intranet. This said information is of no use if no one can access it.

Knowledge Creation

For information to be used to create new knowledge, information is processed further. In terms, of this research to reach the second level of information usage some action needs to be executed and information needs to be conversed, which in terms of external explicit information means combination of knowledge.

- In the process of *conversion* knowledge is created by bringing together explicit knowledge from a number of sources. Thus, for an interviewee to be accepted as combining information, one needs to have processed information by combining information with another individual. This can be done through conversations or categorizing information in, for instance, an Intranet.

Of the 12 interviewees, external information (in terms of traditional media monitoring, that came from an external source) was the least beneficial for the three R&D- professionals and they cannot be said to create new knowledge according to this type of information as their information needs were not met purely on the basis of this information. The majority of neither marketing nor communications say to discuss these issues in social contexts. The communications professionals used the information in relation to future contact with journalists and media. So they organize the information into novel categories, different from how media provided them, and use these new categories to prepare themselves for future contact with media. This type of categorization processing occurs also in the arena of business intelligence professionals, though then the external information is processed for internal usage.

The social media monitoring does not reach knowledge creation in any function. This type of information provides a channel for secondary feedback (as it is summarized by the media monitoring service provider) and the information may be made sense of, but hardly is it possible to create new knowledge strictly on the basis of information that may be anonymous and unreliable. This said, the information may lead to discover deficiencies in the system or new ideas. Further information needs to be found before reacting on the basis of this information and only if the information were to be combined with some type of other knowledge, would it be sufficient to call it knowledge creation and this did not occur in the research at hand.

Executives use information to create new knowledge through meetings with the executive group. They combine information of individuals and this is combining information at its purest. Executive professionals and business intelligence professionals benefit the most of external information in the stage of knowledge creation. They use the external information provided for them for future years, whereas the needs of others are usually at maximum a scope of months, and they analyze information the deepest. The accounting person interviewed benefitted of the external information mostly on this second level as well. The information that she reaches through this channel is mostly novel to her and she discusses these subjects often with a colleague. This said, the knowledge creation in her case cannot be said to benefit to her work, but rather represents personal knowledge creation and the social dimension is highly valued in her case.

Thus, the three R&D- professionals cannot be said to create new knowledge on the basis of the information. All others interviewed were able to create knowledge according to the information, though the usage lied deepest in the hands of executives and business intelligence.

Thus a majority of employees can be said to create new knowledge according to external information.

Decision making

Decision making is the third and deepest level of information usage. A majority of firms say that market intelligence has a heavy impact on their decision making, but the actual usage of information on an individual's decision making seems to be rather weak. In decision making, alternatives are to be evaluated and finally one chosen and former information ought to be used in evaluation.

- In decision making, information is *interpreted*. In the framework of this thesis, the effect of external information on decision making is only accepted, if the information is interpreted in the usage of factual information. Thus, if the decision made can actually be explicated to be based on external information, then only is a decision made according to this information. Additionally, the information is then used to create action, as the outcome of a decision made is action.

Information is said to be gathered for decision making and at least in the case of strategic decisions, the executives in the company are evaluated in accordance to actions taken. In the case of executives in this research, decisions were actually made on factual information provided by the external information provided from an external source. The decision made was to focus expenditures on the company's image in media, due to negative media image which was portrayed through these reports. The actions taken, that are grounded on this decision are also evaluated through reports.

For executives the use of information on decision making is more straightforward than for other employees. Employees in R&D cannot be said to make decisions on the basis of external information and this information is congruent with the notice that they did not reach level 2 on information usage. The accounting professional uses the information rather as a social tool and information is not directly relevant to her work description.

Two communication professionals use the information in decision making. The information is used to measure their individual, and the company's, success in the area of media publicity. Measured are the tone and reputation discovered in these reports through several indicators, which may be done internally or externally. Decisions are made in communication-efforts based on these indicators, and the actions taken are evaluated in a continuous cycle through these reports. Additionally, smaller decisions, that may have an invaluable effect on the company's image, are the quick responses to reports. These communication employees have the role of "police" to trace the actions of employees in media and take action if something needs to be rectified in the eyes of the media, and public. This being said one of the communication professionals, uses information rather to gain more general knowledge of environment and she cannot be portrayed to use information in making decisions. Thus, a majority of communication professionals do use this information in decision making.

Interestingly enough, the majority of marketing professionals cannot say to use this information in decision making. Situations where information is used by marketing, it provides rather a tool of aid and imagination for future use. Though competitive information is received through traditional media monitoring and future ideas, feedback and even the true market segment of products users, is received via social media monitoring, this information is not used in decision making per se. Social media monitoring still provides information, that is anonymous and portray opinions of individuals, they cannot be confided in as factual information.

As the social media monitoring did not reach the level of knowledge creation, it does not reach decision making either. Decisions made purely on the basis of secondary and anonymous information would probably not even be justified.

In conclusion, communication departments and executives use external information in decision making and in this research they were able to portray a situation of this information usage in decision making.

7.2. Discussion

The media monitoring efforts are almost always read by the interviewees, which is consistent with the notice that regular reports from the external environment are the most important information products received by employees (Vuori and Hannula, 2009). The three companies in this interview outsourced standard reports of media monitoring, rather than analysis, which is also provided by M-Brain. This observation supports the findings of Vuori and Hannula (2009), that the outsourcing of media monitoring and reporting is often easy and cost-efficient. In-depth analysis of media monitoring was not recognized in the interviews as beneficiary and one of the three companies said that they had terminated its outsourcing. The reason for the vanishing nature of analysis is found to be in the rapid pace of information and the lack of value in analyzing past information. Interviewees found that the news and their summaries were adequate in itself and further analysis of news would not be cost-efficient, at least if outsourced.

The Internet has set new requirements in terms of the time span of reporting. According to Rappaport (2010) the frequency of reporting often ranges from “as it happens” to daily or weekly reporting, but the ideal frequency is always dependent on the specific monitoring requirements. In the case of the companies interviewed, information was received on a daily basis, which fulfills the requirements of standard media monitoring, where rapid action need not be taken on the basis of the information. This said, as opposed to printed media, which arrives on recurring timetables, information on the Internet travels on a continuous basis and news are published without dedicated delivery times. Some interviewees crave for information on a near to 24/7 basis. This is due to the fact that if action needs to be taken, it need be as soon as something is published and if the report arrives on a one-day delay, it may already be too late. This is most relevant to communication and executive usage as several situations were mentioned where the activity is by nature reactive. These situations include incidents of information being leaked before-hand into the media, wrong

information is spread and needs to be rapidly corrected or negative information needs to be responded to.

The benefits of social media benefits were difficult to recognize. This derived of the lack of social media strategies in the companies, or the lack of knowledge concerning them. In all three companies social media is a discussed subject, but the benefits deriving from being active in social media was not certain. Some believe that social media presence is related to the industry and for instance traditional industries do not need to be active in social media. The benefits acquired from social media monitoring were recognized to be interestingly important in R&D. Actions were taken on the basis of social media monitoring in other departments as well and it was appreciated as providing "the voice of the public". Employees' uncertainty of using information from social media derives from both the information's often unreliable nature and the lack of experience/guidelines for social media activity.

A company's level of satisfaction for the media monitoring service was highly affected by the accuracy of the keywords and the amount of human resources involved. According to Rappaport (2010) one of the five elements that need be evaluated in the process of media monitoring are the "agents" or bots, which determine the outcomes the service provider receives from the masses of information. The Drink perceived to receive insufficient amounts of outcomes and named the primary reason to be imprecise "agents". This said, The Phone's bots were updated often as they said to receive relevant information of new products, which they did not even remember adding the bots of. Another important element to decide upon is the level of deployment. (Rappaport, 2010) In the case of M-Brain one feature of differentiation from competitors was the human touch it was said to provide. Clients valued highly the feeling of a person providing the service, instead of an automated system and the human touch overweighed moderate mistakes.

8. Conclusions

The main objective of this research was to reveal how media monitoring results are used in organizations. To reveal the utilization of the information, the nature of the collected information needed to be revealed and the available sources listed. The more detailed objectives were to reveal differences in the usage of this information by employees from differing functions in an organization. Additionally, the usage of social media monitoring is glanced at.

As media monitoring is the process of collecting and choosing relevant information from the media related to self publicity, competitor information and industry information, the media monitoring results may become a valuable effort in gathering intelligence. The study already begins with the assumption, that media monitoring is aimed at being used as a part of knowing the environment and receiving information of the market. This said, the research does not imply in advance that the media monitoring results are used in a manner for them to sign up to being called intelligence, but rather that there is often an aim for gathering information.

The results are depicted through a theoretical framework created by Choo (2006,3) where information received from the environment can be used on three levels. These three levels are: sense making, knowledge creation and decision making. According to the research conducted for the thesis at hand, all three levels may be reached by media monitoring results. The level of usage is highly connected to the function of the employee. Everyone, who receives a media monitoring atleast makes sense of his/ her surroundings with this information. The level of new knowledge creation, on the other hand, is not reached by all employees as the information received from traditional media monitoring is not highly relevant in their function. Decision making on the basis of media monitoring efforts happens rarer than the previous information usage. Decision making can only be said to occur in certain functions. Only executives and communication professionals use the information received from media monitoring to make decisions.

The social media monitoring efforts provide a new channel of information for employees. The main usage of this information was another channel for receiving feedback from customers. For R&D the significance of this was surprisingly high and surpassed that of traditional media monitoring. This said, no one used this “voice of public” in neither knowledge creation nor decision making.

8.1. Practical Implications

The findings provide practical implications for media monitoring users. These implications generated from the study at hand are threefold.

First, the information needs of an organization are to be discovered and the media monitoring is to be based according to this. The employees who are to receive the reports should describe the type of information that would be most used. These may range from self publicity (even people or single products) to competition and industry-wide news. According to these needs the bots or agents are to be selected together with the service provider to offer the most essential information. In addition, these needs and the agents/ bots accordingly need to be updated as new competitors or products arise.

Second, the costs should be weighed against the benefits. This is difficult, or even impossible, for many as the benefits maybe intangible and spread across the complete organization. This said, the benefit of outsourcing the daily scanning maybe plausible to count in work hours saved by someone else going through the news for you and summarizing it. Thus, for communication professionals the benefit may be easily calculated through their hourly wage.

Third, the distribution of the media monitoring reports in an organization ought to be taken a closer look at. For some, information seems to be inaccessible though they would wish to receive the reports. In the worst case, resources are wasted as the collection and choosing of information is done twice. In the case of social media monitoring, if personnel needs to read several discussion forums daily, even though the same service is outsourced and sent to the company, the effort taken may be even more vast.

8.2. Recommendations for future research

As outlined earlier, research on media monitoring utilization is scarce, leading to an array of plausible research premises. The research provides three arenas for further research.

First, media monitoring is used broadly and the benefits have not been researched, which seems unbelievable. Further studies could be made on a broad range of media monitoring such as: is the

right information being collected and would resources be of better use if the same person would be collecting, choosing, analyzing and making recommendations on their basis, whereas now these processes are often distributed. Another interesting arena of research are the variables affecting media monitoring; the affect of choosing the correct sources to gather information from, the geographical ranges affect to decisions made or if the products followed and analyzed are more successful than products not scanned.

Second, social media monitoring portrays a completely separate arena of information to be researched. In social media monitoring the true benefits ought to be delved into deeper. Social media monitoring provides the interesting elements of writers anonymity, reaching masses of people and lacking in formal guidelines on how to react to for instance negative discussion.

Third, information, knowledge and intelligence are discussed and broadly researched topics. In theory information is processed and it becomes knowledge, once additional analysis is added, it becomes intelligence. In theory it seems rational, but lacking are the true processes behind these conversions. Future research should commit to interpreting how the information is used. For instance, how decisions are made is extremely interesting with numerous affecting variables.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The interview questions

Haastattelu 1.2.2011

Esi-haastattelukysymykset

a. Nimesi
b. Tittelisi
c. Yrityksesi ja toimiala

1. **Teema 1**: **Ulkoinen informaatio/mitä vastaanottaa**
   a. Toimitetaanko sinulle tietoa liiketoimintaympäristöstäsi? Esimerkiksi mitä yrityksestäsi puhutaan mediassa?

   b. Mitä nimitystä käytät tästä? (mediaseuranta, Liiketoimintatieto, Business Intelligence, market intelligence, joku muu, mikä?)

      i. Mitä kaikkea se kattaa? (kilpailijoita koskeva tieto, toimialaa koskeva tieto, omaa näkyvyyttä koskeva tieto)

      ii. Miten vastaanotatte tämän raportin? s-postitse, intra, puhelimitse, keskustelut…

      iii. Luetko näitä raportteja?

   c. Kerro raporttien merkityksestä työhösi.

   d. Onko yrityksessäsi nimetty BI-vastuuhenkilö?

   e. Onko sosiaalisen median seurantaa?

i. Hyödytkö siitä eri tavalla kuin perinteisen median seurannasta?

2. **Teema 2**: Market intelligence käyttö-**Mitä hyötyy tiedosta?/mistä hyötyy eniten**

   a. Kuvaile mitä teet kun saat uuden raportin.

   b. Keskustellaanko raporteista henkilöstön/johdon kanssa?

   c. Mitä hyötyä näet raporteista olevan sinulle?

      i. Minkälainen tieto on olennaisinta osastollesi/sinulle?

   d. Kuvaile tilanne, missä olet hyödyntänyt näitä tietoja.

   e. Mistä muualta saat tietoa liiketoimintaympäristöstäsi?

3. **Teema 3**: Market Intelligencen analysointi-**Miten analysoidaan/ ja suhteutetaan muuhun tietoon**

   a. Miten tieto prosessoidaan yrityksessäsi? Analysoidaanko, kuka analysoi?

   b. Lisätäänkö analyysiin muita raportteja?

   c. Onko käytössä erillistä tiedonhallintajärjestelmää?

   d. Jaetaanko analyysit muille yrityksessä? Taltioidaanko?

   e. Onko muita järjestelmiä käytössä mistä vastaanotatte tietoa? markkinatutkimus yms.

   f. Analysoidaanko tietoa tarpeeksi?

4. **Teema 4**: Market Intelligence puutteet: **Olisiko mahdollisuus parantaa/ riittääkö tämä?**
    a. Näetkö m-brainin järjestelmässä jotain parantamisen varaa?
        i. Tuntuuko että jotain jää puuttumaan? Jos kyllä niin mitä?

    b. Jos itse tuottaisit kyseistä palvelua, miten muokkaisit sitä?

    c. Olisiko sinulle hyötyä market intelligence palvelusta, jota saisit itse käyttää ja muokata? Jos, niin millaisissa tilanteissa siitä olisi hyötyä?

    d. Miten kuvailisit M-brainin palvelua suhteessa muihin vastaaviin palveluihin?

Lisäksi:

-Kerro yrityksesi päätöksenteosta.

- Onko tehokasta?
- Kuvailisitko päätöksentekoa rationaaliseksi ja sen ottavan huomioon kaikki mahdolliset vaihtoehdot?