

THE INFORMATION EVALUATION PROCESS AND THE POLICE

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Abstract: In the internet-dominated world the mass information available to the humanity doubles every five years. The societies of our age suffer from an abundance of information. The information travels unexplored paths and the world-wide pace of life has accelerated, so that in addition to the abundance of information, the flow of information has also been accelerated. It is essential for every organization to have an intelligent processing structure. The abundant information that is available to us requires from us to develop the ability to identify the information needed. Every organization needs to critically evaluate and select the information. It has to link it to the previous knowledge. As the information grows, the amount of irrelevant information inevitably increases, which additionally demands analytical and critical thinking from the user. The unnecessary information is distracting, confusing.

According to modern history and experience, an organization can compete with its rivals, which of them can more efficiently process the information within its scope. The information also transcends the police activity; therefore the effective application of management is an important organizational interest. The prepared information of the police organization can significantly reduce the distance between crime and law enforcement activities. The police organization can gain advantage against criminals. The availability of the necessary and sufficient information makes it possible to prepare for unexpected events and develop alternative responses.

The aim of this essay is to clarify these complicated questions and presents the up-to-date information processing and evaluation system of the Hungarian National Police. This method can be a good example for every police organization.

Key words: information, information evaluation process, selection of the information, leadership and the information, Hungarian National Police.

INTRODUCTION

Both history and modern experience show that an organization can compete with its rivals, which can use the information most efficiently, while processing and evaluating data. The information also transcends the police activity, therefore the effective application of the information process is of common managerial and organizational interest. The preparedness of the police organization can significantly reduce the distance between crime and law enforcement activities, and in special cases, it can gain advantage.¹ The availability of the necessary and sufficient information makes it possible to handle and prepare for the unexpected events and develop alternative responses.

1. The information in the present time

The societies of our age suffer from information abundance. The amount of the information available to the humanity in the world doubles every five years. In this abundance of information, the flow of information has also accelerated.

It is essential to have an intelligent processing of the abundant information available to us, which includes the ability to identify the information needed. It is very important to critically evaluate the selected information. We can connect it to previous knowledge, and formulate the new knowledge.

Currently, the phenomenon that is very prominent is that as the information grows, the amount of irrelevant information inevitably increases. Analytical and critical thinking is needed from the user. The unnecessary information is distracting and confusing the users.

Now it is clear, the result is an intensive knowledge that the world has entered to the information society.

2. The Police organization and the information

According to this introduction, it is perceptible that the information has a strong impact on the police authorities. Perhaps it is obvious that criminals are increasingly trying to use modern tools that offer great opportunities for them.

These are good opportunities for the creation of protective nets, the hiding and disintegration of information, the transmission of disinformation and communication with each other. This inevitably entails the creation of 'digital traces', so that searching, capturing and involvement in providing evidence are at the top of today's law enforcement challenges.

The lively, moving element of the police organization is the collected information. The police, as a reactive organization, make a strong effort in their activities to collect the information. The police are permanently engaged in collecting different information relating to the phenomena of crime and criminals, the events, announcements, reports, etc.

¹ Czuprák Ottó – Kovács Gábor (2013), *Vezetés- és szervezéselmélet*. Budapest, NKE. 305., 311.

The organization performs a policing-adequate answer, organises different actions that are consistent with the content of the different information.²

A common feature of all is that the information that reaches the organization or its members implies action and task performance by the police organization. The present and future intellectual power of the police is reflected in the ability to receive, collect, process, and generate new information.

It can be measured how fast the police can react and make preventive, restrictive and reconnaissance-based activity on the different information. Every police organization has double tasks: one is the information gathering part, the other is the information processing part (a data controller, a data provider for the different user).

3. Identifying and obtaining the police-relevant information

It is not an easy task to evaluate the content of the necessary and sufficient information. Before the decision of the leader, it is necessary to carry out all intellectual, physical, evaluation, and other analytical activities. In this context we can see what is the needed and what is the sufficient information.

Another question before the police officer makes a decision is whether it is possible to obtain all the necessary information that meets the criteria of necessity and sufficiency. On the basis of processing it, it is necessary to evaluate the minimum quantity, quality and relevance of the information.

Some police decision-makers want to gather more and more information. The risk-taking leader will make his/her decisions based on less information, sometimes based on his/her intuitions and experiences. There are a number of decision-making situations in which, despite the efforts, we cannot obtain all the information that we are interested in or need. On the other hand, the scope of information cannot always be clearly marked, as there can always be a feeling of lack of information.

During the decision-making process we have to evaluate the information: the degree of its importance, as well as whether it is authentic, partially or fully verified. Therefore, it is important to analyze and verify their credibility, to compare them with other information. To use the experience of decisions made in a similar situation in earlier time, the ability to foresee the problem, the knowledge to indicate and the tolerable level of the risk. It is also essential to recognize disinformation, conspiracy, defense, and response of individuals.

It is more common that the offenders prepare for their failure. They also collect information, data, compromising documents which they can be of benefit for them. Police forces are increasingly gathering all the knowledge that highlights the perpetrators' behavior, defense tactics, countermeasures, and methods. Carrying out this task is a half success against the criminals.

2 Finszter, G (2013), *A rendészet elmélete és a rendészeti eszközrendszere*. NKE Kiadó Budapest, 2013. pp. 45.

The police not only wait for the arrival of the information, but also collect and react to it. The police need to have thematic requirements, tasks and activities, a pre-defined information gathering system. It is important to facilitate the investigation processes, to set up the tools and methods in order to collect information.

The evaluation of sources upon receiving information from citizens means that external and internal bodies have to be developed and operated. These sources are partly traditional, such as letter, fax, announcement, filing, anonymous notification in writing, by phone or otherwise. New features include the following: email, sms, Skype, photos, documentation/written documents, tape, video, electronic devices and the media.

Receiving of information should include on-call service, emergency services, the complainant, the victim, the post-dismantling and the media monitoring person, the police officer, website, fax, e-mails, and other electronic messages.

For the purpose of documenting the information, the date, the content, the location, the familiarization, and other related data should be recorded.

The person who transmits the information should be given protection. This depends on the nature of the information. An essential part of correctly handling the information is the protection of the "source". Discretion, the ethics of the authority and the acting person, and last but not least, the proper handling of classified information are of vital importance.

The incoming information has to be examined. If a notice is issued that another body is authorized, the notification has to be made in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations.

4. Information-related operations

Certain aspects of information processing include: collection, recording, highlighting, selecting, classifying, qualifying according to the content of the information processing and analysing system.

Every organization needs to evaluate and separate the essential and less relevant information. It is also necessary to evaluate the information, to be used as a source of fact, data and evidence. A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the written material must be carried out. In relation to this, the analysis of statistical data, time, and research is very important. The result of this evaluation is the preparation of the solutions of different alternatives, use of different techniques, methodologies, tactics, to give good methods for the analysis, evaluation, consideration and utilization of all kind of information.

In the processing of the information, evaluation requires special knowledge. The process needs a different methodology, which depends on the quantity, homogeneity, heterogeneity, appearance, reliability of the information, and the level of its verifiability.

In the process, we can use statistical, sociological methods, text analysis, forecasting, consulting, risk, threat and crime analysis, profiling, analysis of individual cases, serial crime analysis, etc.

5. Personal characteristics

The staff of evaluation experts' professional qualities are indispensable. Efficient evaluating of the information requires specific personal characteristics. One of these is the high degree of experience, attention and concentration ability, the tolerance of monotony, the good systematic ability, the transparency, the persistence of searching for relationships. It is necessary to have the ability to self-check, the objective approach, the ability to draw conclusions, the analysis-free evaluation of subjective elements, the meticulousness in the discovery of contradictions, and if justified, the acquisition of control information.

During the evaluation process the evaluation team can be a pre-selected, pre-assigned and well-prepared body or person, an ad hoc team, or a designated management team. It depends on the nature, quantity, quality, and qualification of the data, the tasks, methods, tools, order of the processing, the rules of information management, the way of communication, the deadline of the tasks, the responsible person, the rights and obligations of the team leader. The reporting procedure must be determined in advance.

6. Forms and characteristics of information

The police leaders on various levels have a well-organized internal information system, that provides information on the external and internal impacts (summaries, analyses, newsletters, websites, internal bulletins, statistics, press observers, etc.). Monitoring, analyzing, evaluating, and processing this information is essential, as it can all have an impact on our activities or the activities of our organization.

Nowadays, the information "floods" the leaders, so without the appropriate "filtering system", much unnecessary knowledge makes the life of the leader very difficult. Managers need to develop an evaluation system.

7. Sharing information

We use the term 'data' for all the news and announcements which have come to the organization, whether they affect the organization or not. By classifying, evaluating the data and news that arrives to the organization, we have to determine the information. Information is all data, news, knowledge that eliminates uncertainty, that helps make decisions and has some impact on the functioning of our organization.³

³ Kovács, G (2018), A rendészeti szervezetekben lejátszódó vezetési folyamatok. Dialog Campus Kiadó Budapest pp. 53.

8. The information can be obtained in the following ways

Directly obtained information, when the law enforcement organization receives information directly from the information source, which is generally accurate and reliable.

Indirectly obtained information arrives not directly from the source of resources. These include various management reports, evaluations, reports, statistics, etc. This information is generally quite accurate, but it may need to be checked occasionally when used.

Table 1: *Sharing information*⁴

classification criteria	features	content
According to the source	external information	knowledge about the external environment
	internal information	a set of knowledge about the organization
Measurable	quantitative information	can be expressed in numbers, percentages, ratios
	qualitative information	not measurable in numbers
By nature	primary information	when information comes directly to the organization
	secondary information	when information reaches the user through transmissions
It can be according to the flow	vertical	when information flows from top to bottom or vice versa
	horizontal	when the information flows between each of the associated organs
It can be based on time factor	past	events occurred
	present	ongoing events
	future	suspected events
Everything else can be	complete or incomplete, accurate or inaccurate, reliable or untrustworthy, true or false, verified or unverified, current or not current	

⁴ Horváth, J – Kovács, G (2016), Pálykezdő rendőrtisztek kézikönyve. Budapest, NKE Szolgáltató Nonprofit kft. pp. 53-54.

9. The main possible forms and main features of the information sent to the police leader or organization

- Oral information - which comes directly to the manager, creating the opportunity for immediate and quick response and, if necessary, clarifying it. Disadvantage: it has no evidentiary force, it may be ambiguous. Occasionally, it may be important to have the exact time of receiving the information, the provider of the information, its availability and other features, answering the questions of what, when, where, why and how.

- Written information - one of the most important forms of data transfer, can be proven, normative, its form is precisely defined, so the preparation of written information sometimes takes more time.

- Illustrative information includes various sketches, maps, graphs and statements that provide concise, transparent information.

- Data format information are grouped according to specific criteria.

The way of information transmission can be extremely varied (live and spoken, telephone, e-mail, Skype on msn), but there is a requirement that you reach the target person or organization in time.

The information is useful if it is:

- in the right place
- timely
- in a proper form
- at the adequate level of processing
- of adequate content and quantity.

CONCLUSION

In the internet-dominated world the information is power, which grows extremely. This is a complex phenomenon which the European law enforcement organizations have to handle. The police organizations have to permanently collect and evaluate the information, which is not an easy task. The police organizations should not only wait for the arrival of the information, but rather need to systematically collect and gathering the information. The evaluation process is the most important work. The police officers need special knowledge in order to be effective during the evaluation work.

As a final thought, we can say that nowadays the information without the appropriate filtering system is confusing. We have to build an effective evaluation system which can provide effective support for the police work.

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