

CONSUMER SCOTLAND DATA WORKING GROUP, 3 OCTOBER 2019

DISCUSSION PAPER: DEFINITIONS

It would be helpful at the outset of the Working Group (WG) to ensure that members have a common understanding of specific terms in the context of this forum.

The first two terms in this paper are provided for (or defined) under the terms of the Consumer Scotland Bill (as introduced) and are included herewith for ease of reference.

Consumer¹: includes both an existing consumer and a potential consumer; and means an individual (i) who purchases, uses or receives, in Scotland, goods or services which are supplied in the course of a business carried on by the person supplying them, and (ii) who is not purchasing, using or receiving the goods or services wholly or mainly in the course of a business carried on by the individual.

Consumer Scotland: the body corporate that is to be established and to have its functions as a consumer advocacy and advice body provided for under the terms of the Consumer Scotland Act 2020.

The terms below pertain to the so-called ‘knowledge continuum’ –

➤ data → information → intelligence

These terms are often used interchangeably and are closely related concepts. However, each has its own role in relation to the other, and each term has its own meaning. It will be important for WG members to work to a jointly agreed and common understanding of these terms

- ❖ Do members accept these provisional definitions; would you like to see them broadened or tightened; or amended in any other way?

Data: the plural of *datum*, a single piece of information; data may be defined as a set of values of subjects with respect to qualitative or quantitative variables. Hence, data are factual values – such as measurements or statistics – that may be *used as a basis for* reasoning, discussion, or calculation.

As such, data may be thought of as being the raw materials that are the fuel for analytical work, quite distinct from information, intelligence, perceptions or opinions.

Information: one definition is *“organised or structured data, which has been processed in such a way that the information now has relevance for a specific purpose or context, and is therefore meaningful, valuable, useful and relevant.”*²

Hence, data may be said to become ‘information’ when it has been viewed in context or in a post-analysis state. Or, to put it another way, data that has been collected and then analysed in some fashion and made suitable for informing decisions, may thence be treated as information.

¹ as per section 23(1) «Interpretation» of the [Consumer Scotland Bill \(as introduced\)](#)

² Rowley, Jennifer; Richard Hartley (2006). *Organizing Knowledge: An Introduction to Managing Access to Information*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd. pp. 5–6.

In summary, information helps describe the world around us, whether in the present moment or perceptions about the past or future. It tells us how the world is; it tells us the “what”.

Intelligence: may be defined as being the product resulting from the collection, evaluation, collation, interpretation, and analysis of all available data and information. It is a product of a process that aims to ensure the most accurate results needed to inform decision-making, and may therefore be thought of as vital to an organisation’s strategic development, direction and execution.

Key to this, is intelligence being a product of a process, one that includes collection, evaluation, collation, interpretation, and analysis. To ensure the most accurate results needed to inform decision-making, this process will also typically be capable of a repeatable process, combined with solid analytic techniques standards.

In summary, intelligence-driven decisions allow individuals and organisations to have greater confidence in what the outcomes are likely to be, for example, effective change. Intelligence guides, predicts and advises; it is the capacity to use information in order to solve problems; it can tell us the “why”.

Integrated intelligence system

SG has thus far used the term ‘integrated intelligence system’. Others will tend to use ‘systems-integrated intelligence’; or ‘intelligence systems integration’.

- ❖ Do Working Group members have a preference, or a particular view on how this should be expressed?

Integrated intelligence: integrating knowledge, information and results by developing the systems - enabled by technology, infrastructure, analytics, applications, and data sources - used by organisations across the consumer landscape in a collaborative manner.

System integration is defined in information technology as the process of linking together different computing systems and software applications physically or functionally to act as a co-ordinated whole.

Intelligence systems integration is making distinct intelligence systems (and, presumably, their individual software components) inter-operable with other components in order to create larger, broader and more capable systems.

Most intelligence systems involve some sort of integrated technologies (e.g. the integration of speech synthesis technologies with that of speech recognition) however, in recent years there has been an increasing discussion on the importance of systems integration as a field in its own right.

- ❖ Are there other additional terms that members feel it would be helpful to define at the outset?