

Media Monitoring: The Complete Guide

*Everything You Wanted
to Know About
Media Monitoring,
But Didn't Think to Ask.*



Nobody Monitors and Measures Media Better

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Media monitoring is the process of reading, watching or listening to the editorial content of media sources, and then, identifying, saving and analyzing content that contains specific keywords or topics.

CHAPTER 1

Media Monitoring: What It Is. How It Evolved. How It's Done Now.

Media monitoring is the process of reading, watching or listening to the editorial content of media sources on a continuing basis, and then, identifying, saving and analyzing content that contains specific keywords or topics.

Key Tool for Public Relations, Marketing & Competitive Intelligence

Most companies, government agencies, not-for-profit organizations (e.g. hospitals, universities, associations, etc.) and individuals such as authors and celebrities utilize media monitoring as a tool to identify mentions of their organization, its brands and executives in news media. Some organizations also deploy media monitoring tools to track the success of their news releases, to find information about competitors and specific issues relevant to the organization, to benchmark performance against competitors, to manage corporate or brand reputation, to gather industry intelligence, to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of corporate communications, to identify new business opportunities, and other purposes.

Monitoring News Media & Social Media

Monitoring editorial content of news sources including newspapers, magazines, trade journals, TV, radio stations and the Internet is by far the most common type of media monitoring. This form of media monitoring is called “news monitoring”.

In addition to monitoring news, many organizations now also monitor social media on the Internet, tracking word of mouth mentions about their organization in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, message boards and forums. This is commonly known as social media monitoring, word-of-mouth monitoring, or buzz monitoring.

Media Monitoring Profile & Search Terms

The media monitoring process starts with the search profile and the search terms or keyword(s) or keyword phrases. The search profile contains the service terms: the media to be monitored, the type of articles and/or mentions to be delivered, the time period of the monitoring, and the method of article delivery.

The search terms are those key words or phrases that must appear in the article such as the name of the organization or its affiliates or brands. An article containing a key word is usually referred to as a “clip” or “clipping,” “news clip,” or “press clipping.” The clips are delivered either physically by

mail or as a digital file, usually via e-mail. They can also be delivered by RSS feed or via FTP feed.

In-House Media Monitoring vs. Media Monitoring Services

While some organizations use in-house staff to monitor news and social media, most companies and PR agencies outsource the function to commercial services such as CyberAlert. The commercial services can usually provide more comprehensive media coverage than in-house staff using free online news monitoring tools such as Google News and RSS Feeds. If labor costs of in-house staff are factored in, commercial media monitoring services usually deliver better results at lower cost than in-house staff. Replacing in-house media monitoring with an outsourced media monitoring service also frees staff from the tedious and time-consuming task of finding clips to do more productive work.

Media Monitoring History

Media monitoring started in the middle 1800s as press clipping services. Press clipping services (called “press cutting” in Europe) employed human readers to scan articles in printed news publications looking for the key words of multiple clients. The readers marked the keywords in articles, then used razor blades to cut out the marked articles, put the clipped articles in folders and delivered the clips via mail to the client. Most press clipping services served a limited geographic area – one country, for instance – and monitored publications in only one language.

According to studies by GE, Kodak and other organizations in the 1980s, the human readers typically missed 30 to 40% of articles containing clients’ key words, largely because the readers were quickly scanning the articles for multiple clients’ keywords, not actually reading the articles word for word.

Broadcast Monitoring History

In the 1950s, specialized broadcast monitoring companies started to monitor TV news broadcasts for mention of key words specified by their client companies. Initially, the broadcast monitoring companies used humans to watch programs, write abstracts of the content and log mentions of clients’ key words. The development of Betamax and VHS videotape recorders, along with mandated closed caption text in the U.S. for the hearing impaired, enabled the companies to record the programs and use software to search the closed caption text for clients’ key words. In the United States, that closed caption system is still in use. However, computers (not videotape recorders) are now used to record the programs. In countries that do not have closed caption text embedded in the TV broadcast signal, broadcast monitoring companies now often use speech to text software to create a character-based document which can be searched for key words. Closed caption text and the latest generation speech to text software are each about 70% to 80% complete and accurate.

According to studies, human readers typically miss 30 to 40% of articles containing clients’ key words. Software misses almost none.

Online news monitoring offers significant advantages over old-fashioned press clipping services including better media coverage, faster delivery and lower costs.

Online Media Monitoring

The growth of the Internet and World Wide Web in the 1990s gave rise to online media monitoring services such as CyberAlert, one of the pioneers of computer-based processes, to monitor online news sources. In recent years, specialized online media monitoring services have emerged to track social media for word-of-mouth or “buzz” about companies, brands, celebrities or political/economic issues. Most of the established online news monitoring services now offer integrated news and social media monitoring services.

The online media monitoring services deploy specialized software called robots, bots or spiders running on high-powered computers to quickly compile in text format the new editorial content of online news sources and social media and, then, to index all the words in those articles and postings. Once the software has compiled the content, it identifies all news articles and/or social media posts containing each client’s search terms (keywords or phrases) and then automatically clips and delivers the relevant articles or social media postings to each client. Unlike human readers in old-fashioned press clipping services, software seldom misses valid articles because it reads the entire article word for word.

Advantages of Online News Monitoring

The commercial media monitoring services offer multiple advantages when compared to old-fashioned print-based press clipping services or in-house media monitoring by staff.

Today, with rare exceptions, print publications publish all their editorial content on the publication’s Internet Web site. In fact, most traditional print publications publish substantially more content online than in the print version.

By monitoring print publications on the Internet (World Wide Web), online media monitoring services can monitor news media sources in all countries in virtually all languages. The CyberAlert 4.0 Independent News Monitoring Service, for instance, currently monitors 50,000+ online news sources in 75+ languages in 189 countries. Most news monitoring services allow customers to specify countries, languages and publications for monitoring.

Some of the services include software-based translation of foreign language news clips.

Whereas the old-fashioned press clipping services required 2 to 3 weeks to deliver clips, online media monitoring services deliver clips overnight as a standard service and usually offer near real time delivery at additional cost. Most clips are delivered by e-mail in text or HTML format but other delivery methods are available including XML and PDF via FTP transfer. The daily e-mail reports enable executives in client organizations to keep up-to-date with a fast and comprehensive overview of how their organization is being

Monitoring social media for plaudits, criticism and complaints is now crucial to protect corporate and brand reputation.

portrayed in the news and social media. The daily e-mail clip report also can provide early warning of brewing issues and problems.

With the use of Boolean logic in client queries, online media monitoring services can meet very specific and specialized media clipping requirements with great accuracy. Instead of delivering “all mentions” of a specific word, the media monitoring service can deliver a specific subset of articles and postings such as:

Monsanto AND (biotech OR genetic OR seed OR frankenfood OR “round-up ready”) AND NOT herbicide...within same paragraph.

Boolean queries can also greatly improve accuracy of clips for companies with names that are also common words such as:

(Orange OR Sprint) AND (mobile OR phone OR cell) AND NOT –fruit OR Julius OR Crush OR “track and field” within 25 characters.

As an added value, many commercial media monitoring services include media measurement data with each delivered clip. The data includes location, media type, and circulation / readership / viewership. Some commercial services include basic measurement charts and graphs with their media monitoring reports.

Social Media Monitoring

While news is clearly the core content to monitor, most organizations now recognize the growing importance of monitoring social media. What is published or uploaded in blogs, message boards, forums, Usenet news groups, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and video sharing sites such as YouTube has gained significant credence and influence. As a result, monitoring social media for plaudits, 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.

It’s possible, but inefficient, for in-house staff to utilize free online tools to monitor social media. For the most part, commercial services are more adept than in-house staff at monitoring social media, offering more comprehensive coverage, time savings, and lower overall costs.

As in news monitoring, the key is comprehensive and accurate monitoring across a wide range of social media, especially blogs, message boards, forums, complaint sites and Twitter. It’s also important to use key words on a continuing basis to monitor YouTube and other video sharing sites.

The most effective social media monitoring services offer thorough coverage of social media. The CyberAlert Social Media Monitoring Services, for example, track 5+ million social media postings each day from a universe of 50+ million blogs and 100,000+ message boards, forums, complaint sites, and Usenet news

Online clip management systems make it easier and faster to manage clips than storing paper-based news clips in folders.

groups. The service also monitors 200+ video sharing Web sites and Twitter. Monitoring these sources for criticism and complaints can be especially effective as a customer service tool – correcting problems and issues and earning the customers’ gratitude before complaints spread virally.

Corporations and not-for-profit organizations must be especially cognizant of privacy concerns and avoid using intrusive monitoring techniques for “friends only” content posted in Facebook, MySpace, Linked-In and similar social media sites.

Digital Clip Book / Clip Archive

Because online media monitoring services for both news and social media deliver clips as digital computer-based files, clip storage, management and distribution are much easier than with old-fashioned paper-based clips. Most online services store each client’s clips in a digital online archive that is available at anytime from anywhere by anyone the client authorizes. Using standard database approaches, clients can easily organize clips by date, geography (location), media type, media source, and other parameters – and sort them into appropriate folders. Most digital archives include keyword search capabilities – that is, clients are able to search their digital clip book for any key word or phrase. Most of the digital archives also make it easy to circulate clips via e-mail to others within the client organization. Some services include specialized software enabling clients to readily publish a newsletter containing their most important recent news clips.

Media Monitoring Summary

Most commercial media monitoring services are subscription based with a monthly fee for on-going service. While some services – usually ones that evolved from old-fashioned press clipping services – charge an additional fee for each delivered clip, most of the newer online services offer a fixed monthly rate with no per clip fees.

CyberAlert, Inc. offers a no-risk 14-day media monitoring free trial for both news monitoring and social media monitoring.

In summary, monitoring news and social media is a vital function to track news release placements, identify other mentions in the media about the organization, manage corporate and brand reputation, monitor competition, stay current on industry issues and other purposes. Online media monitoring services offer superior results and lower costs than in-house monitoring by staff or traditional press clipping services.

Determining Your Media Monitoring Needs

With the increased emphasis on return on investment for corporate communications, an effective media monitoring service is essential as both a media intelligence service and to demonstrate the success of the organization's public relations and social media programs.

With the Great Recession still lurking, the temptation may be to seek out the media monitoring service that appears to be least expensive. As with many B2B (business-to-business) services, however, what appears inexpensive on the surface is often not the best value or the best use of internal public relations and marketing resources.

As noted earlier, online news monitoring is superior to traditional press clipping or in-house staff monitoring because it is a) more comprehensive, monitoring more news sources in more languages in more countries b) more accurate than human readers with fewer missed clips c) more timely in its delivery of news clips either overnight or in near-real time d) more efficient clip storage in digital files instead of paper clips in folders e) additional features such as instant translation of foreign language clips, and finally, f) less costly than either traditional press clipping services that charge a monthly fee plus a per clip fee, or in-house staff using online search engines to identify news clips.

So, let's assume you have decided to subscribe to an online news monitoring service....

How do you go about selecting from the mélange of media monitoring approaches and subscription services?

Even before you contact and assess any of the commercial media monitoring services, you must understand your own requirements and the range of possibilities.

What to Monitor: News

News monitoring is the requisite for most organizations. Today, news in traditional media (newspapers, consumer magazines, trade journals, news syndication services) is best monitored on the Internet. In addition to monitoring and clipping most every print publication, online news monitoring services capture clips from thousands of online news sources that don't exist in print. These include widely viewed online news sources such as Yahoo! News and Yahoo! Finance, CNN and CNBC. In addition, Internet news monitoring offers worldwide coverage in most every language. The online news monitoring

Today, news in traditional media (newspapers, consumer magazines, trade journals, news syndication services) is best monitored on the Internet. With rare exceptions, content in print is also published on the Web.

There is no need to pay for both press clipping and online news monitoring.

Free online news monitoring services such as Google News offer good news coverage, but not as extensive as subscription media monitoring services – and using free services can be quite time-consuming.

software also misses fewer clips than human readers or digital scanners of print publications, especially broadsheet newspapers.

On balance, then, you get far more coverage and clips by monitoring online sources than through traditional press clipping services. Online monitoring is also timelier than press clippings since many publications publish stories on the Website long before the print version reaches newsstands or post offices. (Check the New York Times in the afternoon to see many of the next day's stories in the print edition.)

Press clipping services typically charge a monthly "reading" fee and an additional fee for each clip delivered. The per clip charges can mount up quickly. The monthly bills can cause billing hassles and budgeting nightmares because of the widely varying monthly charges. In contrast, online media monitoring services usually charge only a predictable fixed monthly fee with no per clip fee.

For online news monitoring, you have a wide choice of services.

Free Online News Monitoring

Free online news search engines including Google News, the leader, provide quite good coverage of the news media worldwide and up-to-the-minute search results with news clips organized by either relevance or date. Google News will send you daily e-mail alerts via e-mail listing articles containing keywords you have specified. Lately, Google News has enhanced its search features, making it easier to search specific dates.

Google News does have some shortcomings. It searches news media for key words essentially one country at a time – thereby requiring multiple searches to get multiple country results. More importantly, it doesn't necessarily deliver all found clips either in the e-mail alert or the organic results.

Online News Monitoring: Subscription Services

The subscription online news monitoring services such as the leaders CyberAlert, CustomScoop, and Meltwater offer many more features including a) automated daily search queries b) advanced Boolean logic to minimize extraneous or irrelevant clips c) online digital clip archive to store, search and manage clips d) instant software-based translation of foreign language clips and e) dynamically-created media measurement charts and graphs.

Traditional press clipping services including Burrelle'sLuce and Cision (formerly Bacon's Information) also offer online news monitoring services with similar features.

The subscription services can often customize the news monitoring to meet special client needs. Some custom features include: deliver only clips from a custom list of publications; deliver only "important" articles and avoid

“mere mentions; deliver only one copy of a syndicated article; deliver in special formats such as XML; deliver via FTP or RSS instead of e-mail; deliver at a specific local time; deliver to multiple users; deliver articles about different divisions or brands to different folders and people; deliver clips only after human reading to exclude extraneous clips; assembly of most important articles into a daily executive news brief or staff newsletter; and more.

CyberAlert is well known for customizing services to meet specific client requirements, including the special requirements of measurement and analysis services.

Broadcast Monitoring: TV News

Live TV newscasts are best monitored, not through the Internet, but through closed caption feeds or full video recordings.

Specialist TV broadcast monitors including Critical Mention, TV Eyes, and Video Monitoring Service (VMS) record the closed caption text and the audio/video of all news programs on all national TV networks and most every local TV station in the 210 designated market areas of the U.S. Burrelle’s-Luce and Cision, offer TV news monitoring in affiliation with VMS and Critical Mention, respectively.

Most every major city also has a local broadcast monitor that records local news broadcasts. Many have access to The News Data Service (NDS). This national cooperative enables local broadcast monitors access to news broadcasts and magazine/talk shows of TV networks and local TV affiliates. Each of the NDS affiliates can access the entire video database of 210 markets. Most all the services offer streaming video clips of TV news programs.

The news broadcasts of many national networks and local TV stations are often available on the Internet. Not all newscasts, or not all stories from any given newscast, may be available on the Internet.

TV networks and local TV stations often convert the live news program into text articles that they post on their Websites. These will be found by the on-line news monitoring services – signaling that your company or brand was probably mentioned on the live broadcast and you might want to take a look at the closed caption text or the video. To get a copy, just call a broadcast monitoring service and ask them to find it for you. There will be a small charge for the closed caption text and a larger charge for a video clip, depending on length, usually delivered within hours as a downloadable video file or streaming video.

This is an alternative to paying a recurring monthly fee for a TV News Monitoring service. For small and mid-size businesses (SMB) that seldom get mentioned on TV news programs, an on-going subscription to a live TV news monitoring service may not be necessary or cost-effective.

Live newscasts on TV or radio are best monitored through a service that automatically monitors and queries feeds of closed caption text.

Monitoring radio on a continuing basis for corporate or brand mentions is problematic. Services monitor only a limited number of news radio stations.

Listening to what consumers are saying in blogs, complaint sites, message boards, social networking sites and micro-blogs such as Twitter is crucial to protect corporate or brand reputation and to help improve products and services.

Free social media search engines can provide quite a good cross-section of word-of-mouth commentary by consumers, but are time-consuming to use.

Among the online news services, CyberAlert monitors the closed caption text of TV stations and delivers a text file of all relevant stories, but does not record the audio/video and does not offer streaming video. The advantage here is that you receive both online and TV news clips in the same daily clip report with the same clip archive.

Monitoring Radio News & Talk

The two major radio monitoring services are National Aircheck and Video Monitoring Service (VMS). They monitor using speech-to-text software. Ongoing coverage is limited mostly to all-news radio stations in major markets. With advance notice, they can record a specific program on most any radio station in the U.S.

If you know your organization is going to be discussed on a radio talk show or an executive will be interviewed, and you want a recording, you can ask the station for a copy, or you can provide National Aircheck or VMS with the station call letters and date/time of show, and they will record it for you.

Social Media Monitoring

If your organization wants to track what consumers are saying on the Internet about your company or brands, it's worthwhile to monitor all forms of word-of-mouth media including but not limited to, blogs and micro-blogs (such as Twitter), "complaint" sites, message boards, forums, Usenet news groups, video sharing sites (such as YouTube) and social networking services (such as Facebook and Linked In).

It's best to monitor all the different types of social media as widely as possible, since it's close to impossible to predict where or when important market intelligence will appear or where it will be repeated.

To start monitoring social media, it's probably best to start with in-house staff using free social media search engines. There are now over 100 different services for monitoring and measuring social media.

Free social media monitoring services provide reasonably good coverage of blogs. The most prominent free blog monitoring services are Technorati, Blog Pulse, IceRocket and Google Blogs. No one free blog monitoring service covers all blogs. Staff should utilize multiple blog searching services – and then filter out duplicate content.

The leading service to monitor message boards and forums is Boardreader, and it offers a free online search engine. The drawback is that its free service delivers a limited number of results – far fewer than the subscription service. Boardtracker is a newer message board monitoring service.

Staff can also use the internal search engines for Twitter, Facebook and Linked-In to search for commentary about your organization, its brands and

Subscription social media monitoring services provide more comprehensive coverage, save staff time, and provide valuable bells & whistles to manage social media posts.

The current trend is clearly toward integrated services in which one media monitoring company provides all three media intelligence services: news, broadcast, and social media.

For many organizations, the free online news and social media search engines provide sufficient media coverage and features, but free services may be costly in terms of staff time required for monitoring. Subscription services may be more cost-effective.

service. There are also a wide range of online services to monitor and organize tweets. TweetDeck seems to be the market leader at this time. Others include: Monitter, CoTweet, Trackur and TwitScoop.

The paid subscription services for social media monitoring provide more comprehensive coverage, save staff time, and provide many bells & whistles including automatic filtering of duplicate content and automated digital storage of clip results. With more than 100 such social media monitoring services, it's crucial that you vet your choice thoroughly to be sure its service matches your needs.

Radian6, Alterian M2, and Scout Labs seem to lead the pack and offer robust services.

Many of the news monitoring services also provide integrated social media monitoring. CyberAlert social media monitoring, for instance, provides comprehensive daily coverage of blogs; message boards, forums, complaint sites, and Usenet news groups; video sharing sites; and all Twitter postings.

Integrated Media Monitoring

Most client organizations currently use different monitoring services for news, broadcast, and social media, partly because the monitoring companies created silos by specializing in one of the three services. Now, however, the trend is clearly toward integrated services in which one media monitoring company provides all three media intelligence services: news, broadcast, and social media.

In order to be able to offer fully integrated media monitoring of online news plus broadcast news plus social media, the industry is entering into an interesting business model of co-opetition. That is, both cooperation/partnering and competition. Specialist companies use their own proprietary systems to do one facet of media monitoring – broadcast monitoring, for instance – and then purchase online news monitoring or social media monitoring from a competitor that specializes in that service. They then package the purchased services for resale in their own integrated media monitoring service. As one example, CyberAlert, the online news monitoring specialist, makes available to other media monitoring and public relations services its Omnibus News Service comprising all new news articles each day from over 50,000 independent news sources worldwide.

Choosing a Media Monitoring Service: Is “Free” Good Enough?

For many small and mid-size organizations, news search engines such as Google News or Yahoo News provide sufficient coverage and features. For online word-of-mouth and social media monitoring, the free blog search engines may provide sufficient coverage and search features.

Determining which custom services you want is a crucial step in implementing an effective media monitoring program for an organization.

Online subscription news monitoring services are more time efficient and may be more cost-effective than having paid staff use free online media monitoring services.

Here's how you can gauge if "free" is good enough. Do you typically receive only a few clips each day? Are those clips mostly from local media that you already read or that Google News monitors? Do you have a need for media measurement data or analysis? Do you have a limited number of key words to search? Are you willing to invest staff time to conduct news and social media searches each day on multiple search engines? Do you have the technical expertise and time to somehow store the found clips? If you can answer "yes" to all the questions, using free online search engines could well be "good enough" for you.

You must, however, recognize the true costs in terms of staff time required to perform the manual searches, de-duplicate the results and creating stored files either in print or a digital form such as a SQL database or Xcel file.

For any organization with even a modest number of media clips per month, an online subscription news monitoring service is more time efficient and may be more cost-effective than free online media monitoring services, considering the cost of staff time with in-house monitoring. That value equation is especially true of the online media monitoring services that do not charge an additional fee for each clip delivered.

In subsequent chapters, we examine in greater depth each of the three major categories of media and how best to monitor them.

CHAPTER 3

Print News Monitoring vs. Online News Monitoring

So you've decided you need a media monitoring program for your organization.

How do you go about selecting from the different approaches to news monitoring and the many media monitoring subscription services?

For most organizations, news monitoring is the core media monitoring service.

Today, news in traditional media is best monitored on the Internet. With rare exceptions, most every article that appears in newspapers, magazines and trade journals also appears in the publication's online edition.

For most organizations, news monitoring is the core service. Today, news in traditional media (newspapers, consumer magazines, trade journals, news syndication services) is best monitored on the Internet. The truth of the matter is that, with rare exceptions, most every article that appears in newspapers, magazines and trade journals also appears in the publication's online edition.

In addition to monitoring and clipping most every print publication, online news monitoring services capture clips from thousands of online news sources that don't exist in print. These include widely viewed online news sources such as Yahoo! News and Yahoo! Finance, CNN and CNBC. In addition, Internet news monitoring offers worldwide coverage in most every language.

The online news monitoring software misses fewer clips than human readers or digital scanners of print publications, especially broadsheet newspapers. On balance, then, you get far more coverage and clips by monitoring online sources than through traditional press clipping services.

Online news monitoring is also timelier than press clippings since many publications publish stories on the Website long before the print version reaches newsstands or post offices. (Check the New York Times in the afternoon to see many of the next day's stories in the print edition.)

Press clipping services typically charge a monthly "reading" fee and an additional fee for each clip delivered. The per clip charges can mount up quickly. The monthly bills can cause billing hassles and budgeting issues because of widely varying monthly charges. In contrast, online media monitoring services usually charge only a predictable fixed monthly fee with no per clip fee. In most every case, then, online news monitoring services are less expensive and offer greater value than traditional press clipping services.

For online news monitoring, you have a wide choice of services.

Free Online News Monitoring Services

First, there are free online news monitoring services – usually supported by advertising. The leader is Google News. It offers reasonably good coverage of

news sources, but not as extensive as the paid subscription services. The Google News service will send you daily news alerts via e-mail with articles containing the keywords you specify.

But there are drawbacks to free online news monitoring services that require users to invest substantial time in finding clips.

With Google News, neither the e-mail alerts nor the organic searches deliver all the clips. Google uses its algorithms to deliver only what it considers the most relevant or important articles (clips). For “market intelligence” purposes this may be adequate. For public relations monitoring and measurement, it is seriously lacking.

To get all the international clips in Google News or to monitor more than 10 key words or phrases, you have to conduct multiple daily searches -- a time-consuming and tedious process for staff. And if you enter multiple searches each day, you will undoubtedly get redundant clips in your search results. Staff will have to filter out duplicate clips manually.

The Boolean search capabilities in Google News are not as advanced as most of the paid subscription services. As a result, the free service often delivers extraneous or irrelevant articles, especially if you are searching corporate or brand names that are similar to other companies in other industries. Google News also limits searches to a maximum of 10 key words.

Google News and other free news monitoring services do not include a way to store the delivered clips. To store the clips, a staff person will have to cut and paste the clips into a database or spreadsheet – a tedious and time-consuming task – or print out each article, an expensive proposition (especially in color).

Google News also does not provide measurement/circulation data so measurement of PR success (except numbers of clips, the least important PR metric) is near impossible.

Nonetheless, for many small and mid-size organizations, news search engines such as Google News or Yahoo News provide sufficient coverage and features.

A free search engine may well meet your needs if you have just a few search terms, typically receive only a few clips each day, have no need for measurement data or tools, and are willing to invest the time to conduct multiple searches each day.

The free search services, however, are not truly free. They can be quite costly in terms of time required to do daily searches. Since the free news monitoring services do not store your clips, as do most subscription media monitoring services, there is also the cost of transferring the clips from the search engine results to a database or spreadsheet and the cost of then

Use a free search engine if you have just a few search terms, receive only a few clips each day, have no need for measurement data or tools, and can invest staff time to conduct multiple searches each day.

Subscription online news monitoring services including CyberAlert offer many features not offered by free services including more comprehensive news coverage, automated daily search queries in multiple languages, advanced Boolean logic, online digital clip archive to store, search and manage clips, PR measurement data and tools and many custom features.

It bears repeating: there is no need to pay for both a press clipping service and an online news monitoring service.

printing out clips. Searching and managing those paper-based clips is more difficult and time-consuming than the digital clips subscription services store in a fully searchable online database. Using RSS feeds will help minimize staff time devoted to media monitoring.

Paid Subscription Online News Monitoring Services

The subscription online news monitoring services including the leaders CyberAlert, CustomScoop, and Meltwater offer many features not offered by free services including: a) more comprehensive news coverage including virtually all the daily and weekly newspapers, consumer magazines, trade journals, news syndication services, news portals on the Web, websites of broadcast news organizations worldwide – all in multiple languages b) automated daily search queries in multiple languages for multiple countries with virtually unlimited search terms c) advanced Boolean logic to minimize extraneous or irrelevant clips d) online digital clip archive to store, search and manage clips e) instant software-based translation of foreign language clips f) PR measurement data attached to each news media clip g) dynamically created media measurement charts and graphs g) custom features to meet special needs.

The customized news monitoring features can assure that you get exactly the news coverage you want with a minimum investment of staff time. Do you want clips only from a custom list of specific publications — not all news sources? Do you want only "important" articles, not all mentions of your key search terms? Do you have special delivery requirements such as clip delivery throughout the business day or XML format? Do you prefer RSS delivery? Do you want the clips delivered at a specific or unusual time each day? Do you want only one copy of the same story — a press release for instance? Do you want the clips delivered to multiple people? Do you want clips automatically inserted into separate e-mails and archive folders for different clients or brands? Do you want the clips edited and packaged into a daily or weekly news briefing for executives? Do you want all news clips edited by human readers before delivery to absolutely, positively eliminate unwanted clips? Most of the specialists in online news monitoring offer these customized services.

The traditional press clipping services such as Burrelle'sLuce or Cision also offer online news monitoring services.

But don't let the press clipping services sell you both press clipping and online news monitoring. Most every article in print editions of newspapers, magazines and trade journals also appears in that publication's online edition. Some small community newspapers (mostly weeklies) and some trade journals (mostly medical and academic) do not publish all their print content on the Internet — but that's rare. In fact, abstracts of all medical journals are also available online at PubMed, a free service of the National Library of Medicine. If there are print publications that are really important to you and are not published on the web, then ask the press clipping service to monitor only those publications in print – and everything else online – in order to avoid duplicate clips and escalating variable costs.

Once you have decided what custom features you want – and have made a list of the commercial media monitoring services of interest to you – you can start contacting and vetting potential vendors.

Broadcast Monitoring for TV & Radio News

What's the role of broadcast news monitoring, sometimes referred to as TV news monitoring, in an overall corporate media monitoring program? When should you use a broadcast monitor? How do you go about selecting a broadcast monitoring service?

Broadcast Monitoring: TV News

While most print publications now publish online, the same is not true of live TV news broadcasts.

Online news monitoring services can track and deliver news articles on the websites of TV networks and local TV stations – but not live TV newscasts, at least not with the same online software.

Live newscasts in the U.S. are best monitored through closed caption feeds or full video recordings. Live TV newscast monitoring is available from specialist broadcast monitoring companies.

In the U.S., the broadcast monitoring specialists are Video Monitoring Service (VMS), TVEyes, and Critical Mention. The News Data Service (NDS) cooperative of local independent broadcast monitors also offers access to news broadcasts and magazine/talk shows of TV networks and local TV affiliates. Each of the independent local NDS affiliates can access the entire video database of 210 markets. All the broadcast monitors offer some form of streaming video clips of TV news programs.

Some online news services including CyberAlert monitor the closed caption text of TV stations and deliver a text file of all clips, not streaming video. They can also order video clips of specific news stories. The online services offer the advantage of integrated news monitoring where you receive both online and TV news clips in the same daily clip report with the same clip archive, typically at lower cost than the dedicated broadcast monitors.

The major press clipping services, Burrelle'sLuce and Cision, offer TV news monitoring in affiliation with VMS and Critical Mention, respectively.

The specialized broadcast monitoring services all offer essentially the same service – but vary in market coverage and bells & whistles features.

Essentially, the services monitor the news programs on all the TV news networks and most local TV stations in all (or most all) 210 U.S. markets. The broadcast monitoring companies record the closed caption text of the news

Specialized broadcast monitoring services monitor the news programs on TV news networks and most local TV stations, usually recording the closed caption text of news program – along with the full video and audio tracks.

Broadcast monitoring technology is not perfect. It will miss up to 20% of stories containing a client's key words.

Local organizations seldom need to pay for ongoing broadcast monitoring services.

program – that's the federally mandated text of the audio for use by the hearing impaired that you often see on sports programs in bars where it's not possible to hear the audio — and they record the full video and audio tracks.

The broadcast monitors then assemble the closed caption text into a searchable database for each day's news programming. With software similar to Google's online search engine, they can search that text database for virtually any key word or phrase including but not limited to corporate, brand or executive names each day, then find and deliver the video clips to their subscribers.

The technology of broadcast monitoring is quite good, but it does have some glitches. The quality of the closed caption searching capabilities differs from monitor to monitor. About 80% of any given newscast will be covered by closed caption text, including all of the commentary that the news anchor is reading from a Teleprompter. Closed caption text is often missing on live remote commentary by field reporters. If a key word is mentioned during a "live remote", the monitoring service may miss the clip. Since the services monitor text, they usually miss any visual references, the McDonald's sign or Nike symbols on uniforms, for instance.

Unlike online news monitoring where misspellings are rare, closed caption text – usually typed by humans often on the fly in real time – contains quite a few misspellings. In broadcast monitoring, it's therefore important to search for common misspellings of corporate, brand and executive names.

Most broadcast monitors now offer streaming video and online search engines for their subscriber clients. With streaming video, the recorded audio/video tracks are available to be seen online by subscribers very shortly after the live broadcast. The broadcast monitoring service automatically monitors for key words requested by clients and delivers e-mail or text alerts when it identifies a new clip. In addition, most services permit subscribers themselves to enter search terms to quickly find stories on additional topics.

Who Should Subscribe to a Broadcast Monitoring Service?

Not all organizations require an ongoing subscription to a broadcast monitoring service – which typically cost \$500/mo or more.

If your organization typically appears only on local TV news programs a few times per year, then a subscription service is probably unnecessary. In these cases, you'll likely know about the TV news story in advance or one of your employees or friends will have seen the TV news story. In addition to employees, friends and family, the online news monitoring service you use may also pick up on online reference to the story from the website of the local TV station.

If you learn about a TV news story that has appeared about your organization and you'd like to see it, you can contact one of the broadcast monitor-

National organizations that appear frequently in TV news stories need an ongoing broadcast monitoring service to assure being up to date on news being broadcast about the organization and its brands.

Radio is difficult to monitor. Services monitor only a limited number of all-news & talk stations.

ing services and ask if they have the story and can supply you with a clip. Typically, the local broadcast monitoring affiliate of the News Data Service is the most likely to have the story since they are closest to the local market, will be the most cooperative in finding the story and copying the clip, and likely charge the lowest price. There will be a charge for the edited transcript of the closed caption text and a larger fee for a video clip, usually delivered as a downloadable MPG file or on a DVD.

For national organizations with more than a modest number of TV media clips per month, an ongoing subscription to a broadcast monitoring service is likely a good investment to assure the organization is up to date on all the news being broadcast about the organization and its brands in U.S. markets. In times of PR crisis such as a product recall, broadcast monitoring is an essential service to keep up-to-the-minute on all reports and be able to respond in a timely way.

For companies with large numbers of TV clips each year, subscription services that charge a fixed monthly rate with no per clip fee offer the best value.

Broadcast Monitoring: Radio News & Talk

Radio is more difficult to monitor than TV. There are far more stations; there is no closed caption text.

Two companies monitor radio news: National Aircheck and Video Monitoring Service (VMS).

If you know a person is going to appear on a radio talk show and you want a recording, the interviewee can ask the station for a copy, or you can contact National Aircheck or VMS in advance and they will arrange to record the interview over the air. National Aircheck also records all the news programming on all news stations in major cities and many of the nationally syndicated talk radio shows, as does VMS. If you know what you want – say the Sunday 10:00 am news on WCBS all news radio in New York – they can probably deliver it.

Monitoring on a continuing basis for corporate or brand mentions, however, is more problematic. The companies use speech to text software to produce transcriptions of the news – but... and there are buts: the software, though it has gotten much better in the past few years, is still less than 80% accurate (even less if the speaker has an accent) and, the bottom line is that, the radio monitoring services don't monitor very many stations, largely focusing on all news/talk radio stations in major markets.

Once you have decided what you want to cover – and have made a list of the broadcast monitoring services of interest to you – you can start contacting and vetting potential vendors.

Include in your assessment the national broadcast monitoring companies such as Critical Mention, TVEyes, and Video Monitoring Service. The broadcast monitoring service located in your city may be a good place to start, especially if it's affiliated with News Data Service which enables the local company to provide national coverage. Unfortunately, the websites of the International Association of Broadcast Monitors and News Data Service do not allow customers to search for the names of the local broadcast monitoring companies by city. At the moment, the best way to find a local independent broadcast monitor is the Google search engine with the search term "broadcast monitoring services" AND "name of city".

Selecting a Social Media Monitoring Service

The social web is a fast-growing and fast-changing “platform” for consumers to discuss companies and products.

Definition: Social Media Monitoring

Social media monitoring is the process of listening to these online consumer reviews and conversations about your company, its brands and services.

The overarching goal of social media monitoring is to learn from listening – learn the consumer’s concerns about your company and its industry, and then use that knowledge to improve your products and services.

Social Media Monitoring Services

Your social media listening strategy should encompass all forms of word of mouth media and consumer discussion including but not limited to blogs, “complaint” sites, message boards, forums, Usenet news groups, and video sharing sites such as YouTube. You should also monitor social community sites like Facebook, MySpace and Linked-In, along with Twitter, the microblog.

Social media monitoring services monitor all forms of social media – but not all services monitor all media.

The services use specialized software to aggregate social media postings from multiple sources, index all the content on a near-continuous basis, query the index using the client’s key words and identify consumer posts of interest, and then deliver the relevant posts to the client.

Since it’s impossible to predict where or when important market intelligence will “pop up” on the Web — or where it will be repeated or “go viral”, it’s best to monitor the widest possible range of social media.

Market Intelligence vs. Worthless Chatter

Social media overflows with inane chatter. If McDonald’s monitors social media, over 90% of the corporate mentions will be similar to “I’m going to McDonald’s” or “I’m meeting (name) at McDonald’s” – not very useful for market intelligence purposes.

Sharply focused search queries help weed out idle chatter. As an example, McDonald’s could focus social media monitoring on specific product names (brands) instead of the corporate name. Or it could automatically delete clips by putting an “and not” Boolean operator on the phrase “going to” or

Social media monitoring is the process of listening to online consumer reviews and conversations about your company, its brands and services.

Effective social media listening requires monitoring all forms of online consumer discussion – not just blogs or Twitter.

The goal is to learn how customers feel about your company and services – and to correct problems.

Start by monitoring social media for your corporate name, your brands and the services you offer.

Determine what department and person will coordinate social media monitoring – and how other departments will be involved.

Use free online social media monitoring tools to start. While it may not be perfect, social media monitoring performed by in-house staff with free tools may be “good enough”.

“meet”. That type of clip avoidance strategy will likely delete a bit of worthwhile conversation, but will certainly minimize useless chatter to be reviewed.

If your company is using social media monitoring as a customer service tool, it's important to see all mentions to sort out and act on complaints and compliments.

What should you be listening for?

As a starting point, monitor for your corporate name, your brands, the services you offer, and the names of key executives.

Initially, just start looking for complaints, compliments and questions about your company. Look for any serious issues that need to be corrected. Look for patterns or trends that are emerging – positive or negative. Initially, there is no need to perform any serious measurement, especially if your company is not large.

Later, you may want to expand your listening to encompass competitors and industry-specific issues – and also do some formal measurement of social media conversation.

Who in the organization should do the listening?

The answer to “who should listen?” will emerge from the central reason or the combination of reasons your organization wants to monitor social media

Is it to find service complaints and rectify them? Then “customer service” should listen and react – often called “engagement” in social media circles.

Is the reason to identify issues with product performance? Then marketing or product development should be listening.

Is it to monitor corporate reputation? Then the public relations department should be listening.

In large corporations, multiple departments should be involved in the listening process.

How to listen?

Using free social media search engines can provide quite a good cross-section of word-of-mouth commentary by consumers on the Web. For blogs, try Technorati, Google Blogs and Ice Rocket. Searching multiple services causes a problem of duplicate content that you'll need to filter out – something that commercial media monitoring services do automatically.

For message boards and forums (which may be even more important to moni-

tor than blogs), try BoardReader which covers about 50,000 different online consumer discussion sites.

For Twitter, FaceBook and Linked-In, just sign up as a member and start using each service's search engine.

The downside of free search services is the time required to conduct the searches. In fact, it may not be the most productive use of in-house staff. Staff time is better used for analyzing, not searching.

If there are a limited number of new posts each day, it may be acceptable to monitor less frequently. But at least occasional social media monitoring is mandatory to understand any consumer issues and to protect the business reputation.

Bottom Line: free social media search engines may well meet your needs if you have just a few search terms, typically receive only a few new postings each day, are willing to invest the time to conduct searches on a regular schedule using multiple free services, and have no need for advanced services to measure the quantity, reach, and tone of the social media postings. While it may not be perfect, free media monitoring performed by in-house staff may be "good enough". You must recognize, however, that it isn't truly "free". The staff time investment must have an adequate return.

Commercial Social Media Monitoring Services

The paid subscription services for social media monitoring provide more comprehensive coverage, save staff time, and provide many bells & whistles including online clip archives to manage the social media posts, and automated quantitative and qualitative measurement of the posts.

Prominent social media monitoring services include Radian6, Alterian M2, Trackur, and Scout Labs. Presently, more than 50 companies compete in the social media monitoring and measurement space. There is a "wiki" of social media monitoring solutions at <http://wiki.kenburbery.com/> that continually updates the growing number of social media monitoring services. The Yahoo! Directory also contains a comprehensive list of social media monitoring services.

Many of the well-established news monitoring services provide integrated social media monitoring. CyberAlert, for instance, in addition to its online news monitoring service, provides comprehensive daily coverage of 50+ million blogs; 100,000+ message boards, forums, complaint sites, and Usenet news groups; 200+ video sharing sites like YouTube; and all Twitter postings for the previous 24 hours.

The social media monitoring services vary widely in their "raison d'être" and in their deliverables. In screening the companies, it's vital to match their mission with your need. It's vital to do your homework in advance and narrow down your vendor list before contacting services.

Subscription social media monitoring services provide more comprehensive coverage, save staff time, provide online clip archives to manage posts, and include automated quantitative and qualitative measurement of posts.

Social media monitoring services differ greatly in capabilities. Question vendors carefully to fully understand each service's features.

Assessing Social Media Monitoring Services

Questions to ask in assessing social media monitoring services:

What's the primary purpose of your service?

Who are your key customers? What internal department is the primary client contact point for your service?

What's your service best at doing?

Exactly what social media do you cover? How do you aggregate content? May I add blogs or message boards of special interest to our company?

Do you cover "complaint" sites? Which ones?

Do you monitor Twitter?

Do you cover and exactly what content do you harvest from Facebook, MySpace, and Linked-In?

Can your search engine perform Boolean queries? What Boolean operands does it use? Is it capable of using regular expressions? How many keywords may I use in my queries?

Does your service include a searchable archive of social media posts? What are its features? Ask for a demo of the archive.

How do you differ from (another service you are evaluating)?

Who is your best competitor? Why are you better than they are?

What enhancements do you plan to your service in the next 60 days? Six months? One year?

Many of the services offer a comprehensive demo or, even better, a "test drive" of the service. That's unquestionably the best way to sort through the features and benefits of the various vendors.

Summary

As a new and rapidly evolving media, online consumer discussion and social communities form the "wild west" of monitoring. No solution is perfect. But for most every company, some social media monitoring solution is necessary. The temptation is to jump into the social media landscape full bore. But, the "full service" solution of listening, measuring and engagement may not be the best solution to meet your needs. Determining your needs before contacting or meeting with vendors is the most effective way to start the process. Even with general specifications in hand, you're far more apt to contract with an appropriate service – and not buy more than you need.

About the Author:

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About the Sponsor:

CyberAlert (www.cyberalert.com) is a worldwide media monitoring company for both news and social media. Each day, CyberAlert monitors 50,000+ on-line news sources (newspapers, magazines, trade journals, syndication services, TV stations, Internet-based news services) in 75+ languages in 189 countries. It also monitors the closed caption text of TV network news and news programs on local TV stations. In social media, it monitors 50+ million blogs, 100,000 message boards/forums/complaint sites, 200+ video sharing sites and Twitter tweets. CyberAlert offers a 14-day no-risk free media monitoring trial of all its services.

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Nobody Monitors and Measures Media Better

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