

Why Microsoft SharePoint Just Isn't Cutting It for **Competitive Intelligence**



Northern Light



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Competitive intelligence is not a periodic endeavor to keep score; it's a living, breathing part of an enterprise's marketing ethos. The current pace of change is incredible. But keeping up with it is crucial for survival and growth, especially in a time of digital transformation. When the average lifespan of a tweet is calculated at 15-20 minutes, even today's news is old!

Competitive intelligence professionals find that Microsoft SharePoint just isn't cutting it as a knowledge management portal. Here's what competitive intelligence professionals REALLY need from their knowledge management portal.



Intelligence that's valuable, actionable, and timely.

SharePoint doesn't provide CI professionals access to a curated selection of daily industry competitor news. CI professionals need news that reflects the requirements of each of the product market segments the company competes in AND the ability to share it quickly.

Senior executives require timely information about competitor moves. Who's entering a new market, and should you be considering the same? Who's launching an improved version of a product, and could you gain some market share by satisfying the buyers' needs before your competitors launch the product? When a competitor makes a move in Europe, it's happening before the business day even begins in North America.

So, how do you ensure everyone that needs to know about competitor actions or what's happening within a product market DOES know about it WHEN they need to know about it? Sure, you could read all the news on an external site like Google News and manually add summaries and links to stories to a SharePoint site. Who has time to do that when you are supporting thousands of professionals with a small CI staff?

A collaboration tool to ACTUALLY foster collaboration.

Microsoft SharePoint doesn't provide users with an easy way to create and distribute newsletters and corresponding dashboards to democratize CI information, nor does it allow you to set up expert searches to bring the knowledge of your subject matter experts to the masses. As a result, there's often a great deal of unnecessary duplication of content and efforts, especially when there hasn't been an enterprise-wide adoption of the portal.

SharePoint users often don't share documents and bookmarks or form groups as intended, but they have reverted to old habits like sending documents using regular email or shared drives. A study by AIIM found that 43% of companies surveyed said their employees or groups prefer using their file-share application and not Microsoft SharePoint for everyday content.



Access to externally supplied content.

Competitive intelligence is about the external world and most of the relevant business intelligence about the external world is created in that external world. With SharePoint, external knowledge assets are not consolidated or

accessible with a single sign-on. You have to be able to mine for relevant insights, whether from business news, journals, social media, or government databases. SharePoint won't help you with external content.



A platform that's easy to use and customize.

SharePoint does not have enough built-in functionality. For example:

- It doesn't offer a user-friendly interface with drag and drop widgets, so you're at the mercy of a limited range of widget types and your IT department's backlog.
- Users of Microsoft SharePoint must compete for IT priority and budget with all the other projects their companies need to have IT execute.
- There's no quick and easy way to create a strategic dashboard for featured market research reports, analytics on related strategy issues, videos, and content streams on relevant topics.
- SharePoint doesn't have an out-of-the-box, fully responsive user interface for mobile, either.
- It requires a specific development project using MS Tools to make it mobile-friendly.



Stop saying, "I know it's here somewhere, but I just can't find it."

Sound familiar? A Northern Light client once said, "SharePoint is where research goes to die." Most of your users will agree that you can't rely on SharePoint Search to help you find the content you need and know is there.

The problem starts with the fact that SharePoint search is not optimized for market research, customer insights, or competitive intelligence. It has to search email, HR policies, expense report forms, corporate intranet pages announcing the company picnic.

Oh, and market research reports. Research documents are different: large, filled with terms of art, and with meaningful metadata. SharePoint can't optimize for that use case. So, the search results are often not helpful. Then what do you have to do? Well, that would be to find the SharePoint folder that the document you need is in. That means clicking around SharePoint like you are on an Easter Egg hunt. Or maybe ask a colleague if they have a copy of it or know where it is. What a really good use of your time!

To learn more about the ways Northern Light can help your competitive intelligence team, [contact us](#).





Access to the content they are authorized for when they need it.

SharePoint shares the security concepts of the Microsoft enterprise computing environment, which provides security for servers, file directories, and applications. However, it does not account for the fact that different documents in a folder or file directory (“lists” in SharePoint lingo) might be available to some users but not to others, independent of where the document resides in the server, network, or application space. The result is sometimes the sharing is too restrictive; other times, it’s too relaxed. Even if a document is there in a library that you should be able to see, that doesn’t mean a user can access it if there are



security restrictions on that library as a whole. Wouldn’t it be great if you could set the access rights at a document level instead of the blunt axe of everything in a collection is available or none of it is?



What solution IS going to cut it for competitive intelligence?

Northern Light SinglePoint is a custom-built enterprise knowledge management platform optimized for the challenges of competitive intelligence. The platform facilitates sound information governance practices, allows you to determine what is in the content repository with ease, provides what you need out of the box, and makes information easy to find and use.

Thanks to machine learning, SinglePoint users also receive personalized content based on their specific interests and recommendations for relevant content without any extra work. With SinglePoint, you have central, easy control of access rights to content to ensure everyone that should be able to see a particular piece of content can and that no one who shouldn’t be able to see it cannot.

SinglePoint allows you to integrate your third-party subscription research sources and externally hosted services, so users have access to it all with a single sign-on. And our search technology is business-research optimized, so your searches will always return excellent and comprehensive results.



Why CI professionals rely on SinglePoint

SinglePoint is a machine learning powered enterprise knowledge management platform optimized for market research and competitive intelligence. SinglePoint strategic research portals seamlessly integrate and search any number of internal, licensed external, news, video, social media, and government sources with single-sign-on ease. The result is securely hosted, turnkey market and customer intelligence solution that is fully deployed in just 90 days

Competitive Intelligence

One of the principal uses of SinglePoint is as a competitive intelligence portal. SinglePoint enables a company's marketing, sales, product development and other teams to mine market research, news, and specialized industry content for insights into the plans, strategies, and tactics of other players in the company's target markets.

“Having access to terabytes of data doesn't mean an organization has good competitive intelligence (CI) ... for many organizations, meaningful CI is a scarcer commodity than it ought to be.”

- Five Trends that are changing the face of CI SCIP CI

Content Options

Conducting competitive intelligence requires accurate information derived from only the most credible sources. Here are the types of content that can be included in SinglePoint portals:

- Licensed subscription research
- Primary research
- Business news
- Peer-reviewed journals
- Conference abstracts
- Industry databases
- Government databases
- Corporate reports
- Authoritative social media authors

**Global Organization
Competitive Intelligence
Case Study:**

**How can SinglePoint
help you with
Competitive Intelligence?**