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Exploitation Products Files

Exploitation products files are those files which contain references to products produced by PI organizations. Types of products referenced in these files include those produced as a result of third- phase analysis for example, those produced as part of the Basic Reports Program, and departmental hard copy typescript reports, engineering drawings, photo maps and models. Exploitation products files can also include selected data produced from first- and second-phase reporting.

Two types of exploitation products files presently exist in the PI community -- the national file and departmental files. The national file is maintained by NPIC for community use. It resides on magnetic tapes and discs and is processed by a UNIVAC 494 computer system. Access to this file is available directly to Washington area users having terminals linked to the 494 system, and to appropriately cleared COINS users throughout the world. Users not having direct or COINS access must rely on hard copy printouts sent periodically to them by NPIC. NPIC also provides exploitation products information on an ad hoc basis tailored to the specific needs of the requestor. The departmental files contain records of the particular organization's in-house production. These files are retained for archival purposes, and in some cases, to support management information requirements.

It is the judgement of the data base subcommittee that the national file is both a necessary and an important one. It serves as the only potentially comprehensive source of information concerning published PI products and can be instrumental in reducing or avoiding duplication between PI organizations -- primarily in the third-phase arena. The subcommittee has found, however, that the national file suffers from several deficiencies and recommends actions be taken to enhance its quality and utility. The findings and recommendations of the subcommittee with regard to the national file are as follows:

Findings

-- The file is incomplete. No clearly defined guidance exists to ensure that all PI products -- national or departmental -- are sent to NPIC for inclusion. Consequently, many departmental products are not entered into the file.

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-- The file is not current. Some products -- primarily departmental -- do not appear in the file for two to three months after they are disseminated by the publisher. Part of this delay can be attributed to the producing organization not sending a drop copy to NPIC at the same time the product is disseminated, and part to delays in the process NPIC uses to enter products into the file.

-- Accessibility to the file varies from good to poor. Organizations having direct on-line access to the file have little trouble in using it. Those with COINS access can query it on-line but are often frustrated with the complex query language, and frequently cannot utilize the various sorting options which exist. Organizations with no direct access must rely on NPIC periodic printouts or they must request, on an ad hoc basis, special runs tailored to their specific needs.

-- Confidence in the files is not high. Users know -- or at least suspect -- that the file is not complete, either because the producing organizations have not entered all their products, or the file is not current.

-- Knowledge of the file's existence and utility varies among users. PI organizations appear to be the primary users, although use within these organizations varies greatly. Very few all-source analysts use it, either because they do not know about it, because they have problems getting access to it, or because they rely on their departmental PI organization to query it for them.

Recommendations

-- Improve the completeness of the file by requiring all PI organizations to enter all national and departmental products -- with appropriate exceptions -- in the national file. To facilitate the implementation of this requirement, establish an ad hoc study group -- consisting of representatives of all PI organizations -- under the auspices of EXSUBCOM to identify those exceptions (e.g., OIA products supporting clandestine operations) that will not be included. This action should be completed within one month after the formal approval of the recommendations.

-- Improve the currency of the file by requiring all PI organizations to send to NPIC, concurrent with routine dissemination, at least one and preferably three drop copies of those products qualifying for entry to the file. Require NPIC to have a reference to each product entered into the file and accessible for retrieval within ten working days of its receipt in NPIC.

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-- Improve the on-line accessibility of the file. This committee fully supports the emphasis being placed upon development of a simplified standard query language for COINS III and NDS users. However, increased emphasis must be given to user input and coordination during this development.

-- Publish a new users manual on the file and disseminate it widely throughout the community. This manual must clearly and explicitly describe the file's completeness, currency, accessibility and sorting capabilities in accordance with the above recommendations. This is imperative to build user confidence in the file and increase its utility. Instruction regarding the file's content, capabilities, and accessibility should be an integral part of the curriculum of established intelligence training, such as the CIA Information Science Center, Defense Intelligence School and NSA Training Center.

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