

# Retrospective Source Analysis

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Army-Contract MOIE

The logo for the MITRE Technology Program, featuring a stylized graphic of stacked blocks in yellow, orange, and blue to the left of the text.

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# Problem

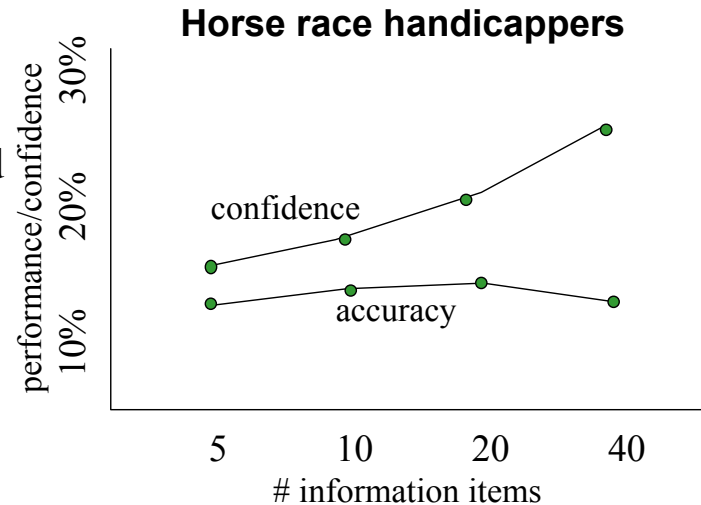
- There are no objective measures of intelligence “usefulness” (coverage, accuracy, timeliness) of alternative classified and open sources.
- Analysts may use “reliability ratings” of HUMINT sources, but this rating is subjective and ill-defined.
- Open sources are not rated.
- Analysts rely heavily on preferred sources, but have no objective guidance on selecting or weighing sources.

# Background

## From research in expert judgment:

Confirmation bias: once opinion formed additional data tends to increase confidence, unless definitely negative

Hindsight bias: people recall predicting things they didn't



**Objective feedback is key to improving analyst subjective judgments.**

# Objective

- **Develop objective metrics and methods for evaluating sources**
- **Apply metrics and methods to comparatively evaluate selected sources**
- **Recommend approach, based on objective measures, to improving the use of sources in forming intelligence assessments**

# Activities

- Literature review
- Developing procedure to characterize open source usefulness
- Empirical analysis of usefulness of selected open sources
- Adapt and apply procedure to HUMINT sources

# Highlight

## Uniqueness of Open Sources Coverage of Topics

### Similar articles on Iraqi WMD status

	New York Times (1/29)	London Time (1/30)	Kyoto News (2/1)	Interfax (1/30)	Herald Tribune (1/29)	Total %	
<b>All Iraq WDM articles</b> 1/26 - 2/4	NYT set (19)	-	90% (9 of 10)	75% (3 of 4)	75% (3 of 4)	78% (7 of 9)	81% (22 of 27)
	LT set (13)	73% (8 of 11)	-	50% (2 of 4)	50% (2 of 4)	67% (6 of 9)	64% (18 of 28)
	HT set (8)	27% (3 of 11)	70% (7 of 10)	25% (1 of 4)	50% (2 of 4)	-	45% (13 of 29)
	% covered	73%	90%	75%	75%	89%	63%
	All articles	(8 of 11)	(9 of 10)	(3 of 4)	(3 of 4)	(8 of 9)	(53 of 84)

**Each newspaper covered topics not addressed by the other papers.**

**Examples of topics New York Times didn't mention**

**London Times:** US would help Saddam leave Iraq to avoid war

**Kyoto News:** Russia likely source of mobile labs

**Interfax:** Activity of Sadam's son Qusay

**Herald Tribune:** Gallup poll drop **and** US officials say 1441 grants sufficient authority for war

# Highlight

## Uniqueness of Open Sources' Coverage of Details

**Parsed articles into “topics” and “details”**

Topic “Iraq has built mobile labs to produce biological weapons”

Detail “Substantiated by three Iraqi defectors”

**Examined overlap between sources on topics and details**

**NY Times coverage of one article in ...**

London Times: 9 of 10 topics (90%), 1 of 24 details (4%)

Kyoto News: 3 of 4 topics (75%), 3 of 7 details (42%)

Interfax: 3 of 4 topics (75%), 2 of 3 details (67%)

Herald Tribune: 7 of 9 topics (78%), 3 of 37 details (8%)

**Different papers had substantially different coverage on details.**



# Impacts

- **Potentially provide objective method for continuous source reevaluation**
- **Potentially provide objective metrics to help analysts**
  - **select primary sources**
  - **weigh evidence from alternative classified and open sources**

# Future Plans

**One year investigation should be enough to**

**Document metrics**

**Document initial results**



**Explore applications within intelligence community**