

Review of the Reuser's Information Services OSINT Pathfinder Course

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Within the past five or six years, we have experienced a drastic increase in the number of intelligence training providers that offer Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) courses. In June of this year, I had the privilege of attending the annual International Association for Intelligence Education (IAFIE) conference, which was held at St. John's University in Queens, New York. At this conference, I presented a paper on OSINT training in the private sector. My emphasis was to survey, at a very high level, the quality of the training that is currently being offered by third-party intelligence providers. My overall conclusion was that, while there are many OSINT courses available, most of them are overpriced and do not offer usable knowledge that is retainable in the long-term. Because of the vast number of OSINT courses available, I urge the consumers of OSINT training to conduct their due diligence and choose a well-balanced course – one that is sustainable long-term, is reasonably priced and has an instructor that knows the intricacies of information, not just of intelligence, but of information. One of the biggest lessons I have learned is that when it comes to OSINT, knowledge of the intelligence profession is not enough. It does not matter whether you have an extensive collection of war stories from when you practiced intelligence, if you do not understand information then you are as knowledgeable as someone with beginner OSINT skills. The Pathfinder OSINT course offered by Reuser's Information Services is one of the very few courses I have encountered as an OSINT professional that is bound to impress and teach even the most seasoned intelligence professional.

I am naturally very hard to please when it comes to OSINT courses, so when I traveled to The Hague I was having my own reservations about

the organization of the course, the number of classmates I would have, the method of information delivery, the content itself and whether the course was a good investment. At a price tag ranging between USD\$1,400 and USD\$1,500 (depending on exchange rate as this course is paid in Euros), *this course is one of the most affordable and effective* OSINT courses currently available in the market, especially when you take into consideration the amount of information shared with you by Mr. Arno Reuser. From the moment I entered the room and realized the classroom size was rather small, intimate and very selective (not everyone that applies for the course gets accepted), I knew it would be a different experience than from the previous courses I have taken. Mr. Reuser provides his students with his tailored version of an OSINT machine, a modified OSINT version of Firefox, as well as other writing materials for the participants to have. The information delivery is very paced and effective. Since there is plenty of information to be covered, Mr. Reuser recognizes when rest is needed. Periodic breaks from the classroom are complemented by excellent food and other refreshers that his business associate, Ms. Marjon van Dijk, has organized to ensure that the whole OSINT course is not only interesting and pedagogically effective, but also a very pleasant stay. In terms of organization, the Pathfinder course is by far the best organized intelligence course I have attended.

Now, in terms of the actual course content, the Pathfinder course surpassed all my expectations. Mr. Reuser does a magnificent job covering a plethora of topics that are of practical use for any OSINT professional. As a seasoned OSINT professional, the Pathfinder course destroyed any unfounded arrogance I had when I thought I knew OSINT inside and out. Mr. Reuser starts his course with an extremely brief, but effective, survey on what OSINT is, what it is not, and on needed concepts such as the intelligence cycle and on the origins of the intelligence discipline as well. Immediately, this is followed by a brief overview of what students are to learn and what they are expected to implement in their day-to-day by the end of the course. From the very beginning, Mr. Reuser highlights the importance of the research methodology. The added value of this course is found in its applicability to real life professional scenarios as Mr. Reuser includes practical exercises from start to finish. Furthermore, Mr. Reuser performs all these exercises in real time along with the students in a hybrid version of the Socratic method while also looking over your shoulder and telling you when you are doing something wrong or ineffective. For example, are you using the proper search engine? Do you know what search language to use when using Google or when on Bing or DuckDuckGo? Hint: they are very different. One of the things that are very attractive about the Pathfinder course is the fact that by the end of it, all students obtain all the material

required for long-term knowledge sustainability. If you took notes and review all the material Mr. Reuser provides, you can replicate the course for personal use. Included in the materials are the Pathfinder OSINT Research Machine, the Reuser's Information Services Pathfinder Handbook with all the details of the course content, Quick Reference Sheets, access to the Pathfinder training website, and the most important resource, access to Mr. Reuser for any OSINT-relevant questions, hypothetical or real-life scenario, for the next six months after the course.

As an intelligence professional, the learning and education never ends. I am always looking for the next best training course or for information that would enhance my current set of skills. At the same time, while there are few honest companies, such as Reuser's Information Services, that provide amazing content for an honest price, there are also other companies that, unfortunately, provide weak intelligence training at a very high price. It is my opinion that intelligence training should be honest, passionate, with applicable knowledge and with the best interest of the client. There are companies out there that provide OSINT training and try to entice potential customers behind an approach that claims to provide world-class training by former Intelligence Community personnel. To the reader I ask, if you have attended one of these very expensive OSINT training courses, how much of it were you able to honestly include (short-term and long-term) within your day-to-day operations? Was it sustainable after a year or two? OSINT training should be reasonably priced, and the Reuser's Information Services Pathfinder OSINT course is one of the best, if not the best. As an intelligence professional and global OSINT instructor, I highly recommend and personally endorse this course.