

Establishing a Digital Surveillance System in Startups: Global Illustrations and Their Relevance inside the Algerian ecosystem

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Summary

During a time of swift technological transformation, startups in emerging markets face an increasingly complex information environment. Digital vigilance — the systematic capacity to detect, assess, and react to nuanced signals from competitive, technological, and regulatory landscapes — has emerged as a crucial organisation capability. Nonetheless, its application in resource-constrained startup settings, particularly in the Global South, remains insufficiently studied. This article examines the development and execution of digital surveillance systems in startup ecosystems throughout France, the United States, Singapore, Morocco, and South Korea, employing documented empirical data and established theoretical frameworks. It subsequently examines the structural, cultural, and institutional conditions of the Algerian startup ecosystem—assessing Algeria’s nascent digital economy, the legislative framework instituted by the Start-up Act of 2020, and the evolution of tech clusters in Algiers and Oran—to ascertain the degree to which international models are transferable, adaptable, or require total reinvention. The paper asserts that while no sole worldwide model is directly relevant, a hybrid framework customized to Algeria’s distinct constraints and opportunities is a viable and necessary advancement. Suggested tangible implications for creators of Algerian businesses, politicians, and ecosystem architects.

Keywords: digital vigilance, competitive intelligence, startup ecosystem, Algeria, technology entrepreneurship, environmental scanning, knowledge management

Introduction: The Information Paradox in Developing Startup Ecosystems

A unique irony characterizes contemporary entrepreneurship. Never before has such a comprehensive collection of information has been so readily available—market statistics, competitor filings, technological trends, consumer sentiment, regulatory updates—yet founders, particularly in emerging markets, often report experiencing cognitive overload and strategic myopia simultaneously. The large volume of accessible data can, paradoxically, obfuscate rather than elucidate the most critical signals (Hilbert & López, 2011).

This dichotomy is especially evident for startups. Unlike established organisations with dedicated research departments, competitive intelligence units, or proprietary data infrastructures, startups operate inside uncertainty, facing limited resources, little personnel, and significant time restrictions. Neglecting a crucial competitive signal—such as a rival's product introduction, a regulatory alteration, or an imminent technological advancement—can prove to be both expensive and harmful (Lesca & Lesca, 2014).

Digital vigilance offers a limited remedy to this problem. Digital vigilance, rooted in the established practices of competitive intelligence and environmental scanning, refers to a company's methodical and ongoing capacity to monitor, obtain, analyze, and interpret information from its digital environment to anticipate changes and inform strategic decision-making (Aguilar, 1967; Porter, 1980; Lesca, 2003). Conventional competitive intelligence was often costly, laborious, and primarily available to large enterprises; however, digital tools have democratized many of its essential practices, making systematic environmental scanning theoretically feasible for resource-limited startups worldwide (Calof & Wright, 2008).

Algeria serves as a notably illustrative example for analyzing these dynamics. After decades of reliance on hydrocarbons and centralized economic management, the government has embarked on a purposeful reform trajectory focused on entrepreneurship, achieving significant legislative progress since 2019. Executive Decree No. 20-254, dated 15 September 2020, serves as the cornerstone of Algeria's startup ecosystem by instituting the National Committee for Startup, Innovative Project, and Incubator Labeling, thereby conferring a legally recognized status upon startups within Algerian law. Subsequently, Executive Decree No. 20-356, dated 30 November 2020, instituted Algeria Venture as the official entity for incubation and support, accompanied by various fiscal incentive decrees that granted tax breaks to designated businesses. Collectively, these instruments form what ecosystem participants generally denote as the Algerian Startup Act framework. By early 2024, more than 300 companies had attained official startup designation under this framework, with additional structural advancements — notably the establishment of a specialized Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups and Micro-Enterprises in 2022 — strengthening the institutional framework of the ecosystem (Zakaria et al., 2024).

Algerian startups, mainly in fintech, agritech, edtech, and logistics, operate in a landscape of genuine yet precarious opportunities, characterized by deep local market understanding, a young and digitally engaged population, significant institutional instability, limited access to venture capital, and infrastructural constraints (Khelfaoui, 2003).

This study examines the lessons that Algerian startup founders and ecosystem developers may derive from worldwide trends in digital vigilance, as well as the essential adaptations required. The investigation is not only theoretical. As Algeria's startup ecosystem develops — with more than 300 startups officially registered under the 2021 framework by early 2024 — the methodologies and practices implemented by founders today will shape the competitive nature of an entire generation of businesses.

The article proceeds as delineated below. Section 2 outlines the theoretical foundations of digital vigilance, situating it within the domains of competitive intelligence and dynamic capabilities literature. Section 3 presents a comparative analysis of digital surveillance

techniques across five international startup ecosystems. Section 4 analyzes the specific conditions of the Algerian environment. Section 5 delineates a framework for adaptation and implementation. Section 6 delineates repercussions and constraints, and Section 7 presents the conclusion.

2. Theoretical Foundations: Transitioning from Environmental Scanning to Digital Vigilance

2.1 The Origins: Aguilar and the Scanning Tradition

The theoretical foundation of digital vigilance is grounded in Francis Aguilar's (1967) pioneering study on environmental scanning in business management, which empirically demonstrated that successful companies consistently monitored their external environments across the dimensions he designated as ETPS — Economic, Technical, Political, and Social. Aguilar's observation was clear yet important: organisations that methodically structured their information-gathering initiatives were more proficient at predicting and reacting to environmental changes than those reliant on serendipitous intelligence.

Subsequent scholars refined and broadened this concept. Daft and Weick (1984) defined the organisation as an interpretative system, emphasizing that scanning goes beyond mere data collection and encompasses sense-making — the intentional creation of meaning from confusing environmental signals. The interpretive dimension is essential to contemporary digital vigilance: the issue is not just in data collecting but in extracting meaning, identifying patterns, and transforming observations into actionable strategic intelligence (Weick, 1995).

2.2 Competitive Intelligence and the Lesca Framework

The field of competitive intelligence has systematized various scanning tasks into corporate frameworks. Lesca (2003) and Lesca & Lesca (2014) developed important frameworks for 'anticipatory intelligence', emphasizing the importance of recognizing weak signals—initial, ambiguous, often isolated indicators of emerging threats or opportunities—before they develop into recognizable trends. The **Lesca model** asserts that efficient intelligence systems incorporate systematic approaches for signal acquisition, collaborative interpretation, and organisational distribution.

Lesca's work distinctly identified the particular obstacles faced by SMEs and startups: the resource constraints that make intelligence crucial also hinder its systematic application. The alertness dilemma for small firms is a recurring theme in the literature (Bisson et al., 2013).

2.3 Dynamic Capabilities and the Absorptive Capacity Perspective

The resource-based view (Barney, 1991) and its dynamic extension (Teece et al., 1997) provide a complementary theoretical framework. Digital vigilance is characterized as a dynamic capability—an advanced organisational proficiency to detect, acquire, and restructure resources in response to environmental shifts (Teece, 2007). From this perspective, creating a digital vigilance system involves not only the deployment of technologies but also the establishment of organisational practices, the fostering of an information-conscious culture, and the formulation of processes to translate insight into action.

Cohen and Levinthal's (1990) concept of absorptive capacity clarifies that a firm's ability to recognize the value of fresh external information, assimilate it, and apply it for commercial

objectives is profoundly affected by its pre-existing knowledge base. For Algerian startups, this signifies that the enhancement of digital vigilance capabilities cannot occur in isolation from a holistic knowledge infrastructure, which includes the development of human capital, intersectoral networking, and exposure to global trends.

2.4 Defining Digital Vigilance in Startup Environments

Guided by these theoretical frameworks, we define digital vigilance, for the purposes of this article, as “The systematic organisational practice of continuously monitoring, collecting, processing, and interpreting digital signals from the competitive, technological, regulatory, and social environments, with the objective of promptly identifying emerging opportunities and threats to enable strategic foresight and adaptive response”.

This definition distinguishes digital vigilance from: (a) passive information consumption, marked by an absence of systematic and strategic methodology; (b) sporadic market research, which is irregular rather than continuous; and (c) big data analytics, which typically prioritizes internal or proprietary datasets over external environmental metrics. Digital vigilance is defined as an *ongoing, externally focused, interpretative organisational behavior* (Lesca&Lesca, 2014; Calof& Wright, 2008).

3. Digital Oversight in Global Startup Ecosystems: Five Case Studies

This comparative analysis employs documented empirical cases, publicly available startup process documentation, academic case studies, and ecosystem reports. Five ecosystems are examined: France, the United States, Singapore, Morocco, and South Korea. The selections sought to guarantee regional, cultural, and developmental diversity while providing significant documented evidence of digital vigilance strategies in startup contexts.

3.1 France: Institutionalized Vigilance and the Tradition of Economic Intelligence

France occupies a unique position in the global competitive intelligence landscape. Subsequent to the seminal Martre Report (1994), which established “*L’intelligence économique*” as a national strategic imperative, successive French governments have endeavored to include competitive intelligence methodologies throughout the economic ecosystem, including the startup sector (Harbulot, 2012).

French enterprises, particularly those supported by the “*Station F ecosystem*” in Paris — which, as of 2023, hosts over 1,000 startups and claims the distinction of the largest startup campus worldwide — frequently implement structured intelligence procedures from their conception (Fayolle & Lassas-Clerc, 2006). The curriculum of **Station F**'s Founders Program explicitly includes lessons on competitive mapping, ecosystem analysis, and regulatory monitoring. Notable technologies employed by French entrepreneurs include Mention (social and media monitoring), Kompyte (automation of competitive intelligence), and customized RSS aggregation procedures that facilitate collaborative sense-making sessions (Bisson et al., 2013).

The French case illustrates the importance of institutional scaffolding: the patent databases of **INPI** (National Institute of Industrial Property), intelligence reports from **CCI** (Chambers of Commerce), and diagnostic tools backed by **Bpifrance** have created a publicly accessible intelligence framework for early-stage startups (Harbulot, 2012). This institutionalization

relieves individual startups of the necessity to independently construct intelligence systems and underscores the potential importance of ecosystem-level infrastructure in the Algerian context.

3.2 United States: Lean Intelligence and the Silicon Valley Paradigm

The Silicon Valley startup development model, founded on Eric Ries's (2011) *Lean Startup methodology* and Steve Blank's (2013) *Customer Development framework*, integrates approaches characterized as '*lean intelligence*' into its fundamental philosophy. The continual emphasis on customer discovery, hypothesis testing, and validated learning effectively represents a continuous practice of environmental scanning, however it is rarely expressed in terms of competitive intelligence (Ries, 2011).

American entrepreneurs have developed a strong ecosystem of tools for competitive intelligence. Tools such as *Crunchbase* (for tracking funding and corporate developments), *SimilarWeb* (for digital traffic analysis), *SEMrush* (for SEO and content evaluation), and *G2* (for product review analysis) have become integral components of the startup intelligence framework. Advanced operators deploy automated alerting workflows using platforms like *Zapier* or *Make* to integrate signals from news, social media, patent filings, and regulatory publications into unified intelligence dashboards (Calof & Wright, 2008).

Y Combinator, the foremost startup accelerator worldwide, explicitly teaches founders in competitor analysis as part of its standard curriculum. *Batch firms* routinely conduct weekly competitive analyses as a fundamental component of their operations, viewing intelligence not as an intermittent strategic activity but as a persistent operational practice (Graham, 2012). The cultural normalization of vigilance — the idea that founders must consistently and systematically monitor their competitive environment — is arguably as *crucial* as any specific tool or technique.

3.3 Singapore: Government-Directed Digital Intelligence Framework

Singapore's approach to startup digital regulation illustrates *the city-state's* comprehensive developmental strategy: anticipatory governmental assistance aimed at bolstering private sector capabilities. *The Economic Development Board (EDB)*, *Enterprise Singapore*, and *the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA)* have collaboratively made substantial investments in creating intelligence infrastructure accessible to businesses.

The Enterprise Development Grant and *Market Readiness Assistance* programs specifically fund competitive intelligence measures for eligible firms, including market research, subscriptions to digital monitoring systems, and intelligence consulting (Enterprise Singapore, 2022). The government-sanctioned *IP Hub Master Plan* has enabled access to patent analytics and technology trend monitoring through subsidized access to major databases.

At the ecosystem level, *Block71* — a collaboration between the *National University of Singapore* and *Singtel Innov8*, acknowledged as one of Asia's most interconnected startup communities — facilitates intelligence sharing through structured networking events, sector-specific communities of practice, and alumni networks (Kenney & Pon, 2011). The social aspect of intelligence — the informal yet meticulously cultivated exchange of market signals within a trust-centric culture — augments formal tool-based approaches and emphasizes the importance of social capital as an intelligence resource.

3.4 Morocco: An Emerging Market Equivalent

Morocco's startup ecosystem is the most relevant foreign standard for Algeria, owing to their common Maghrebi cultural context, French administrative heritage, and analogous economic development trajectories, albeit Morocco's ecosystem is somewhat more developed (Mezouaghi, 2007).

The Moroccan startup ecosystem, centered on Casablanca's *CasaTech* cluster and supported by *Maroc Numeric Fund* and the *Smart Industry* program, has developed practical digital vigilance measures adapted to resource constraints. A notable trend among Moroccan startups is termed '*intelligence collective*' — a structured exchange of information within informal sectoral networks, where founders of non-competing startups mutually share market signals, regulatory updates, and technological insights (Mezouaghi, 2007).

Moroccan entrepreneurs have been early adopters of Arabic and French social listening tools, using unique monitoring systems to track customer sentiment and competitor activity across platforms including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and regional news aggregators. The capacity for linguistic intelligence—monitoring signals across many languages—is particularly advantageous for Algerian businesses operating in an environment where strategic information is conveyed through Arabic, Darija (i.e. local language), French, and Tamazight mediums (Khelifaoui, 2003).

3.5 South Korea: Technological Acumen in Deep Tech Startups

Established in 2013 and overseen by the Ministry of SMEs and Startups, South Korea's *TIPS* (*Tech Incubator Program for Startups*) has become one of the most structurally advanced state-supported startup incubation programs in the Asia-Pacific region. As of 2023, the program had assisted more than 3,200 businesses and enabled approximately 15 trillion *KRW* in subsequent private investment (Ministry of SMEs and businesses, Republic of Korea, 2023). For the purposes of this article, companies in deep tech sectors supported by *TIPS*—such as semiconductor applications, biotechnology, and AI—are generally mandated to provide annual technology landscape analyses as a prerequisite for continued support. This requirement fosters a systematic approach to competitive intelligence and environmental scanning, which significantly influences the development of startup support frameworks in Algeria.

Korean deep tech businesses, frequently originating from research universities or *chaebols* (i.e. massive, family-owned South Korean business conglomerates), generally implement advanced patent intelligence systems from their inception. Korea's *KIPRIS* (Korea Intellectual Property Rights Information Service) offers complimentary access to patent analytics, while numerous *TIPS* companies enhance this with commercial patent intelligence platforms like *Derwent Innovation* or *PatSnap* to monitor technology trajectories, assess freedom-to-operate risks, and observe competitor R&D strategies (Lee & Lim, 2001).

The Korean model is characterized by the explicit amalgamation of technology intelligence and strategic planning cycles. Companies financed by *TIPS* are generally mandated to provide annual technological landscape studies as a component of their grant reporting, fostering institutional rigor in intelligence activities. This incentive-based model, which requires the demonstration of intellectual capacity for access to public resources, presents possible design implications for support programs for startups in Algeria.

4. The Algerian Startup Ecosystem: Conditions, Limitations, and Emerging Opportunities

4.1 Historical and Structural Context

Algeria's economy has traditionally been based on hydrocarbon profits, with oil and gas contributing an average of 60 to 70% of government income and almost 95% of overall export earnings (Benachenhou, 2015). This structural dependency, thoroughly recorded by a former Algerian Minister of Finance with extensive economic experience, has persistently hindered the development of a knowledge-based entrepreneurial culture — the essential foundation for a vibrant startup ecosystem and its requisite digital vigilance practices.

The reliance on resources, coupled with a history of centralized economic planning and an expansive public sector, has fostered an environment that has historically hindered private entrepreneurship, risk-taking, and the dynamic, information-driven culture essential for startup ecosystems.

The oil price fall from 2014 to 2016 profoundly disturbed this model, intensifying pre-existing demands for economic diversification and facilitating political opportunities for entrepreneurship-oriented reforms that had been previously debated but resisted (Khelfaoui, 2003). The following years had a significant change in policy direction, resulting in a series of legislative and institutional advancements from 2019 to 2022.

4.2 The Startup Act and Its Consequences

The most significant legislative action by Algeria to help its startup ecosystem was not a singular law but a series of presidential decrees initiated in September 2020. Executive Decree No. 20-254 established the *National Startup Labeling Committee* and, for the first time, created a legally recognized status for innovative companies under Algerian law, serving as the institutional foundation of what ecosystem practitioners refer to as the Algerian "*Startup Act*". The establishment of Algeria Venture as the state incubation entity (Decree No. 20-356, November 2020) was complemented by fiscal incentive measures formalized in April 2021. These tools collectively signify the most extensive public commitment to the development of the startup ecosystem in Algeria's contemporary economic history (Zakaria et al., 2024).

The Act instituted a statutory '*startup label*' that grants preferential access to public procurement, tax exemptions, and administrative convenience; established a dedicated *National Fund for Startups*; and initiated the *Algeria Venture incubation program*. By January 2024, over 300 startups had obtained official designation under the system.

From a digital oversight standpoint, the *Startup Act*'s importance resides not alone in its explicit stipulations but also in the ecosystem dynamics it stimulates. A formal startup label establishes a coherent community of practice – a network of recognized participants capable of sharing insights, co-investing in monitoring infrastructure, and developing collective knowledge management systems. This clarity is a prerequisite for the type of institutionalized collective intelligence observed in the French and Singaporean examples.

4.3 Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

The digital infrastructure of Algeria has significantly expanded in the last ten years. *World Bank* statistics indicates that internet penetration was roughly 72% of the population in 2021 and nearly 77% by 2023, with 4G mobile coverage now encompassing all major urban centers

(World Bank, 2024). The *ARPCE* (2023) quarterly report reaffirms the persistent increase in mobile data traffic and broadband subscribers. Nonetheless, infrastructure limitations beyond primary urban centers, along with comparatively elevated internet expenses compared to per capita income, persist in influencing the practical context for the implementation of digital vigilance technologies. The *Algérie Télécom* network and heightened private sector involvement have enhanced bandwidth availability in urban areas such as Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and Annaba.

Nonetheless, substantial digital infrastructure limitations persist beyond primary urban areas, internet expenses relative to per capita income remain somewhat elevated, and dependable access to cloud services can be inconsistent (Khelifaoui, 2003). The existing infrastructure conditions need practical considerations in the design of digital vigilance systems: cloud-dependent, data-intensive intelligence platforms that operate effectively in Paris or Singapore may require significant modifications for dependable functionality in Algeria.

4.4 Human Capital and the Knowledge Framework

Algeria yearly generates a significant number of university graduates, roughly 350,000, from a higher education system comprising over 100 institutions (Benachenhou, 2012). The faculties of engineering and computer science have experienced substantial growth, resulting in an increasing number of digitally proficient young graduates entering the workforce. This signifies a true human capital asset for the advancement of the startup ecosystem.

The higher education system has always faced criticism for inadequate focus on practical research, entrepreneurship education, and the market-oriented analytical abilities necessary for digital vigilance (Khelifaoui, 2003). The ability to oversee, analyze, and respond to competitive intelligence necessitates not only technical digital proficiency but also strategic thinking regarding markets, technologies, and competitive dynamics—skills developed through entrepreneurship education, practical business exposure, and reflective experience.

4.5 Cultural and Institutional Aspects

Numerous cultural and institutional aspects of the Algerian setting are pertinent to the design of digital vigilance systems. Initially, a considerable level of institutional uncertainty — characterized by regulatory unpredictability, intricate administrative processes, and insufficient judicial reliability in business conflicts — generates a specific need for awareness regarding the regulatory and policy landscape (Mezouaghi, 2007). Algerian entrepreneurs must observe not only competitive dynamics but also the evolving environment of governmental policy, foreign exchange regulations, import limitations, and sector-specific licensing requirements.

Secondly, a robust interpersonal network culture — characterized by the significance of informal relationships, familial connections, and community affiliations in Algerian social and corporate contexts — can function as both an advantage and a limitation for intelligence systems. On the asset side, personal networks provide as valuable sources of market data, regulatory insights, and sector expertise, especially in contexts where formal information channels are lacking (Lesca & Lesca, 2014). The prevailing network culture may generate information silos, restrict receptiveness to external intelligence sources, and perpetuate tribal rather than market-oriented information processing.

The multilingual information landscape, whereby economically significant signals may manifest in Arabic, French, English, or Tamazight through both formal and informal channels, engenders authentic intelligence complexity. Effective digital surveillance systems for Algerian startups must encompass multilingual monitoring, serving as both a design necessity and an opportunity: Algerian founders with native proficiency in these languages hold a competitive intelligence advantage over foreign market entrants.

5. Towards a Customized Digital Vigilance Framework for Algerian Startups

5.1 Tenets of Adaptation

The comparative examination of worldwide cases, juxtaposed with the Algerian contextual study, indicates that the direct adoption of any singular international model would be both practically unfeasible and theoretically flawed. A customized framework must be developed from transferable concepts, tailored to Algerian situations.

We offer five fundamental concepts for this adaption. **Initially**, pragmatic minimalism dictates that, because of budget limitations, Algerian startups ought to develop a minimum viable intelligence system—one that is methodical and habitual rather than exhaustive and costly. The objective is to institutionalize the practice of vigilance rather than to implement the highest level of technological sophistication. **Secondly**, network amplification: considering the robustness of interpersonal network culture, intelligence systems ought to intentionally utilize, rather than supplant, social intelligence channels, establishing systematic procedures for collecting and recording signals from personal networks. **Third**, the multilingual scope: monitoring systems must encompass Arabic, French, and English language sources as a minimum, while also focusing on local social media platforms, WhatsApp-based professional networks, and diaspora groups as sources of intelligence. **Fourth**, regulatory sensitivity: because to institutional uncertainty, regulatory and policy oversight should be prioritized in the Algerian context relative to frameworks designed for more stable regulatory settings. **Fifth**, communal efficiency: due to the ecosystem's limited scale, the argument for a shared intelligence infrastructure—via incubators, sectoral associations, or startup networks—is notably compelling.

5.2 A Tri-Level Architecture

Based on the analyzed worldwide experiences and the aforementioned principles, we suggest a three-tier framework for digital vigilance in Algerian startups.

Tier 1: Fundamental Layer — Organized Signal Acquisition

The foundational layer establishes the essential systematic monitoring infrastructure. For the majority of Algerian startups, this will entail: (a) the configuration of **Google Alerts** for company names, competitor names, key sector keywords, and regulatory terms; (b) a structured **RSS** reader (**Feedly** or **Inoreader**) that aggregates sector-relevant Algerian and regional news sources, including El Watan, L'Expression, Echorouk, and Arabic-language business publications; (c) monitoring **LinkedIn** for competitor activities, talent movements, and industry discussions; (d) a simple shared document or Notion database for logging and tagging signals collected informally through personal networks. This tier must function with minimum expense and be accessible despite infrastructural limitations.

Tier 2: Processing Layer – Cooperative Sense-Making

Unprocessed signals possess minimal utility without methodical analysis. The processing layer implements protocols and procedures for collaborative sense-making within the startup team. Drawing from the Lesca (2003) ‘*cible-acteurs*’ model and the *Silicon Valley weekly Review Methodology*, we propose: (a) a weekly 45-minute intelligence review meeting with all co-founders and, when relevant, department leaders; (b) a straightforward signal classification system categorizing competitive signals, technology signals, regulatory signals, and customer signals; (c) the designation of intelligence ownership — specific team members accountable for monitoring particular signal types; (d) a quarterly strategic intelligence session, aligning aggregated signals with strategic decisions and pinpointing knowledge deficiencies necessitating further investigation.

Tier 3: Action Layer – Translation of Intelligence into Strategy

The action layer guarantees that intelligence collection yields strategic value instead of merely amassing data. This necessitates: (a) a clear connection between intelligence assessments and strategic planning cycles; (b) a straightforward decision log linking strategic decisions to their intelligence sources; (c) a mechanism for elevating high-priority signals (regulatory modifications, competitor product introductions) beyond the standard review schedule; (d) regular updates on the competitive landscape conveyed to investors, board members, and key stakeholders as proof of market awareness.

5.3 Recommendations for Tools in the Algerian Context

Table 1 delineates the recommended digital vigilance technologies tailored for the Algerian environment, emphasizing affordability, reliability amongst infrastructural limitations, multilingual capabilities, and ecosystem pertinence.

Category	Recommended Tool(s)	Cost	Key Feature for Algeria
General monitoring	Google Alerts + Mention	Free / Freemium	Multilingual, low bandwidth
News aggregation	Feedly (basic)	Free	Works offline; supports Arabic feeds
Competitor tracking	SimilarWeb (free tier)	Free	No local install required
Patent intelligence	Espacenet (EPO)	Free	Covers DZ filings; French interface
Social listening	Hootsuite / Tweetdeck	Free tier	Twitter/X, LinkedIn monitoring
Knowledge management	Notion / Obsidian	Free	Offline-capable; collaborative

Network intelligence	LinkedIn + WhatsApp groups	Free	Dominant professional channels in DZ
Regulatory monitoring	JORADP.dz RSS	Free	Official Algerian legislative gazette

Table 1. Digital vigilance instruments for Algerian startups suggested by the researchers.

These are recommendations for free digital surveillance tools accessible to all startups, regardless of their maturity stage or level of technological utilization in Algeria.

5.4 The Collective Intelligence Alternative: Ecosystem-Level Infrastructure

Algeria's emerging collective intelligence infrastructure identifies its most promising anchor institutions in both public incubators and a range of business and academic entities whose recorded innovation efforts establish them as integral nodes within a larger ecosystem. *Ooredoo's Tstart program*, one of the pioneering and most significant corporate startup assistance initiatives in Algeria, has offered incubation, finance, and technical resources to a limited yet expanding group of ICT-oriented businesses (Leancubator, 2021). *Djezzy*, now entirely state-owned after *VEON's* divestiture in 2022, has progressively directed its innovation efforts towards open challenges in collaboration with the *Algeria Startup Challenge platform* and the *Ministry of Higher Education*, including the “*2025 Impact Challenge*” centered on digital inclusion (Algeria Tech News, 2026). *USTHB* possesses a recognized *WIPO Technology and Innovation Support Centre* accreditation and, in 2024, co-established an *ICT-focused incubator* with *Algérie Télécom*, signifying a tangible advancement in university-industry collaboration (Resilient Digital Africa, 2024). Fostering enduring, organized relationships among corporate entities, academic institutions, public incubators, and startup networks—rather than depending on sporadic events—would cultivate an intelligence-sharing ecosystem that individual founders and government agencies cannot independently produce. Establishing these relationships across startups, business partners, academic institutions, and public agencies would foster an intelligence ecosystem that neither individual entrepreneurs nor government entities can generate independently.

6. Discussion: Consequences, Constraints, and Prospective Research

6.1 Consequences for Founders of Algerian Startups

This data underscores that Algerian company owners must regard digital vigilance as a fundamental practice to be institutionalized from the outset, rather than a luxury to be postponed until later stages of growth. Evidence from Silicon Valley, Paris, and Singapore converges on the understanding that behaviors established in a startup's initial months tend to endure (Ries, 2011; Graham, 2012). Founders who include regular intelligence reviews into their weekly operational routines from the outset establish organisations with a fundamentally enhanced ability to anticipate and adapt to environmental changes.

This entails explicitly assigning intelligence responsibilities instead of relying on organic development; routinely dedicating time to analyze competitor activities, technological advancements, and regulatory indicators; investing in essential skills such as strategic analysis,

information literacy, and cross-linguistic monitoring; and fostering reciprocal intelligence relationships with founders in related sectors.

6.2 Consequences for Policy Makers and Ecosystem Developers

International evidence indicates that for policymakers and ecosystem developers, the most impactful interventions are those that establish shared infrastructure rather than those that finance individual startup initiatives. The Korean TIPS model mandates annual technology landscape studies that connect resource access to proven intelligence practices, which merits consideration for possible integration into the Algerian Startup Act framework (Korea Technology Finance Corporation, 2023).

Investing in the digitization and accessibility of Algerian public information—such as patent databases, regulatory publications, statistical series, and public procurement data—would significantly lower the costs associated with intelligence gathering for all entrepreneurs. The *JORADP* official gazette currently offers free digital access; a systematic extension of this method to sectoral regulatory databases, *ANDI* investment statistics, and customs data will significantly enhance the national intelligence infrastructure.

6.3 Constraints and Methodological Considerations

This article possesses multiple shortcomings that necessitate clear acknowledgment. The worldwide case analyses rely predominantly on published accounts, ecosystem reports, and secondary sources, excluding primary fieldwork in the analyzed ecosystems. Subsequent study ought to include interviews with practitioners in both international and Algerian settings to evaluate and enhance the comparative analysis.

The analysis of the Algerian ecosystem predominantly depends on published statistics sources and publicly accessible policy papers, augmented by the little scholarly literature on the topic. The empirical foundation for analyzing the Algerian startup ecosystem is limited, indicative of its relative novelty and the deficiencies in research infrastructure prevalent in many emerging market environments. A comprehensive primary survey and interview-based investigation on the intelligence practices of Algerian startups constitutes a substantial and useful research opportunity.

The revised approach presented in Section 5 is inherently theoretical, as it has not undergone empirical testing inside Algerian startup environments. Pilot implementation studies, preferably in collaboration with one or more incubator programs, are necessary to validate and enhance the recommendations.

6.4 Prospective Research Avenues

This analysis reveals multiple avenues for future research. Comparative research investigating the intelligence practices of a sample of designated Algerian startups—specifically their monitoring methods, instruments utilized, and the correlation to strategic decisions—would furnish the empirical base that is presently absent. Longitudinal studies examining the correlation between startup performance and the sophistication of intelligence practices would explore the fundamental question of whether digital vigilance provides a competitive advantage in the Algerian setting, or if other factors prevail. A cross-national comparison between Algeria and analogous ecosystems such as Tunisia, Morocco, or Egypt would broaden the analysis to encompass the wider Maghrebi and North African setting.

7. Final Assessment

Digital vigilance is not a privilege for affluent organisations; it is an essential practice for startups operating in conditions of authentic unpredictability. Evidence from France, the United States, Singapore, Morocco, and South Korea indicates that companies employing regular, habitual intelligence approaches surpass those dependent on fortuitous or reactive information acquisition.

Algeria's startup ecosystem is at a significant turning point. The legislative and institutional frameworks provided by the Startup Act create a basis for the development of a generation of digitally adept, globally competitive startups. However, legislative frameworks alone do not establish vigilant organisations. This necessitates founders who approach the profession with seriousness, ecosystem architects who establish communal infrastructure, and politicians that associate resource accessibility with proven strategic capability.

The proposed paradigm in this article—comprising three levels of signal gathering, collaborative processing, and strategic action, tailored to Algerian resource limitations and cultural nuances—provides a viable solution moving forward. It is presented not as a conclusive directive but as an initial framework for empirical research, practitioner experimentation, and policy discussion that the issue warrants.

The startups that will shape Algeria's economic future are being established now. The intelligence systems they develop — or neglect to develop — will determine their ability to survive, adapt, and ultimately compete globally. There is no more opportune opportunity to commence.

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