Types of Intelligence

As with a reliable response, planning is required. Often, we're reactionary and this can put a response to an attack, or threat, in limited reach. You want as much detail about your threats as possible to better build a layered defense. This information is obtained, refined, and then made available to personnel to use accordingly. The process is a cycle that is never-ending. This lesson covers four different types of intelligence; SIGINT, OSINT, HUMINT, and GEOINT.

SIGINT

Signal intelligence involves the interception of radio signals and broadcast communications to gather intelligence. This came about as early as the First World War. These come from communication systems, weapons systems, and radar transmissions. SIGINT falls under two different categories:

- `COMINT` – Communications intelligence relating to communications between people and groups of people (messages and voice) and often synonymous with SIGINT, even though it is considered a discipline of SIGINT.
- `ELINT` – Electronic intelligence is collected from systems not used directly for communications, such as guidance communication for missile systems and radars.

Commonly you can find these methods executed in electronic warfare through surveillance drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and communications interceptions between foreign governments to keep intelligence pipelines open

OSINT

There is an endless amount of information available to us online, almost too much. Open source intelligence is information that is gathered from public sources. Types of information that can be gathered are driving records, telephone numbers, street addresses, social messaging and social network information, email addresses, domain names, and much more. The amount of information that can be used to detect, track, or stop threats is almost endless. This is also a double-edged sword, in that bad actors can utilize the same information to plan cyber attacks.

HUMINT

In the broadest sense, human intelligence (HUMINT) is gathered from other humans. Being effective in this discipline requires an understanding of how humans feel, think, and act, which can vary from person-to-person. This intelligence is often gathered through in-person meetings, debriefings personnel tasked with acquiring information through observation, document gathering, etc. Such information can be attained through espionage or open communications between diplomats, as an example.

GEOINT

Whether traveling the seas, or flying, geospatial intelligence (GEOSINT) is the body of intelligence that helps these modes of engagement possible during times of natural disasters, wartime, or through other major events, such as political turmoil. Satellite imaging is highly used to provide intelligence personnel with targets, landmass structures and whether they're manmade or natural, where our militaries are and their enemies, to better coordinate attack and defense efforts. This also allows aid to allies during times of natural disasters, so first-responders can better identify the state of their deployment.

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