



**MASTER UNIVERSITARIO di II Livello**

*in*

**HOMELAND SECURITY**



**Università Campus Bio-Medico – Roma**

**Consorzio NITEL**

Academic Year 2015/2016

***OSINT & SOCMINT, theory and practice***  
***Intelligence collection using location tools on Twitter***

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## **Abstract**

Old as Man itself, the art of collecting intelligence has been in constant evolution since its own birth.

“Political” requirement on the one hand, and technology on the other, compose the never-ending rails along which intelligence has been forged and shaped.

Today, intelligence collection is a well-structured discipline counting many different “souls”, each bound to the kind of information they collect and how they collected them. Open Source INTelligence (OSINT), vulgarly describable as information related to- and collected from-sources that are publicly available, is a fundamental pillar for the intelligence community as a whole and, contrarily to common thinking, is not new. Decision makers have been exploiting overt information since ancient times. What is relatively new, is the categorization process OSINT went through since the early 1940es.

Newspapers, the radio, television: every media is source of intelligence. So is the Internet, so are the Social Media. OSINT becomes SOCMINT (Social Media INTelligence).

OSINT and SOCMINT are surely essential for those entrusted with the maintenance of law and order and public security such as governmental and intelligence agencies, Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and even the Military. However, they are not alone: students, journalists, scholars and the business sector in general, to name a few, can benefit from this kind of information. OSINT and SOCMINT, intended as both discipline and content, easily adapt to different actors and requirements.

This Paper aims at proving how OSINT and SOCMINT can be useful to whoever is in need of specific kind of information, and tries to achieve its purpose using one of the most popular Social Networks: Twitter. Counting 317 million active users as of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2016, this platform is well suited for OSINT / SOCMINT analyses.

Following an overview on OSINT / SOCMINT “theory” and tools, the Paper focuses on OSINT / SOCMINT “practice”. In particular, it investigates location-related intelligence that can be collected using location tools and includes dissertations on:

- Twitter’s location features
- Tools performing searches by locations / areas
- Tools performing searches by targeted Twitter users