Utilizing Advanced Technology to Tackle Classified Data Breaches: The Role of Babel Street Insights in the Era of Data Overflow

By Major General Mark R. Quantock (ret.)

Introduction

The recent posting of highly classified government documents on social media — where they were shared for weeks before discovery by military intelligence — represents a significant but solvable problem for the U.S. Department of Defense and the wider intelligence community. Intentional leaks and unintentional spillage constitute a known vulnerability that, if allowed to persist, will continue to hamper our most sensitive intelligence operations. Leaks and spills must be detected quickly so that mitigation and remediation can begin quickly.

Spillage of sensitive USG and allied material can cost the United States significant sums for investigation and remediation. Spills and leaks also degrade focus on important CI/Sec initiatives; place sources and methods at risk; and mar the USG's reputation.

Unfortunately, instances of leaks and spills are increasing. Since the terrorist attacks of 2001, the USG has distributed sensitive and classified information much more broadly — heightening the risk of purposeful or accidental disclosure. Concurrently, the ubiquitously accessible nature of social media makes it easier for wrongdoers to upload classified information to a broad array of public-facing websites. Data may reside on these sites for lengthy periods before detection, dramatically increasing the number of parties who can access and compromise this information.

Now more than ever, the United States needs to rapidly discover instances of leaked or spilled information.

Deploying artificial intelligence to search a vast array of PAI

Artificial intelligence (AI) technology can rapidly and persistently scan vast amounts of publicly available information (PAI) and commercially available information (CAI) to identify key words and terms associated with sensitive or classified information — spotting spills and leaks quickly so the USG can respond to them more rapidly.

Babel Street Insights is a data and analytics solution that provides AI-enabled persistent searches of PAI and CAI published in more than 200 languages. The Babel Street Data Library is the world's largest and most diverse collection of enriched data, originating from more than a billion top-level domains; the deep and dark web; commercially and publicly available sources; and blog posts.

Insights also searches more than 25 social media platforms (including Russia's VKontakte); and real-time interactions generated on more than 30 million message boards including Discord, 4-Chan, 8-Chan, Baidu Tieba, and Tianya Club. In doing so, Babel Street provides insight not just on the messages posted, but on the handles employed by those posting the messages.
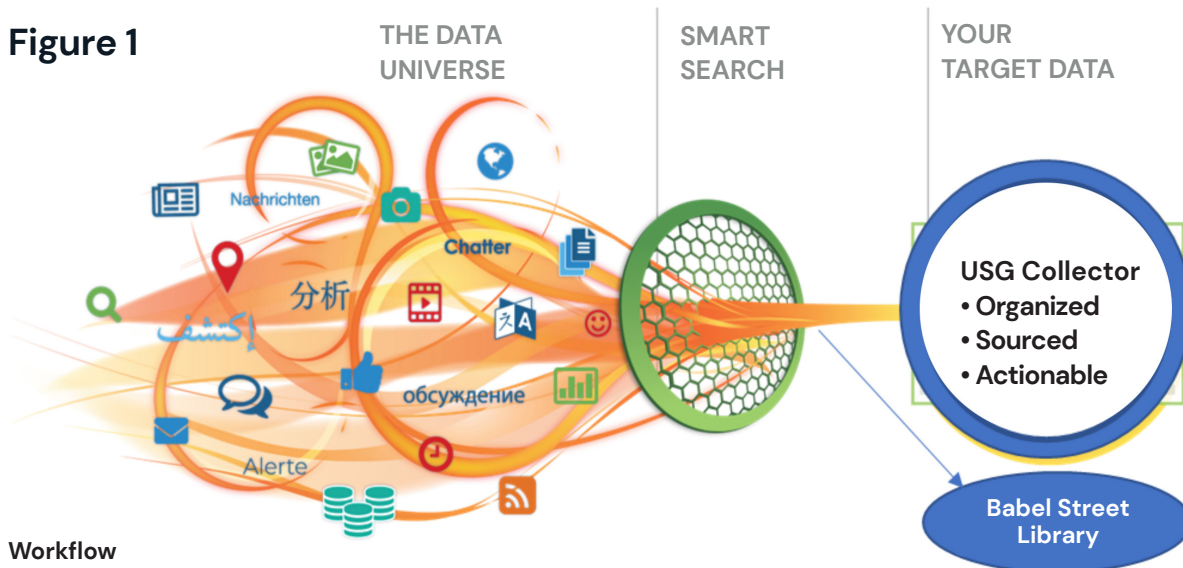
Working with Babel Street, government organizations can achieve further insight through *regulated* PAI, including credit headers, criminal records, and medical information. Advertising technology-based geolocation and telemetry data is available to qualifying government organizations.

Babel Street Insights is a data and analytics solution that provides AI-enabled persistent searches of PAI and CAI published in more than 200 languages.

Babel Street both runs its own continuous review of the data sources most germane to its clients and takes input from clients on which data sources to search. This capability empowers the USG to develop its own search terms and to choose data sources most important to its mission. Our persistent search capabilities keep a search operation running regardless of whether anyone is actively using it, automatically recording updates associated with the search term — and alerting your team as necessary.

Figure 1

THE DATA UNIVERSE   SMART SEARCH   YOUR TARGET DATA

USG Collector
• Organized
• Sourced
• Actionable

Babel Street Library

Workflow
1. Build search terms (e.g., Top $ecret–HC$, $ecret TK, etc.)
2. Select data sources (e.g., Discord, 4–Chan, 8–Chan, etc.) from Data Universe
3. "Run" persistent search
4. Harvest results — take countermeasure/mitigation efforts per USG Policy

Figure 1: Babel Street Insights search processes include persistent search, a capability that keeps search operations running regardless of whether a client is actively using them.

Partnering with the USG

While our platform operates in the open source/unclassified space, many Babel Street employees have government clearances. We also have former military, IC, and government professionals on staff. This means Babel Street can help the USG more quickly detect leaks and spills while *aligning our technological processes to your protocols.*

How?

Consider the Babel Street Insights search and collection process depicted in Figure 1. As

illustrated, search results are rendered to the collector (in this example, the USG). But we can also isolate these results from NIPRNet and other government networks as necessary, housing them in a sanctioned or isolated network or computer. This can be helpful for evidentiary, prosecution, and other purposes.

Collection results are also typically sent to the Babel Street Library for retention. Library entries are unattributed to the USG or any other client. Babel Street will work closely with the USG to align these

retention policies with your needs, determining how, or even if, to retain this information.

We also understand that classification authority lies with the originating agency. Therefore, we would suggest that, at least initially, each agency and service maintain a Babel Street Insights instance for monitoring compromised information. For the DoD, this would likely require a directive from USDI&S to DoD agencies and the services to acquire this capability. Here again, Babel Street would follow DoD guidelines and policies to standardize actions relative to collection and disposition of compromised material.

To efficiently and cost-effectively mitigate the damage caused by leaks and spills, the DoD and other arms of the USG need to detect leaks and spills as quickly as possible. Babel Street Insights can help in this effort.

For more information, please visit babelstreet.com.

About the author

Ret. Major General Mark R. Quantock is executive vice president of strategic accounts at Babel Street. He came to the company after more than 37 years of Army experience, with a focus on Signals Intelligence and All-Source Intelligence. He served four combat tours in the Middle East and South Asia in senior leadership positions. Additionally, he is the former Director of Operations and Military Deputy Director at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. For his culminating assignment, he served as the Director of Intelligence/J2 for U.S. Central Command.

Babel Street can help the USG more quickly detect leaks and spills while aligning our technological processes to your protocols.

Babel Street is the trusted technology partner for the world's most advanced identity intelligence and risk operations. The Babel Street Insights platform delivers advanced AI and data analytics solutions to close the Risk-Confidence Gap.

Babel Street provides unmatched, analysis-ready data regardless of language, proactive risk identification, 360-degree insights, high-speed automation, and seamless integration into existing systems. We empower government and commercial organizations to transform high-stakes identity and risk operations into a strategic advantage.

Learn more at **babelstreet.com.**

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