



Environmental Investigation Agency

IBM i2 solutions help combat the illegal tiger trade

Overview

The need

EIA's investigations have generated a wealth of intelligence on the illegal animal trade. Because this information was stored in various formats, EIA was challenged with manually mapping the players and illegal transactions in order to visualize connections and share intelligence with government and international law enforcement partners.

The solution

The solution EIA chose IBM i2 software to facilitate their undercover investigations into the criminal networks that perpetrate the illegal wildlife, timber and chemical trades. Network mapping helped EIA to reveal these complex and covert networks to the international community, and iBase provided a common language through which EIA could communicate with enforcement partners.

The benefit:

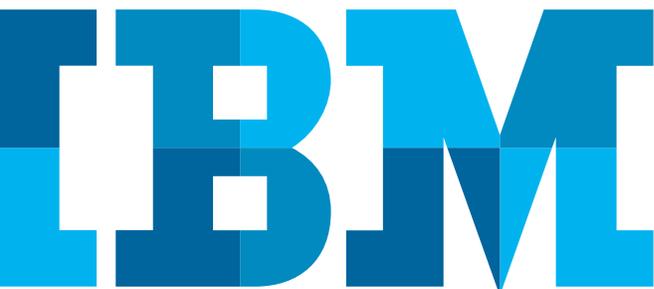
Overall, IBM i2 products helped enable EIA to integrate and represent a wide range of intelligence from a variety of sources into a consistently organized whole - and plug intelligence gaps that may have previously been obscured.

Environmental crime is global in nature. The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) is an independent campaigning organization that has been investigating and exposing environmental crime since 1984. Part of EIA's mission is to protect the last of Asia's endangered big cats - including the tiger, leopard, snow leopard and clouded leopard - which currently face a multitude of threats including habitat degradation, prey decline and poaching for their skin and bones.

A growing problem

For several years, EIA has conducted covert field investigations to document the transnational illegal trade in Asian big cat skin and bones, and encountered first-hand the traffickers, dealers and buyers involved. These investigations have generated a wealth of intelligence, stored in various formats. Nominal information was collated on profile sheets, frequently with telephone numbers and photographic records attached. EIA kept tabs on enforcement events such as seizures and arrests by collating information into an Access database.

As the years progressed, the scale of organized elements embedded in the illegal trade, much like that of the trade in drugs, became increasingly apparent. In discussions with partners about a trans-Himalayan criminal network, EIA could manually map the players and illegal transactions, watching the paper grow in size whilst attempting to unbundle the vast amount of intersecting lines and link subjects to potential aliases. Visually presenting the dimensions of such networks to governments and international law enforcement partners, alongside the time-critical issue of species in decline, understandably presented a challenge.



Solution Components

- IBM® i2® Analyst's Notebook®
 - IBM® i2® iBase
 - IBM® i2® Text Chart
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“IBM i2 products and solutions enhance interagency communication and understanding of significant issues providing a much needed asset to enforcement.”

—Julian Newman, Campaigns Director, EIA

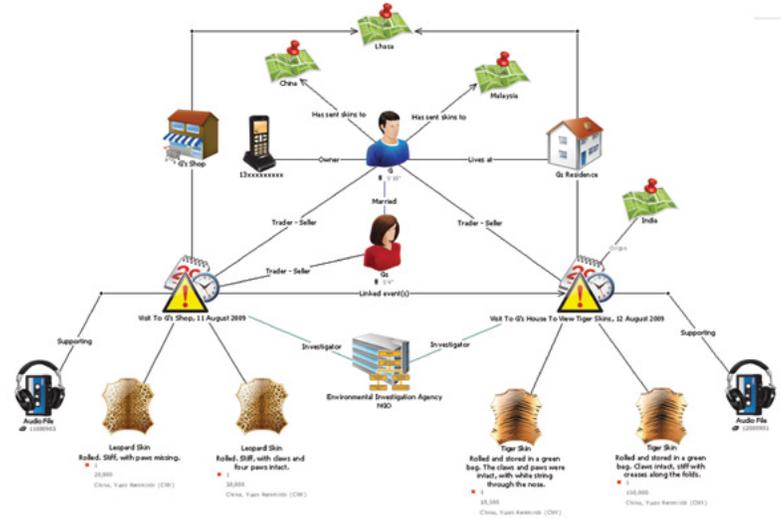


Figure 1: EIA documented the illicit activities of a Lhasa-based skin by using covert means to view illegal tiger skins sourced from India and exported to other Asian countries.

Custom solutions yield deeper understanding

After much thought, EIA chose IBM® i2® software to assist them in planning investigations, processing and sharing intelligence and campaigning for international change. EIA began to implement IBM i2 solutions in 2006, in the form of a custom-designed database, employing IBM® i2® iBase, IBM® i2® Analyst's Notebook® and IBM® i2® Text Chart. The first use was to synthesize historical intelligence and investigation findings into one fully-searchable, stand-alone database.

Text Chart and iBase facilitated the import of EIA's existing multi-source records. iBase picked up where previous databases, which could be limited in their capacity to respond to complex queries, left off. For a crime type in which individuals operate by multiple aliases, Analyst's Notebook's ability to map, smart match, merge and resolve entities helped to streamline associations and present a clearer picture of core involvement, correspondingly facilitating suspect targeting. Crucially for an organization that documents illegal activity through film and photographs, Analyst's Notebook has the ability to display visual evidence alongside nominal, organizational and locational information. Quantitative market information from surveys in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region and Linxia, China, could be represented in a more easily interrogated manner, and iBase queries discern market trends over a period of years.

Overall, IBM i2 products helped enable EIA to integrate and represent a wide range of intelligence from a variety of sources into a consistently organized whole - and plug intelligence gaps that may have previously been obscured.

Specifically, EIA used iBase and Analyst's Notebook to plan and facilitate its most recent investigation into the Asian big cat skin markets of China and the Tibet Autonomous Region in 2009 by:

- Identifying indicators of illegal trade connected to specified locations and cross-referencing them to previous years' findings
- Completing the intelligence cycle by feeding investigative findings back into the system, through the use of field proformas harmonized with iBase categories for swift upload into the database, and mapping new entities
- Downloading and exporting intelligence, tailored to partner specifications, to share with law enforcement agencies and NGOs. The telephone numbers of skin dealers that were gained were provided to partners in India, who recently implemented their own IBM i2 system, to draw together the links in the trans-Himalayan trade.

Expanding opportunities to combat environmental crime

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) encourages the strengthening of communication and intelligence sharing as means to combat illegal trade, and EIA aims to be part of that solution.

One of the key assets of IBM i2 products is the expanded opportunity they provide for communicating key issues to partners in governments, law-enforcement agencies, and NGOs. Analyst's Notebook offers persuasive visual examples of associations and transactions which afford stakeholders arresting insights into the scale and flexibility of the trade - and the multifaceted approach needed to tackle it. To this end, EIA has used information from Analyst's Notebook charts in briefings to INTERPOL and the CITES Enforcement Export Working Group. The tangible benefits of these activities include enhancing partner knowledge and discussion around environmental crime, eliciting commitment to tackle the illegal trade more effectively, and fostering a unified and coordinated approach to the problem.

EIA is expanding its use of IBM i2 products to incorporate the illegal trade in ivory and timber, a process facilitated through use of IBM® i2® iBase Designer to build a robust data capture process for World Customs Organization commodity codes, export records and indicators of corruption. EIA has pioneered the application of IBM i2 products in the NGO sector, and has experienced the benefit of adding these tools to its capabilities to combat environmental crime.

For more information

To learn more about IBM i2, please contact your IBM representative, or visit: ibm.com/i2software

To learn more about all of the IBM Smarter Cities solutions, visit: ibm.com/smartercities



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