Media Monitoring 2014: The Ultimate Guide

Media monitoring has traveled quite a journey over the past few years.

Every year, media monitoring services have added new features, tools and enhancements so their PR and marketing clients can better monitor and measure their publicity and social media progress, track leads, engage customers, build brand awareness and protect their reputation.

The result: a cornucopia of different tools and services that vary in price, coverage and capabilities.

*Media Monitoring 2014: The 2014 Ultimate Guide* compiles the latest news and insights on media monitoring to serve as a resource for organizations to create or improve their media monitoring and measurement programs.

The white paper is organized into seven chapters offering media monitoring tips, techniques and strategies for every stage and step of your media monitoring program. All organizations — including large and small corporations, not-for-profit organizations, government organizations, and agencies — will find worthwhile information to enhance their media monitoring programs.
Table of Contents

Chapter 1
  News and Social Media Monitoring: How to Get the Most from Your Service     Page 4

Chapter 2
  Metrics and Charts to Measure Media Monitoring Results     Page 10

Chapter 3
  Transforming Media Monitoring Data into Insights and Actions     Page 16

Chapter 4
  Media Monitoring for Crisis Prevention and Control     Page 19

Chapter 5
  Broadcast Monitoring: How It Works and How to Use It Strategically     Page 24

Chapter 6
  Media Monitoring for SMBs: Free vs. Paid Tools     Page 30

Chapter 7
  Social Media Monitoring: Uses and Benefits     Page 37
CHAPTER 1

News and Social Media Monitoring: How to Get the Most from Your Service

Key Points

- To optimize the effectiveness of your media monitoring service, learn all capabilities of its online dashboard up-front.
- In addition to PR, an effective media monitoring strategy can serve social media programs, reputation management, crisis communications, SEO, customer service, competitive intelligence and a number of other company functions.
- Use the expertise of your media monitoring service to help craft the most effective keyword queries.
- Take advantage of the free trials and demos offered by media monitoring services, and invite managers from other departments to take part in training.

Communications departments, including public relations, marketing and brand management, have long used media monitoring to gather and measure data to understand and improve their results. Now, additional departments like customer service and social media also use media monitoring to resolve customer issues, gather audience demographics, obtain customer feedback and uncover conversations to improve ROI.

Companies that utilize a media monitoring and measurement service have access to important data to drive sales, engage customers and build brand awareness. Knowing how to deploy that data is just as important as choosing the media monitoring service that supplies it.

Most businesses — especially those with a regional or national market footprint — rely on subscription-based media monitoring services to save time and money and deliver better, faster results. Not all businesses fully leverage the benefits these services offer.
An effective media monitoring strategy:
• Sets monitoring goals that reflect and tie into business goals.
• Includes features that meet your organization’s specific requirements.
• Fits into your company’s budget.
• Transforms monitoring results smoothly and accurately into measureable data.

The following 3-step process will help assure your business monitors, analyzes and implements data correctly to take full advantage of media monitoring’s capabilities.

Step 1: Utilize monitoring insights

Through media monitoring, your organization can gather timely intelligence and share that knowledge to deliver company-wide benefits. This market intelligence can be used for a variety of applications, including:

**PR and Social Media Programs**
• Identify all earned media placements
• Track the reach and spread of press releases and other earned media
• Measure reach, impact and sentiment of earned media
• Monitor conversations in reaction to a release or campaign
• Identify the location, language and demographics of the audience talking about your organization or its brands
• Identify journalists interested in your organization’s industry and topics
• Republish positive articles on your website and/or blog
• Retweet/repost positive conversations about the brand

**Brand Monitoring**
• Monitor public perception; listen for positive and negative mentions
• Discover brand advocates
• Learn where customers/the media talk about your brand
• Monitor campaigns or brand-specific hashtags
• Listen for social response and sentiment to specific marketing campaigns
Reputation Management

- Compare brand mentions to industry and competitor mentions
- Monitor industry trends, news and influencers
- Track perception of company and industry

Crisis Communications

- Monitor for crisis warning signs — spike in mentions, competitor crises, failed online campaigns, etc.
- During a crisis, track all news, conversations and community outlets that mention the crisis, and respond to editors accordingly
- Continuously measure negative and positive sentiment of your brand’s media mentions to evaluate the effectiveness of PR efforts
- Monitor for competitor and industry crises that could produce a domino effect

SEO

- Discover relevant industry keywords
- Identify best- and worst-performing keywords
- Monitor SEO influencers to stay up-to-date on the latest search engine trends

Thought Leadership

- Find posts and customer questions that your company’s subject experts can answer
- Track influence of company and industry thought leaders
- Monitor conversations around key issues
- Find influential blogs for guest post opportunities
- Gather inspiration for content ideas

Customer Service

- Listen for comments and complaints on company and competitors’ products
- Discover new uses and features for existing products, as well as opportunities for product offerings
- Respond to customer issues in real-time
- Gather customer feedback and share with marketing, sales, and advertising
Lead Generation

- Find outlets with prospects discussing your industry and product/service category
- Learn the language of prospects
- Filter articles and conversations by location to find prospects in specific areas

Step 2: Consult the experts

Clients of media monitoring services get better results from media monitoring when they invest time up-front to learn and optimize the system.

The first step to accrue the long-term benefits of a subscription-based media monitoring service: work with the service’s experts to develop keyword queries, learn the features and functions of the service’s online clip archive (“dashboard”), and establish other key functions like email scheduling.

Develop keyword queries. Successful media monitoring starts with developing the appropriate search queries to aggregate all relevant news articles and social media conversations and minimize extraneous clips. Media monitoring services are experts in crafting keyword queries to meet customer needs and requirements. They are especially adept at fashioning complex Boolean queries that allow users to combine keywords with operators such as AND, NOT and OR to produce more relevant results.

These Boolean operators are what differentiate the telecommunications company “Orange” from search results about colors, fruits, cities, football bowl games, and frozen drinks that share the same name.

CyberAlert and other subscriptions services also use regular expressions (REX) to achieve more accurate results by specifying capitalization, proximity of Boolean terms, frequency of keywords, and other parameters.

Your media monitoring service can help you decide which terms and phrases to add to your query list that will deliver the most accurate media monitoring results and the best market insight.
**Learn the dashboard.** Subscription-based services offer a platform or “dashboard” equipped with filtering, search and measurement features. While most services’ dashboards are user-friendly, it helps to learn all its capabilities so you can become facile in managing your clips.

Take advantage of the demos offered by the supplier, and invite managers from other departments to take part in training. Subscription-based services often provide access to multiple users, and companies can accomplish initiatives more quickly and effectively when multiple staff members are trained to use the dashboard effectively.

**Schedule email alerts.** Daily email alerts delivered before the start of every business day satisfy most organizations’ needs. However, some companies may opt to receive more frequent email alerts. Ask your media monitoring service which delivery schedule they recommend that best meets your organization’s goals. Your organization might choose to receive alerts multiple times per day at specified times during a crisis.

Some monitoring services can and will separate each day’s clip delivery into distinct segments for different countries, departments or brands.
Step 3: Measure insights for ongoing improvement

Valid measurement insight requires effective monitoring of news and social media. Without a solid media monitoring strategy, it’s impossible to assure the data for measurement is complete, accurate and timely.
CHAPTER 2

Metrics and Charts to Measure Media Monitoring Results

Key Points

• Organizations should use sentiment analysis for their own brand and as a yardstick to benchmark competitors.
• PR and marketing can track press releases and campaigns by measuring the number and quality of their media mentions.
• Subscription-based media monitoring services allow brands to filter keyword mentions into reports and easily create charts for measurement data such as circulation/reach, consumer sentiment, topic/subject analysis and audience demographics.

Subscribers to integrated media monitoring services can create custom reports and charts to present to key executives and make more informed business decisions. These reports offer a 360° view of all your PR and marketing efforts and help assess how effective each effort was in meeting its goals.

Most services offer in-depth reporting and charting. CyberAlert, for example, includes over 35 quantitative charts (e.g. reach, opportunities to see) and 40 qualitative charts (e.g. sentiment, prominence, messages, and spokespersons). Most all charts may be customized to specific client needs.

Each media monitoring service supplies different tools and measurement capabilities, but below are some examples of reports and the value they deliver:

What media mentions your organization, products and competitors?

The chart below is a simple but helpful one offered by most media monitoring services — a pie chart displaying the types of media that cover your organization’s keywords. Knowledge of
such coverage identifies where your organization is most active, and can help improve message targeting and highlight areas of opportunity for the organization.

How does your sentiment compare to your competition?

While sentiment analysis certainly paints a picture of a brand’s public perception, it’s also a relative metric. Organizations should use sentiment analysis not only for their own brand, but as a yardstick to benchmark how they’re faring against competitors.

For example, 25 percent negative brand sentiment may seem satisfactory, but if your competitors’ mentions are only 10 to 15 percent negative, you may want to bolster your customer service or product features.

Subscription-based media monitoring services allow brands to filter keyword mentions into lists so they can easily create charts that compare their sentiment to another brand’s.
How has a recent campaign affected brand awareness?

A campaign doesn’t end when it’s published or sent to constituents. Measuring the reach and effectiveness of that campaign is a crucial part of PR and marketing to gauge public reaction, point out weaknesses or assess if the campaign hit the target audience.

PR can easily track a press release in the dashboard by measuring the number of clips generated over the past week (or any preferred time period). If they want to delve further into metrics, services like CyberAlert provide clients with tools to measure the number of clips by the type of media or geography.

For example, an organization could determine specifically how much print coverage a release received — and, if they choose, they can compare that coverage to the mentions in online news and/or broadcast news.

Media monitoring delivers the following measurement data on which companies can capitalize:

Circulation/Reach: Subscription media monitoring services provide circulation numbers and the web rank of the publication site, which businesses can use for insight to gauge the number of people reading their press releases and articles.

With an integrated media monitoring solution, organizations can further track a press release’s impact through blogs and social media. They can also find media outlets that have posted the release or article, evaluate the reach from audience conversations talking about the article and identify influencers.

Consumer Sentiment: For crisis prevention, it’s beneficial to understand consumer sentiment numbers. (Tweet this) A spike in negative conversations may be an early warning sign of a brewing crisis. Benchmarking consumer sentiment also provides a yardstick when measured against the results of competitors and the company’s historical results.

Topic/Subject Analysis: Media monitoring services can break down mentions by their topics so businesses can identify indus-
try and market trends. Topics can also highlight the most relevant contextual keywords so managers can better refine their media monitoring strategy.

**Audience Demographics**: Audience demographics that show the region, country and language of a business’ audience offer valuable information on areas and publications the company should target. This information is especially important for business owners planning to branch out or expand marketing efforts.

The following graphs illustrate typical media measurement charts:

**Clips Over Time**

![Clips Over Time chart](chart1.png)

**Opportunities to See Over Time**

![Opportunities to See Over Time chart](chart2.png)
Number of Clips by Media Type

Percent of Clips by Media Type

Number of Clips from Print Over Time
Opportunities to See by Top 10 Media Sources

Print Opportunities to See by Top 10 Sources

Number of Clips by Tone (Sentiment)
CHAPTER 3

Transforming Media Monitoring Data into Insights and Actions

Key Points

- Listening to media monitoring is a key step to understanding market needs.
- To unlock media monitoring’s value, companies must transform data into meaningful insights and actions that deliver business results.
- Analyzing and synthesizing data reveals patterns that can bring data to life.

With an effective media monitoring service, businesses can use results to achieve for company-wide benefits. Used correctly, media monitoring can provide insights for PR, marketing, customer service, product development, sales and human resources.

To unlock the value of media monitoring, companies must transform the data into meaningful insights and actions that deliver business results. *(Tweet this)*

The benefits can be attained through three steps: Listen, Transfer and Execute.

**Listen**

At its core, a media monitoring service enables businesses to *listen* to the media and customers. Without this media listening function, the gap between a business and its stakeholders widens, resulting in misinformation, products that don’t meet customers’ needs, poor brand engagement and a weak reputation.

A media monitoring service delivers several key listening benefits:

- Better media coverage so businesses can find the company in relevant articles and reach their full targeted audience.
- Multiple user access to allow staff to share data with colleagues and executives.
• Full-featured online dashboard to manage clips from different media channels, including online news, print news, broadcast news and social media.

For most businesses, listening should encompass key word queries about brands, products, competitors and industry issues.

**Transfer**

If a business uses media monitoring to simply learn what’s being said about the brand, it’s not reaping the full benefits of the service. Businesses must unlock the value of media monitoring results by transforming data into meaningful insights to implement improvements in products, services and customer support.

Analyzing and synthesizing data reveals patterns that can bring the data to life. For example, perhaps after scanning media monitoring results for the past few weeks, you see a pattern of complaints about bugs in a new feature. Further investigation might reveal a flaw that, when fixed, significantly improves customer satisfaction.

A big-picture view reveals trends, audience demographics, media coverage and brand sentiment. PR and marketing professionals should take a step back from media monitoring results and look at the data as a whole.

**Execute**

After transforming data into insights, the obvious final step is to take action on insights. Ask: how can you use this information to drive business results?

The most immediate action is to respond to consumers and critics. Consumers on social media today expect quick responses from the brands with which they engage. Many media monitoring services integrate social buttons into media monitoring results so businesses can immediately join conversations.

Media monitoring results also offer insights beneficial to departments other than PR. With an effective service in hand, businesses can use media monitoring for more than just PR initiatives, including:
**Marketing.** Marketing. Forums and message boards are often run solely by fans, with conversations dedicated to a specific industry or product. By tracking these channels and various social media networks, marketing professionals can identify influential brand advocates.

Another key marketing benefit of media monitoring: lead generation. Businesses should track online channels to identify the locations, conversations and needs of their target audience. They can then isolate a specific key phrase or location that audience uses and find new customers that use the same language and/or channel.

For example, a CyberAlert client monitors news and social media for mentions of deteriorating floors in school gymnasiums. Another client monitors for mentions of public discussion and local town council votes to fund defibrillators. Both clients have identified solid sales leads and closed deals that wouldn’t have been possible without monitoring the news and conversations for those key words.

**Customer service.** By monitoring social media for customer questions and issues, customer service representatives can quickly identify and respond to questions. *(Tweet this)* They can also compile common questions and issues into a FAQ document and direct customers to the content on their website for more efficient customer service.

**Product development.** Media monitoring data delivers valuable market insight so businesses can improve their products. Businesses can listen to conversations to identify product problems and gain input and ideas from customers on how to improve products.

**Sales.** The sales department can uncover conversations that ask for recommendations or show discontent with competitors, and convert those consumers into customers by directing them to their business or its website.

**Human Resources.** Businesses can fish for recruits on social media, look for past employees to gauge their perception of the business as an employer, and find common industry issues that impact an employee’s satisfaction.
CHAPTER 4

Media Monitoring for Crisis Prevention and Control

Key Points

- No brand or company is immune to a crisis.
- Signs that a crisis is pending include a sudden spike in mentions, failed campaigns, competitor crises and out-of-date company policies.
- During a crisis, use real-time monitoring to filter news and blog articles that mention the crisis, and respond to editors quickly and appropriately.
- The four steps to responding during a crisis: (1) address the issue; (2) apologize; (3) reassure your company is correcting the issue; and (4) check in for feedback.

Negative reviews spread rapidly through the Internet and social media networks. Sometimes, they’re picked up and reported by mainstream news sources. In an age where nearly 30 percent of company crises spread internationally within an hour, no business can afford to ignore these reviews and conversations.

Organizations can’t stop crisis-causing articles and conversations from occurring, but media monitoring can mitigate their damage. *(Tweet this)*

Media monitoring provides insight for decision makers to act on potential crises, evaluate risks, assess solutions and formulate responses. For the most effective crisis management plan, PR and reputation managers must use media monitoring as both a proactive and reactive strategy.

**Proactive Media Monitoring Strategy**

Proactive media monitoring techniques help companies anticipate a crisis before it occurs. Warning signs often precede a crisis, and PR managers can detect these warning signs with a powerful media monitoring service.
To catch the early warning signs of a crisis, companies must monitor both online news and social media. (Tweet this) Mid-sized and large businesses may consider adding TV and/or radio monitoring to their crisis management plan to gauge a full-channel impact of any issue or crisis that may occur.

PR managers should examine past news and social media coverage their organization has received to determine the extent of media monitoring necessary to manage a crisis. Questions to ask might be:

- What kind of coverage does your organization most frequently receive — local, national, or international?
- In which social media channels are stakeholders and customers most active?
- How often does the organization appear on TV and radio broadcasts?
- In which media channels and social networks are competitors most active?

Larger companies usually opt for an integrated media monitoring service to track print, online news, TV and radio news, and a full range of social media including major platforms like Facebook and Twitter, blogs, forums, message boards and video-sharing sites such as YouTube.

In a reputation crisis, most integrated media monitoring services deliver a quick turnaround of monitoring results, offering reports from all media on an hourly or near real-time base. Fast turnaround enables staff to respond to an issue in a more timely way to inhibit the spread of negative information across channels.

Media monitoring services often prove more cost-efficient than paying in-house staff to perform time-consuming searches during a crisis. During a crisis, PR staff should focus their time on interpreting data and responding to the media rather than spend their valuable time conducting online searches.
Warning Signs

Media monitoring services deliver key data and insights that enable PR staff to understand the extent of the issue, identify important sources and assess the progress of their mitigation efforts. There are several crisis warning signs companies can look out for, such as:

**Sudden spike in mentions.** An unexpected increase in mentions triggers a warning flag that something may be wrong. PR staff should monitor their mentions frequently and use sentiment analysis tools to evaluate the ratio of positive, negative and neutral mentions.

**Failed campaigns.** Social media monitoring campaigns (or PR or advertising programs) sometimes offend segments of the audience. Organizations frequently make mistakes on social media, whether it’s an inappropriate comment or a hashtag campaign. If this happens, the issue will not stay on social media. When an issue breaks out in one channel or region, don’t expect it to stay isolated in that channel for long. Journalists, bloggers and competitor brand advocates exploit these mistakes. They can generate headlines like “Biggest Social Media Fails” and “How Not to Run Your Social Media Campaign.”

**Competitor crisis.** Industry issues sometimes have a domino effect. When a salmonella outbreak forced the recall of peanut butter and nut products last year, it affected brands throughout the food and restaurant industries. The earlier a company addresses industry issues, the better prepared it is for any repercussions.

**Out-of-date or poorly communicated company policy.** Organizations must ensure their staff — especially authorized spokespersons — are well-trained on recent product issues, social media strategies and crisis response plans. Social media is now the No. 1 activity on the web, so it’s likely the organization’s employees are active on Facebook, Twitter and/or
Google+. Without a communicated policy in place, employees might share information that misrepresents the company or damages its reputation.

**Reactive Media Monitoring Strategy**

No brand is safe from a crisis. When a crisis strikes, companies should have a media monitoring plan in place that addresses all contingencies of the crisis. *(Tweet this)* Consequences escalate when brands fail to respond quickly to an issue on social media.

During a crisis, companies must receive and respond to the latest updates in near real-time. To do this:

- Arrange for frequent email alerts — say, every 15 minutes or so.
- Filter all news and blog articles that mention the issue, and respond to their writers/editors accordingly.
- Continuously measure negative and positive sentiment of your brand’s media mentions to evaluate the effectiveness of PR efforts.

The better a company handles a crisis, the more praise it will receive from customers and the media for taking swift, effective action. It’s therefore necessary to properly respond to a crisis using the following steps:

**Address the issue.**

Be transparent and address your audience in a genuine manner. Use your media monitoring service to determine where the issue first occurred, and address the problem on that channel first and every other outlet that carries the story.

**Apologize.**

Even if your organization had no fault in the matter, tell customers you’re sorry they had a bad experience.
How to Respond to Customers and Stakeholders During a Crisis

The key tool to prevent and control a social media crisis is an automated, integrated media monitoring service that covers online news, print news, broadcast news, and the full range of social media. PR staff should dedicate their time to interpreting data, addressing hot-spot issues and building (or rebuilding) relationships with customers — not searching for and aggregating all mentions of the brand.

If a crisis does occur, media monitoring and measurement tools help guide the decision-making process and mitigate damage to the organization’s reputation.
CHAPTER 5

Broadcast Monitoring: How It Works and How to Use It Strategically

Key Points

• For larger organizations, broadcast monitoring adds significant coverage and value to a media monitoring program for reputation management, competitive research, media placement, internal presentations, crisis monitoring and to showcase work to sponsors.
• It’s useful to have a media monitoring service that integrates both TV and social media news under one platform.
• Monitoring live newscasts on TV and the radio is the most reliable way to get comprehensive coverage of all media.

Broadcast monitoring can add significant value to a comprehensive media monitoring program.

Many national organizations miss out on important market insight because they don’t strategically monitor broadcast news.

Despite recent audience gains for online news, television remains the most popular news source among Americans, according to a recent Gallup study. Fifty-five percent of Americans use TV as their main source of news for current events, leading the Internet at 21 percent. (Tweet this) A Pew Research Center study reported that over the span of the month, the highest percent of those viewers watch local news, with network news a close second.

TV and radio news have the greatest impact on public opinion among all media types, yet many corporate, government and nonprofit organizations either have not added broadcast to their media monitoring strategy, or don’t strategically monitor broadcast news to drive actionable business outcomes.

Including broadcast monitoring in an integrated media monitoring program assures organizations that they hear everything the public hears about their brand names and products, competitors, and industry issues.
Only broadcast monitoring services can provide the needed comprehensive coverage. To understand your broadcast monitoring options, it’s helpful to understand how services track, deliver and store TV and radio news.

While each company’s goals may vary, most use broadcast monitoring (and online news monitoring as well) for the following applications:

- **Reputation management.** Broadcast monitoring provides valuable market insight companies can use to detect early warning signs of a crisis and gauge how the audience perceives the brand.
- **Competitive research.** Companies monitor competitors to find new product rollouts, learn about an industry crisis, acquire financial earnings reports, and view live interviews with CEOs and other company personnel.
- **Opportunities for placement.** Often, companies use broadcast monitoring to research different networks and stations to get a feel for their past work and most frequently covered topics. They then apply the research to secure future story placements with the station or network.
- **Internal presentations.** PR and marketing management use broadcast clips and videos in internal presentations to show management how their audience perceives a brand or product in the marketplace.
- **Crisis monitoring.** During a crisis, companies want to know the tone and messaging of the media, critics and their audience. This application requires near real-time broadcast monitoring which most services provide.
- **Information for sponsors and potential clients.** Broadcast monitoring clips are especially useful for PR agencies to showcase their work to prospects.

How TV monitoring works...

Most major broadcast monitoring services, such as CyberAlert TV, monitor all 210 designated market areas of the U.S., effectively covering most all TV networks and local stations. TV news monitoring services record the live broadcasts of network, cable and local news and talk shows. The digital recording includes the closed-caption text attached to the live broadcast.
Originally designed for use by the hearing-impaired, closed caption displays text of the audio. For live broadcasts such as news and sports, a human typist transcribes the audio in near-real time. The displayed text is usually very close to the actual audio, but may have missing segments and misspellings.

The broadcast monitoring services search the closed-caption text from all TV news broadcasts and talk shows for each of their client’s selected keywords, and deliver the closed-caption text and/or preview video of any news segments containing the key words. Some services also save the clip in an online clip archive for the client.

Many TV news monitoring services, including CyberAlert, will conduct back searches of the closed caption text for key words and then provide the text for all found clips. Some services enable the client to order a digital video/audio file of the clips. The services deliver the clips as downloadable files — usually an mpeg4, mpeg2 or Windows Media File. Some services will deliver the clip to clients on a DVD.

**How radio monitoring works...**

The radio news monitoring process differs from TV news monitoring because radio stations have no closed-caption text. Instead, radio monitoring services use speech-to-text technology to convert the audio of radio stations into text, and deliver the text alerts to their clients. Clients may also choose to download the audio file.

Speech-to-text technology is far from perfect. Radio monitoring subscribers should expect to see misspelled words and jumbled sentences in the text alerts.

Nonetheless, radio monitoring and speech-to-text software have greatly improved over the past few years. Now, several media monitoring services have incorporated this radio monitoring technology into their integrated media monitoring services. Radio monitoring services like CyberAlert’s track more than 250 news and talk radio stations in the top 50 U.S. markets. Virtually all talk radio stations are located in the top 50 markets.
Strategies for Broadcast Monitoring

Over the last few years, the focus in broadcast monitoring has transitioned from “monitor everything” to “monitor specific pillars.”

Large organizations must monitor broadcast news strategically by concentrating on specific searches that relate to their latest pillar or brand initiative. Otherwise, they’ll likely waste time and valuable resources trying to review, analyze or respond to every broadcast clip.

Many broadcast services offer an “all-you-can-eat” program that grants clients access to every video. Clients can view the video at any time, from anywhere with a browser such as Internet Explorer or Chrome. The downside: previewing the video of all the clips can be time-consuming, and many of these clips are irrelevant and don’t meet the company’s pillars. Reviewing the closed caption text is a much faster way to identify the important clips for preview.

The more cost-effective media monitoring services allow clients to subscribe to only the closed-caption text of broadcast news mentions. They also create very precise search specifications to avoid irrelevant clips. The result: more good clips that fit in specific pillars with less review time required.

Clients can then order downloadable files of only the most important videos.

In setting up search profiles for broadcast monitoring — either TV or radio — it’s important to include spelling variations of the key search terms. This is especially important for company, brand or personal names that tend to be misspelled. Include all common misspellings in the search profile.

Integrating Broadcast Monitoring into Your Strategy

The emergence of “social TV” has created a unique relationship between TV and social media — specifically, Twitter. More television programs are implementing socially interactive portions into their programs and news casts. For example, news stations frequently poll users about their thoughts on recent events, and
ask them to answer the poll via Facebook and/or Twitter.

The result of the social TV phenomenon: more people are using social media to discuss TV news stories.

For this reason, it’s especially important for brands to utilize media monitoring services that integrate both TV and social media data. Online reputation management becomes much easier when all media mentions are located on a single platform.

Example: a broadcast monitoring service picks up a local news station that mentioned one of your company’s top executives. Companies with an integrated media monitoring service can create a timeline from the date of the news segment’s broadcast and track the reactions of their audience following the news via social media.

Another benefit of having an “all-in-one” monitoring strategy: broadcast monitoring doesn’t capture clips on video-sharing sites like YouTube. A social media monitoring strategy that monitors the meta-tags of these video-sharing sites can identify the spread of broadcast clips on Internet-based video services and can find clips that are exclusively online.

Monitoring only the Internet site of broadcast networks or local stations is not an effective broadcast monitoring strategy. While many broadcast news organizations share some of their newscasts online or through YouTube, not all stories from the live broadcast are posted and stories are often not posted in their entirety.
Monitoring live newscasts on TV or radio is the most reliable and cost-effective way to get comprehensive coverage of all stories on news broadcasts.

Many broadcast monitoring services such as CyberAlert provide human editors to identify, edit and deliver the key stories each day to clients.

Each vendor’s service is similar, but differs somewhat in format. The best way to determine if a media monitoring service is right for your organization: try it for free. *(Tweet this)* Many media monitoring services — including CyberAlert TV — offer a demo or 14-day free trial of their broadcast monitoring services.

National and international organizations and brands should include broadcast monitoring as an integral part of their media monitoring program to identify company and brand mentions and to track competitors and industry issues.

Like all media monitoring, broadcast monitoring requires a well-planned strategy and set of goals to be effective for each of its various business applications.
CHAPTER 6

Media Monitoring for SMBs: Free vs. Paid Tools

Key Points

• Brands can evaluate whether a free or paid solution is right for them by assessing the goals and scope of their monitoring strategy. Free tools come with costs that may be more than subscription services.
• Just because your company falls under the small or medium business category doesn’t necessarily mean it should be using free media monitoring tools.
• Subscription services deliver results and benefits not available with free tools.
• Organizations with paid tools are nearly 3 times more satisfied with the results than those from free tools.

Media monitoring services that offer in-depth analyses and shiny features are mostly geared toward big consumer brands and B2B companies with substantial PR and marketing budgets.

Small and mid-sized businesses don’t have big budgets to afford those tools, and frankly, don’t need many of the glitzy features that some media monitoring services push on them.

The “free vs. paid” decision depends on a business’s goals and market footprint.

Some small businesses can get by with free tools. But larger “small businesses” — including smaller B2B companies with a national footprint — have needs and a larger market presence that warrant a subscription media monitoring service.

Brands can decide whether a free or paid solution is right for their company by assessing the goals and scope of their media monitoring strategy.
Which Organizations Can Get By with Free Tools?

The landscape for media monitoring has changed in just a few years. Years ago, most all small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) could get by without any form of media monitoring.

With the emergence of social media, most businesses — even small, local businesses like restaurants and car dealerships — must mine blogs, review sites and customer conversations to see what their customers are saying about them.

An unhappy customer can rapidly spread his/her discontent about a product or bad customer service through social media. A bad review can reach many eyes in a matter of hours and damage a business’s reputation. If a business doesn’t monitor social media, it misses out on valuable market information, potential opportunities for growth and defusing negative comments.

SMBs with a very local market footprint and short-term goals may get by with free media monitoring tools like Google Alerts, SocialMention and Hootsuite. Free tools lack an integrated media monitoring solution, but many small businesses, including local B2C companies and retail stores, have very little news to monitor. If they’re featured in a local paper, they usually know about the placement beforehand.

But small or mid-sized businesses that have regional or national market footprints can benefit greatly from a subscription media monitoring service.

These organizations promote their business through a more dispersed market, thus needing the online news and social media monitoring integration benefits a subscription service offers.

Assessing the media footprint of your business will determine whether free tools are appropriate for your media monitoring needs.

How can businesses determine whether they fit into the “free tools” category?

Consider your market and media footprint to determine its coverage needs. Will free tools cover every publication, social
media network and channel that talk about your brand?

Additional questions to ask about coverage:
- How many news and social media mentions does your brand receive in a day?
- Do free tools monitor the media sources important to your business?
- Where is your business active online and in social media?
- Where is your audience active online and in social media?
- What keywords (and how many) should your business monitor?
- How much time will it take your designated employees to gather results from all these channels? Can your employees analyze these results and transform them into actionable data?
- How many staff members need access to media monitoring results?
- Do you plan to use media monitoring results for customer service?

Create a list of publications and channels that have covered, or have the potential to cover, your business. A list helps businesses determine the types of media they should monitor — whether it’s online news, print news, social media, or a service that integrates all three — and if a paid service is needed to do so.

Some organizations must monitor industry trade journals and niche publications. When that’s the case, they should look for a media monitoring service that’s flexible enough to add publications to their media list.

Workflow can also be important for companies monitoring news and social media, especially if they use social media for customer service. No business wants to end up responding to a customer twice with two different answers. Free tools rarely offer multiple-user access so staff can easily share data among themselves.

**Comparing the “Costs” of Free Tools**

Once a business has established its goals and media footprint, it can **determine its media monitoring budget**. This means weighing the cost of free tools (yes, free comes at a cost) against that of a subscription media monitoring service.

**Formula to determine the cost of free tools:**

\[
\text{Staff hours per month required for monitoring} \times \text{Staff cost/hour} = \text{Cost of DIY monitoring}
\]

Is cost of subscription service comparable or less?
The advantages of free tools are quite obvious: they’re free, quickly accessible and offer a general overview of results.

But free tools have their shortcomings: they provide a limited scope and only a partial view of what customers and the media are saying about your business.

Free tools are do-it-yourself, and require businesses to designate one or multiple employees to collect results and analyze data.

In 2011, the Aberdeen Group surveyed 176 organizations regarding their use of analytical tools and processes in marketing campaigns and programs. Aberdeen asked the businesses how satisfied they are with their paid tools, free tools, or mixes of both. The report revealed three important findings:

- Companies using free web analytics are more likely to struggle with data interpretation compared to peers using paid or mixed tools.
- Companies are 3 times more satisfied with the quality of media monitoring data from paid tools than from free tools. *(Tweet this)*
- Companies that only use free tools experience a year-over-year decline in marketing campaign performance.

In the years since the Aberdeen study, subscription tools have improved markedly, while free tools have deteriorated.

Each free tool offers a “niche” monitoring service: Google Alerts monitors only online news; Hootsuite tracks only social media conversations; and Klout interprets social media influence. For reasonably comprehensive media coverage, it’s necessary to use anywhere from 4 to 12 separate free tools — a time-consuming daily process.

With all the back-and-forth switching between platforms to find relevant data and aggregate it into a single report, businesses may spend more time and money employing in-house staff to monitor than they would hiring a subscription media monitoring supplier.
Free monitoring tools rarely provide the media coverage sought by most organizations with a larger market footprint, and require substantial staff time to conduct daily media searches and aggregate the data.

Depending on a business’s volume of mentions, it can take over an hour — and sometimes several hours — each day for in-house staff using free media monitoring tools to:

- Search social media sites to find company, product and competitor mentions;
- Store media clips in an easily searchable format for future reference;
- Aggregate media mentions into a single file for analysis and share with employees, partners and clients;
- Convert the information into measurable data;
- Measure the data to determine the clips’ prominence, reach, sentiment and other factors.

Using free media monitoring tools, then, usually makes economic sense only for companies that employ volunteers or unpaid interns to perform media monitoring and measurement functions. *(Tweet this)*

However, free tools do play an important role in the initial testing of media monitoring strategies. You can use free tools to determine the monitoring and measurement needs of your businesses and get an idea of the types of features you would like.

It’s also helpful for PR agencies and SMBs to explore their options through the media monitoring free trials that services offer to determine which publications, channels and metrics are important to their business. During this experiment, you can also determine just how much time and resources you invest in your current media monitoring plan, and decide on reasonable budget expenditures per month or annually.

**Benefits of Professional Media Monitoring Services**

Subscription monitoring and measurement services can integrate online news, social media and broadcast news daily, with technology that avoids clip duplications and irrelevant data. The services also accommodate clients with multiple user accounts so that news clips and measurement data can be easily shared among departments.

The figure below illustrates features that most professional
monitoring services offer. Professional services’ advanced technology is especially important for a valid measurement program. Missing clips and skewed data can result in inaccurate measurement results.

With these features, subscribing to a professional media monitoring service delivers multiple benefits:

- Better media coverage with international data available in multiple languages, often with automated translation.
- More precise results with fewer missing clips and fewer irrelevant clips.
- Multiple user access for cross-department use
- Full-featured integrated online dashboard for sorting, sharing and managing news and social media clips.
- Automated charts and graphs for PR measurement.
- Reduced time investment, freeing staff for more productive work.
- Greater insight into results of media programs.

A major benefit of a subscription service is its reliability: all your clips will be monitored, measured and delivered to your business on a daily basis. Do-it-yourself monitoring is not as reliable as a subscription media monitoring supplier. If your business has a busy day, will your designated employee(s) still be able to spend as much time assessing media monitoring results? These same rules apply to PR agencies that service SMBs. Not only is it virtually impossible for a small PR team to do the media monitoring work for multiple businesses — it’s also unrealistic
to expect the results and data to be reliable.

PR agencies should instead employ a media monitoring service that enables them to subscribe multiple clients. CyberAlert’s Partner Program, for instance, delivers media monitoring services to agencies so they can resell the service to their clients under their own logo and price terms.

The bottom line: Free monitoring tools rarely provide the media coverage sought by most organizations with a larger market footprint, and require substantial staff time to conduct daily media searches and aggregate the data. The outcome: low-quality results and high staff costs.

Just because your company falls under the “SMB” category, doesn’t mean it should use free tools. (Tweet this) A business’s media monitoring needs depend on its footprint and goals. For small and mid-sized businesses that have a regional or national footprint and long-term goals, outsourcing media monitoring to a subscription service delivers the best deal: better coverage and smaller time investment.
CHAPTER 7

Social Media Monitoring: Uses and Benefits

Key Points

- Monitoring social networks for criticisms and complaints is crucial to protect reputation.
- It’s vital to monitor all social media, not just Facebook and Twitter.
- Nearly half of consumers who complain on social media expect a response from brands within one hour, while about one-third expect a response within 30 minutes.
- Social media monitoring enables brands to gather insights, questions and issues from customers and use that information to develop better products and services.
- Monitoring social media can yield significant competitive intelligence.

Many PR and marketing professionals associate social media monitoring with tracking comments in networks like Twitter and Facebook. And that’s true. Monitoring social networks for criticism and complaints is now crucial to protect corporate and brand reputation, and to better understand what consumers think about the organization, its brands and its customer service.

Blogs, message boards, Usenet news groups, video-sharing websites and forums are all considered “social media” and contain vital consumer information for brands.

Like news monitoring, the key to comprehensive and accurate social media monitoring is to monitor across a wide range of media to capture all the different audiences. The most effective social media monitoring services will offer thorough coverage of all forms of social media.

**Pay for What You Need, Not What Looks “Cool”**

The unstated agreement between suppliers and consumers is: you pay more, you get more.
But it’s important for businesses to research and test subscription social media monitoring services before signing on. Many businesses often look for the wrong qualities in social media monitoring services — the “bells and whistles” — instead of purchasing the tools that deliver data and easy-to-read reports that decision-makers truly need.

In social media monitoring, actionable data doesn’t take the form of fancy, colorful charts or word clouds. Real business insights come from the content in the posts. *(Tweet this)* Instead of spending time on glossy reports, PR and marketing can better spend their time reading, understanding and responding to the posts.

Carefully monitoring social media and listening to consumer discussions can produce numerous benefits for companies, brands and non-profit organizations. Be sure tools can deliver the following benefits when choosing a service for your PR, marketing or social media strategy:

- **Track mentions.** Monitoring placements and mentions in all social media can provide clear measures of the reach and impact of PR or marketing campaigns. Assessing social media mentions also gauges how people think about the organization and its brands, and which areas may need attention.

- **Identify outreach opportunities.** In social media, important conversations about industries, brands and products take place in many different locations — not just Facebook and Twitter. Social media monitoring services should help to identify influential individuals within conversations and reveal their perspectives and positions. By monitoring carefully, companies can discover where to focus their PR, marketing and advertising efforts.

- **Gain reputation insight.** Social media commentary illuminates what people think about your organization and its brands. Straightforward customer feedback in social media helps identify any corporate or brand issues that may need to be addressed.

- **Generate sales leads.** Customers who are ready to buy often use social media to seek recommendations for products or services. Monitoring social media for words that describe products or industry categories will often turn up those
highly qualified leads.

- **Spot a crisis.** Listening to social media reveals the early warning signs of a developing crisis. Media monitoring can turn up patterns of negative comments as they develop and allow companies to respond to them and solve the issue before they go viral.

- **Create an archive.** Brands can collect and archive customer questions, complaints and resolutions. With this data, they can create a FAQ page where customers can find quick, efficient solutions.

- **Gather competitive intelligence.** Monitoring competitors on social media reveals their strengths, weaknesses, product positioning, customers, product launches, and other important insight. Often, this intelligence is not available anywhere else.

**Social Customer Service**

With social media dominating the Internet, most companies utilize the networks, especially Twitter, for customer service. This “social customer service” provides consumers with a direct outlet to brands to ask questions and voice their concerns.

Social customer service has become so common that customers now expect brands to respond — and respond quickly. Nearly half of consumers who complain on social media expect brands to respond within one hour, while about one-third expect a response within 30 minutes. *(Tweet this)*

Organizations must structure their social media strategies to meet the growing demands of their customers, and the only way they can do this is through social media monitoring.

**Social Media Monitoring Case Study: Starbucks**

Social media monitoring enables brands to provide unconventional customer experiences. Such efforts lead to happier customers, more engaged interactions and even new product ideas.

Starbucks, for example, developed a forum called “My Starbucks Ideas” that acted as a channel for customers to share product ideas and feedback. Starbucks monitored and engaged in customer conversations in the forum, encouraging them to share...
their ideas on Starbucks menu items, coffee flavors, rewards cards, drive-thrus and more.

Starbucks found that listening to customers proved a win-win for both parties: it made customers feel like their opinion mattered, and it helped Starbucks build brand loyalty.

Lesson: Brands can get plenty of ideas from customers offering help with products, services, and customer service. Social media monitoring allows brands to gather such insight and reward customers with better company products and services.
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