

SOCIAL MEDIA

NEWS MEDIA

INTERNAL DATA



BOOLEAN KEYWORD CORPUS

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

HUMAN ANALYSIS

STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE

2020 Media Monitoring Buyer's Guide

by Eric Schwartzman

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ERIC SCHWARTZMAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Media monitoring services began helping clients by finding news clippings of articles they were mentioned in. However, with the transition to digital and network distribution, news media monitoring has become an opportunity to gather business intelligence.

From the client's perspective, one of the biggest challenges when considering switching to a new media monitoring service is training staff to learn to use it and integrating it into their PR tech stack.

While many public relations professionals use all-in-one PR enablement platforms — providing news and social media monitoring, newswire distribution, a database of journalists with their contact information, and analytics for reporting — others integrate best-of-breed solutions from different providers.

When a company switches news media monitoring providers, they have to teach their employees how to use the new service in order to capture relevant results, set up accurate reports, create useful visualizations, build media and influencer lists, and so on.

"How hard is it to tune your solution to get what I want? Buyers only care about themselves, and that's understandable. They're right. They should be. How do I get this solution to give me what I need? It's a lot of work so they want to know how easy it is to do that," says Golin's digital chief, Jonny Bentwood.

Beyond AI Hype

Most media monitoring services claim they already have artificial intelligence that's capable of accurately automating sentiment analysis.

It's easy to count and score keywords in sentences for sentiment. But when you consider the multiple ideas, concepts, topics and sub-topics that can be included in a single news article, accurately interpreting sentiment requires more than just natural language processing. What's required is natural language understanding.

For a number of reasons discussed in this paper, while AI can help process language in some narrow areas, when it comes to truly understanding language, it's just not there yet — and according to most data scientists, it probably won't be for another 40–50 years.

There's also a chance we will never be able to build machines that can reason as well as humans can.

Broadest Coverage

Most media monitoring providers claim to have access to more media outlets than their competitors. But just as you don't necessarily know all of the stations included in your cable TV subscription, nearly all media monitoring service providers refrain from publishing a public list of the outlets they cover, because it's challenging to keep that list current.

A lack of standards with respect to how media outlets publish their news online makes it equally challenging for media monitoring providers to keep track of just how much of an outlet's coverage gets monitored. And rightly so.

"There's no set schema for a pivot table with all the news that's available in every database from every outlet," says Johna Burke, Global Managing Director, **AMEC** (International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication).



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Johna Burke

*Global Managing Director,
AMEC (International
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Up to now, clients have not demanded a high level of accuracy when it comes to who covers what, and when they do, media monitoring sales reps respond to client queries manually to get and keep clients on their platforms. Unless the public relations industry pushes back to level set expectations here, murky promises about broad coverage will likely persist.

The bottom line is that figuring out which news media monitoring services cover which news media outlets, and whether or not they deliver just a snippet, the entire text, photos, graphics, and easy access to other articles from that same reporter, is a high-touch, laborious process.

News Media Filtering

Most media monitoring services are accessing the same information. Some through partnerships with Critical Mention, Factiva, LexisNexis, Talkwalker or TVEyes. Others are scraping their own snippets without a license to deliver the full text of the article, so you get an excerpt of the story you're mentioned in with a link to the publishing source, which may be behind a paywall.

What's important to understand is that the technology and human support behind the news media monitoring you choose is just as critical as the breadth of news that service has access to.

Separating Boolean queries from narrow AI filters in a two-step process helps, but fully automated solutions also make it a little too easy for novice users to over-filter and miss out on key results, which is why a solid onboarding program with ongoing user training is something buyers should ask about before deciding which media monitoring platform to go with.

Don't get too distracted by the aesthetics of a media monitoring platform.

“The look and feel of a dashboard is at best tertiary for very serious people looking for insights and measurement because they aren’t just producing a report for the executive team. Rather, they’re using it as a piece of their data stack and generating competitive insights,” says Burke.

Big Picture

While there's no shortage of media monitoring solutions, evaluate the people behind the technology and go with who promises to give you whatever support you need to get and keep the service working properly.

Everyone says that they monitor more media outlets than their competitors, so work with your rep to make sure the service indexes the outlets you want and find out if it delivers the whole article or just a portion.

Be particularly wary of artificial intelligence features that claim to be able to understand and automatically analyze each story or conversation. Meaning is not currently understood by machines because meaning is related to the world, and current systems do not have sufficient world knowledge to understand and digest conversations. More on this in the section on AI.

If you're looking for a seat at the boardroom table, you want a media monitoring service that supersedes clip reports and helps you extract the kind of quantitative business intelligence that matters to the C-suite. If you're focused more on media relations, go with the tool that has the features you need — like logo search and podcast monitoring — and makes it easiest to find and report on your coverage and digest conversations.



DEFINING OBJECTIVES

When it comes to monitoring, measurement and evaluation, listening for trends is very different to monitoring for mentions, so know your priorities.

Before you start, ask the CEO or the CMO what success looks like. “The only way to start a measurement program is by being very clear on your objectives,” says **Katie Paine**, CEO of **Paine Publishing**. “Nine times out of 10 they’ll say your objective is protecting their reputation.”

To do that, you need to be able to capture and analyze what’s being said about your company, your competitors and the categories in which you compete so you can determine what the widespread beliefs are about your organization or brand.

The challenge is trying to truly digest and summarize a large number of articles and online conversations and analyze what’s being said with the aid of machines that don’t understand the meaning of the keywords and phrases they’re monitoring. When defining your objectives, understand that if accuracy is mission critical, you’ll need to allocate human resources to determine widespread beliefs, because media monitoring platforms can’t do that.

When considering the different media monitoring platforms, rather than focus solely on breadth and depth of content or fancy AI filters, figure out if the platform has the features and capabilities you need to achieve your objectives.

“Do you really need broadcast? Because in my experience, everything winds up online anyway. Do you really need to spend an extra \$24k a year, cause that’s how much it could cost. Who’s going to be doing set-up? Do you have a team of data scientists who can write Boolean or are you going to be relying on them to do it? What about reporting? Do you want automated reports or are you going to be doing that yourself? A lot of the automated reports are very pretty, but do they show value?,” asks Bentwood

Media Monitoring Interview Questions

To help assist you when talking to media monitoring platform providers, here’s a list of questions you can use to review their features:

- 
1. Does it get everything or just a snippet?
 2. Does it get photos and graphics?
 3. What outlets do we need and does it capture them?
 4. If it doesn't, can those outlets be added?
 5. Does it do social and traditional?
 6. How many KPI's are available to choose from on your platform?
 7. Does it have historic data?
 8. Can I bring in third-party data and run comparisons?
 9. Can I bring in usage data from my social networking profiles?
 10. Does it have language translation?
 11. Does it have image recognition so you can search images and video for logos?
 12. Does it measure KPIs around engagement?
 13. Does it understand virality, can I set my own virality parameters and how is viral amplification presented/displayed?
 14. Can I group the media outlets that matter most to me?
 15. Are there advanced, rules-based alerts you can set up via email and text?
 16. Instagram is notoriously difficult to monitor. To what extent can they get such data? If they say they can get all of Instagram's data they're either scraping it illegally or lying.
 17. Have you looked at the artificial intelligence layer and evaluated specific articles for relevancy or sentiment scores?



MEDIA MONITORING CHALLENGES

There's a reason why there are hundreds of different cars on the market: there are different drivers, different commutes, and different use cases. The same is true of media monitoring, which is why there are so many providers to choose from based on what you're trying to accomplish.

Artificial Intelligence

If Google knows what I want to search, Amazon knows what I want to buy, and Netflix knows what I want to watch, why can't media monitoring platforms find and show me relevant news and online conversations?

It's a fair question, the answer to which relies on a basic understanding of what artificial intelligence is, and what it isn't.

Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) can do anything a human can do, which is well beyond the scope of recommendation engines that are optimized to make suggestions based on patterns in structured data.

After decades of academic research, we are beginning to see the promise of AI in software products that use neural networks to solve problems that have quantitative answers.

Rather than take a rules-based approach — like the popular **IFTTT** tool or the use of Boolean queries to filter text — neural networks make decisions on their own by sifting through mountains of structured data.

However, that data must be parsed into a consistent scheme of classes, and news articles are unstructured and unparsed. If it's not parsed, AI struggles to interpret it. Neural networks can only accurately compare apples to apples, which is a long way from reputation management.

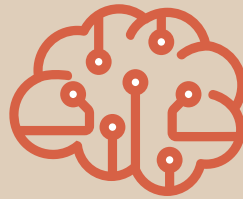
In order for a neural network to make an accurate decision, it needs relevant, structured data, a good algorithm, a narrow domain, and an unambiguous problem.

This type of AI — which is nothing close to AGI — is good at processing organized, structured data, such as financial statements or health insurance claims. News and conversations are the polar opposite.

Deep learning examines data from a single domain and makes decisions to achieve a specific, quantitative outcome.

Unlike financial data, news and social media are unstructured, culled from a broad domain of global sources with no consistent standards, complicated by slang, sarcasm and emotions.

So while neural networks are no doubt impressive and exciting, they are incomparable to humans when it comes to natural language understanding.



“Getting to AGI would require a series of foundational scientific breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, a string of advances on the scale of, or greater than, deep learning. These breakthroughs would need to remove key constraints on the ‘narrow AI’ programs that we run today and empower them with a wide array of new abilities: multi-domain learning; domain-independent learning; natural language processing; common-sense reasoning; planning and learning from a small number of examples. Taking the next step to emotionally intelligent robots may require self awareness, humor, love, empathy and appreciation for beauty. These are the key hurdles that separate what AI does today — spotting correlations in data and making predictions — and artificial general intelligence.”

Excerpt from **AI Superpowers** by
Kai-Fu Lee, former president of Google China

At a high level, the goal of media monitoring for corporate communicators — who essentially shepherd brands based on messages and relationships — is to track message penetration.

In other words, you have a message and you have media targets. Rather than just counting keyword mentions in articles, the more important goal of media monitoring is to determine if your media targets are repeating your messages.

Tracking message penetration is less about aggregating articles and conversations based on keywords than it is about understanding and identifying that medium based on ideas, topics and sub-topics.

Unfortunately, this requires a level of natural language processing sophistication and common-sense reasoning that automated solutions still cannot deliver. This requires artificial general intelligence.

If we had AGI, it would spare us the manual Boolean rules-based approach to keyword filtering and instead assemble a list of articles, stories and conversations automatically. Theoretically, a media monitoring platform with true AGI would read clips, digest nuances, interpret sentiment and summarize the results.

But this is far, far beyond the scope of today's neural networks.

Apples to Oranges

Unlike technologies that make it easier to perform a specific task, like the food processor or the typewriter, artificial intelligence is general-purpose technology, like electricity and information technology.

General-purpose technologies have sweeping economic impact, and **PwC predicts AI will add \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030.** Much of that growth will come from automation, which will essentially replace humans with machines.

The good news is that the risk of public relations being replaced by AI is among the lowest for all careers. Tasks that don't require

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social interaction and that can be optimized with data are likely to be replaced by automation. But interacting naturally with people, performing creative tasks, and applying cross-domain critical thinking are uniquely human skills. “I want people who can tell me what something means and what I should do about it,” says Bentwood.

The bad news is, Boolean scripting isn’t going away. For the foreseeable future, you still need to manually filter, read and analyze your media clips. And you need to take the automated, AI-powered relevancy and sentiment scoring features baked into most media monitoring services with a healthy dose of skepticism.

Determining the true business impact of news and social media conversations is anything but straightforward. It’s one thing to optimize structured data to achieve a specific outcome; it’s far more difficult to analyze concepts and draw conclusions.

The unspoken truth is, media monitoring is not an apples to apples process. It’s apples to oranges, and without AGI, the technology is just not there yet.

Debunking Fake News

This is the age of narrow AI, not AGI, which explains why machines can’t solve the fake news problem and why social networks are legitimately perplexed at how to address this challenge.

“If you think about the problem of fake news, first the machine has to understand everything that’s the truth, because only then, when you understand everything that’s true, can you say whether something is fake,” says Jurij Leskovec, Chief Scientist at Pinterest, and Associate Professor of Computer Science at Stanford.

“Debunking certain things may be easy. But certain things may be very, very hard. Basically, what you are asking is, can I build a machine that knows all the truth in the world, so that then I can say what is truthful and what is not,” says Leskovec.

Buyers should keep this in mind when they hear promises from sales reps about the accuracy of a news media monitoring platform’s AI capabilities.

Beyond Clip Reports

As the task of media monitoring grew beyond counting press mentions and evolved into competitive intelligence based on message penetration and share of voice, media monitoring platform providers expanded their feature sets to help clients track more than just what was being said about them.

In his book **Outside Insight**, Meltwater CEO Jorn Lysengen suggests monitoring changes in press release boilerplate paragraphs as a way of determining a company’s strategic direction. He also writes about monitoring your competitors’ job posts to get a sense of their

product development priorities and sales expansion goals. By monitoring these types of competitive markers, Lyssegen suggests you can benchmark yourself against a control group. The ability to monitor unstructured, external media in competitive

environments should be used to gut check and counterbalance the accuracy of the internal metrics that management uses to make business decisions, argues Lyssegen. In his book's appendix, Lyssegen offers the following chart as a baseline for external intelligence gathering:

Competitive arena	How it is measured	Measurement
Strength of brand	Measures the strength and size of your online footprint. The key drivers will be mentions in news and social media. Sentiment is carefully assessed to understand whether media mentions are advantageous or not.	Net number of people you have touched with a positive sentiment.
Client satisfaction	Measures the social media feedback on your products and services.	The percentage of feedback you receive through social media that is positive.
Online ad spend	The default licence estimates spend on the Google search engine.	Money spent on Google ads.
Hiring	Tracks the hiring pattern that is announced in the public domain.	Number of new hires.

From **Outside Insight** by Jorn Lyssegen



Photo by Matheus Cenali on Unsplash

"Apple is one of my clients. It learns whether I'm talking about Apple the company, Apple the record label, or apple the fruit. That's where I'm seeing AI."

- Jonny Bentwood
Golin's Digital Chief

Other CEOs agree with Lyssegran. "We are looking for correlations between stock prices and strategic messages," says Eric Koefoot, CEO at **PublicRelay**, whose clients want to see which messages lift stock prices, and the number of days between the introduction of that message and any uplift. For example, do messages about innovation have a greater impact on stock price than messages about trustworthiness?

The challenge here is distinguishing correlation from causation. Just because two measures move in the same direction at the same time doesn't prove a cause-and-effect relationship.

Relevancy

Some words have multiple meanings, which can complicate news media monitoring efforts.

"Apple is one of my clients. It learns whether I'm talking about Apple the company, Apple the record label, or apple the fruit. That's where I'm seeing AI. I'm not yet seeing it as much in the other areas. It's mostly around contextual learning of words, phrases, relevance or emotional context," says Bentwood.

"Let's say you're using a tool and tracking a keyword and all of a sudden one of your keywords wind up in a popular song and your results spike like crazy, but it's got nothing to do with your business. Unfortunately, a lot of solutions can't clean that stuff out of there and so you see these giant spikes in the charts and the

graphs and you go in there and you see the data's all bad. It's so noisy. That's the dirty little secret of data today," says Koefoot.

Imagine what that means for a public relations person relying on Boolean keyword queries to measure share of voice.

Sentiment

With any piece of content, multiple topics are usually addressed, and each one of these topics requires a unique assessment for sentiment and tone.

Assigning a single article sentiment category is inaccurate. Within each story there will be multiple messages, and multiple sentiments, which might be positive on message A and negative on message B — a crucial distinction when analyzing media.

Public relations is about communicating complex ideas, concepts, topics and subtopics to key stakeholders. It's not about keywords and phrases, and therein lies the rub when it comes to applying narrow AI to media monitoring. Certain tasks in the analysis of media do require a human perspective.

"For a study we did, our analysts reviewed over 100,000 articles for sentiment and compared the results to IBM Watson, and what we found was 90% of the time Watson was wrong," says Koefoot. "Watson was programmatically biased to seek out any way to

assess sentiment, which is not how the world works. You don't seek out sentiment when there's none. When a word is used, it doesn't mean it's always used in a way that conveys sentiment. It could just be conveying a fact."

Fully automated solutions lack the technical sophistication to accurately determine sentiment because they lack knowledge and understanding. "At this point we don't have machine learning with knowledge. That's the next big step we're working on," says Georg Gottlob, Professor of Informatics at Oxford University, and CSO at DeepReason.ai.

Concepts vs. Keywords

Some customers are monitoring for concepts that are difficult to define with Boolean scripting.

When I served as a **Special Advisor on Climate Communications** at US Dept of State, I set up a news and social media monitoring service to separately follow the following climate-related issues:

1. Conservation & Water
2. Environmental Quality & Transboundary
3. Global Climate Change
4. International Health & Biodiversity
5. Marine Conservation
6. Oceans & Polar Issues
7. Science Tech Cooperative
8. Space & Advanced Technology
9. Wildlife Trafficking

In addition to understanding which issues were resonating internationally, US climate negotiators were headed to the UNFCCC Climate Conference in Paris and wanted a dashboard that would show them which issues were most important in each of the countries in attendance.

Through human analysis, trial and error, I built a Boolean keyword corpus for each of these nine topics. Here's what the Oceans & Polar Issues keywords were:

Oceans & Polar Issues Corpus

contains	also contains	does not contain
acidification	#ocean	LGBT
antarctic treaty	"climate change"	god
antarctica AND environment	environment	furniture
antarctica AND "ice sheet"	"global warming"	
arctic council	ocean	
atmospheric AND ocean	policy	
biodiversity AND ocean	save	
environmental protection in antarctica		
freedom of navigation		
glaciers melting		
greenland AND "ice sheet"		
indigenous AND antarctica AND "sustainable development"		
"indigenous people" AND arctic		
law of the sea		
maritime security		
mercury AND contaminated		
mercury AND contamination		
"ocean acidification"		
"ocean health"		
"our ocean"		
pollution AND ocean		
reef AND pollution		
"rising sea level"		
"sea ice"		
"sea level" AND "coastal communities"		
"sea level rise"		
thawing		

The keywords were collected from extensive research, including Naomi Klein's book, **This Changes Everything**, which was hugely helpful. The negative keywords were added later to exclude off-topic results, but it's easy to imagine how they could also result in filtering out relevant results as well, which is a big challenge when it comes to manual keyword filtering.

Consider the implications of misinterpreting the data in this situation, with negotiators relying on the dashboard for information on which issues resonate most on a country-by-country basis. An automated sentiment analysis

tool that counts keywords but can't interpret meaning would never be able to make sense of unstructured news and social media posts. The result would be as disastrous as the issue of climate change.

For another media monitoring project, **I was retained by Inter American Development Bank** to conduct a study on discussions in the news and on social media in English, Spanish and Portuguese about sustainable business development in South America and the Caribbean.

Here's an example of a small section from a trilingual keyword corpus I built for this study, with the help of native Spanish and Portuguese speakers:

English	Spanish	Portuguese
Regional development banks	Los bancos del desarrollo regional	Banco regional de desenvolvimento
Urban development bank	El banco del desarrollo urbano	Banco de desenvolvimento urbano
Bank for development of	El banco para el desarrollo de la	Banco para o desenvolvimento da
Business development	Bancaria del desarrollo de la empresa	Desenvolvimento de negócios bancários
Private sector finance	Las finanzas del sector privado	Financiamento do setor privado
Private development finance	La finanzas del desarrollo privado	Financiamento de desenvolvimento privado
Multilateral investment fund	El fondo de inversiones multilateral	Fundo multilateral de investimentos

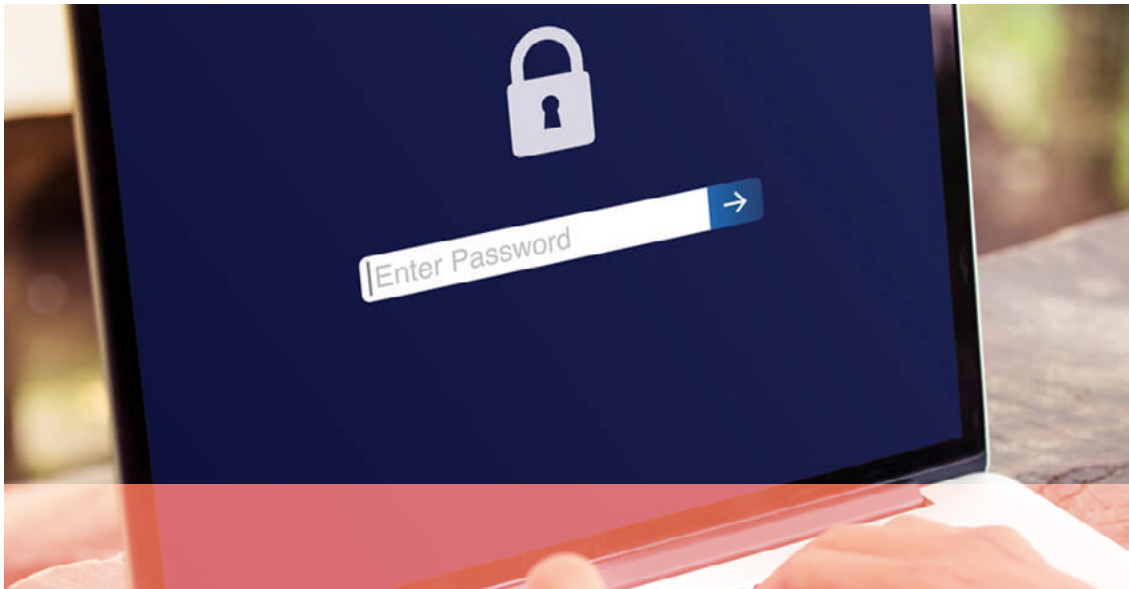
We limited our queries geographically and captured literally hundreds of thousands of articles and conversations. There was no way to manually read them all, so we analyzed sample batches and tweaked our filters accordingly to improve statistical relevancy and ferret out off-topic results.

Ultimately, we found across all media types that clean energy was the most discussed topic in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the majority of these conversations occurring in Brazil and Mexico. The second most popular topic were environmental issues, the third was agriculture, and the fourth was education and leadership.

However, we could not confidently make any claims about the sentiment or tone of these conversations, despite the allegedly accurate sentiment analysis filters at our disposal.



Photo by Angie Warren on Unsplash



Passwords & Firewalls

When it comes to monitoring mainstream media, the next big challenge is accessing content that's password protected or sequestered behind a paywall.

This is where LexisNexis and Factiva outperform, because they have licensing deals in place with news media publishers who allow them to display the full text of their articles. Their access is much better than Google News.

The biggest problem with free news search engines is in the breadth and depth of their content. Many newspapers, magazines and business journals don't make all of their content available for free online, so the complete set of articles and features they publish will not be indexed by free news search engines.

Some publications provide online access to subscribers only. Others protect their content with a registration screen. Non-subscribers can register for free, pay to register, pay to access premium content, or are sometimes just plain locked out.

The amount and type of "premium" or subscription-based content being made available online varies widely from one publisher to another. None of the media monitoring platforms maintain a list you can reference to see the breadth and depth of content they have access to, so figuring that out is a manual process, according to a **white paper** from Burrelles.

Advanced Filtering

With any given media monitoring tool, it's always more complex to filter news than most people realize.

There's a tremendous amount of noise out there, and only so many limits you can set for what a tool can do. Whether it's Boolean or word proximity, you may think you're getting accurate data, but a lot of the time you've choked it down so much you're actually missing a lot of stuff.

If you choke it down so much that only good stuff gets through, the trouble is there's actually a lot of good stuff that doesn't get through. You start to miss things. And that's one of the biggest challenges of media monitoring: finding that balance between irrelevant and critical articles.

It's this constant tug of war that makes media monitoring so challenging. The two most common filtering errors are:

Type A Errors —

Under-filtering, so irrelevant stories make their way through.

Type B Errors —

Over-filtering, so good stories don't make their way through.

These are the biggest practical challenges in media monitoring today.

To keep the error rate as low as possible, PublicRelay uses human analysts. "It's virtually impossible to do that with technology alone," says Koefoot.

"A lot of times you get false positives, so if you can have a system that enables you to write really complex Boolean, beyond the ANDs, ORs or NOTs, to get down to a really high degree of definition, that's going to save my time in the long run," says Bentwood.



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Jonny Bentwood
Golin's Digital Chief

Measuring for Business Impact

To effectively measure the business impact of PR, you need two things. First, you need quantifiable metrics. But second — and perhaps more importantly — you need to know how to present your metrics in language the CEO understands.

PR has always wanted a seat at the boardroom table. But if you're talking about metrics like message pull through and share of voice to a CEO focused on revenue and margins, you're speaking the wrong language. Change the narrative by focusing on the customer journey because the lead to revenue path drives bottom line value.

Today customer journeys, rather than media impressions, inform public relations strategies. One retailer tied PR's variable compensation to awareness and it went through the roof. But as awareness increased, purchase consideration decreased.

"When we talk about impressions, let me just say circulation is a ridiculously stupid metric I would never go near because it has nothing to do with how many people actually see it. I prefer engagement: how many people have acted upon it," says Bentwood.

Business impacts are not outputs. They're not the amount of news coverage you secure.

And vanity metrics like impressions and bounce rates aren't business impacts. Nonsense metrics like ad value equivalency are a red herring.

We need to go from outputs to outcomes.

Without a customer journey map, the retailer never would have known this was happening. But by mapping out the path the customer takes as they move from awareness to consideration, they were able to figure out that their tactics were misguided. And media monitoring analytics helped them figure that out.

So measure and benchmark the customer journey. Show how PR is plugging holes in the funnel and accelerating the lead to revenue path. These are real business impact metrics because they're connected to revenue.

Golin developed a free PR tech stack -- of which media monitoring is just one part -- for building out customer journeys.

GOLIN OPERATING SYSTEM - FREE TOOLS (EMEA-focused)		
Listening Technology	• Social, traditional, print, broadcast	talkwalker, Google, social.mention, sumAll, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, crowdangle
Visual Insights	• Clustering, dynamic infographics	FastCharts, Canva, Excel
Audience Intelligence	• B2B, B2C, panels, surveys	CMIonline, SurveyMonkey, kepios
Influencer	• Identification, analytics, acquisition	followerwonk, EXPORTCOMMENTS.COM
Expert Intelligence	• Analyst house: vertical, role driven	CMIonline, nielsen, statista, npd, The Research Center
Web	• Clickstream, SEO	Google, SimilarWeb, ANSWER THE PUBLIC
Predictive	• Real time trends, alerts, crisis	talkwalker, Google Trends, Trendol
Healthcare	• Specialist healthcare info	Everyday Health, WebMD, Patient.info, Medhelp

For those with budget, the premium PR Tech Stack Bentwood recommends for building the customer journey is:

1. Listening/Monitoring: **Talkwalker**
2. Data Visualization: **Quid & Flourish**
3. Consumer Insights: **Global Web Index & ComScore**
4. Test Messaging: **Stickybeak**
5. Engagement Monitoring: **Sprinklr & Chorus.ai**
6. Online Influencer Intelligence: **CreatorIQ & Analytica**

The answer to solving the quantifiable metrics problem lies in understanding and improving the lead to revenue path or customer journey.

PR Attribution

For better or worse, **data-driven marketing** trends are pushing everyone to be more accountable to the bottom line, including PR.

It's easier to see the impact of advertising impressions on sales, because you can compare the people exposed to an ad who made a purchase to people who didn't see the ad, and compare if the group exposed to the ad purchased at a significantly higher rate. It's a straightforward comparison against a control group.

A news story with a tracking link that leads to a transaction can be directly attributed to that source. However, if someone views a news article you're mentioned in and makes a transaction, arguing that PR should get the credit is unlikely to hold up to CMO scrutiny.

Reputation management is not about driving direct sales. It's about underscoring and fortifying the value of an organization's brand. A more relevant metric might be pricing tolerance relative to competitors.

For example, how much more is the customer willing to pay for your product over your competitors? Therein lies the intangible value of a brand, which corporate reputation upholds.

Perceptions and reputations are much more difficult to measure because the inputs and outcomes aren't easily quantifiable. "PR attribution based on webpage visits is the new AVE," says Koefoot.

“

*PR attribution based
on webpage visits is
the new AVE.*

Eric Koefoot | CEO at PublicRelay



MEDIA MONITORING FEATURES GRID

Most media monitoring services included were in attendance at the PRSA International Conference in October and agreed to speak with me for this report.

	Burrelles	Critical Mention	Cision	Intrado	Meltwater
Timespan	12 months	60 days	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Public, Searchable DB of Outlets Covered	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Text Only	✗	Closed Captioning and Electronic Media Clips of up to 10 minutes	✗	✗	✗
Syndicated News Detection	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Truncation	full article	Clips limited to 10 mins	full article	full article	full article
Photos	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
Graphics	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
Journalist Profile	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Journalist Archive	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Chat Support	✗	✓	✓	✓	-
Access to Premium Content	✓	✓	✓	custom	✓
Speed	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate
Multiuser Access	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Published API	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Analyst Support	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Human Scoring	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Starting Price (monthly)	\$125	\$300	\$800	\$800	\$800

This chart is by no means exhaustive or intended to suggest these are the best options out there. There are many other news, social and broadcast media monitoring services not covered in this report that may be excellent providers, so please do not consider this list definitive.

	Muck Rack	PublicRelay	Signal	Talkwalker	TV Eyes
Timespan	13 months	90 days	15 months	24 months	90 days
Public, Searchable DB of Outlets Covered	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Text Only	✓	✗	✓	✗	Closed Captioning and Electronic Media Clips of up to 10 minutes
Syndicated News Detection	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Truncation	text snippet	full article	full article	✓	Clips limited to 10 mins
Photos	✗	✗	consumer print only	✓	--
Graphics	✗	✗	consumer print only	✓	--
Journalist Profile	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Journalist Archive	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Chat Support	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Access to Premium Content	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
Speed	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate
Multiuser Access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Published API	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Analyst Support	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Human Scoring	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Starting Price (monthly)	\$650	\$4,200	\$650	\$700	\$300

This chart is by no means exhaustive or intended to suggest these are the best options out there. There are many other news, social and broadcast media monitoring services not covered in this report that may be excellent providers, so please do not consider this list definitive.



USER RATINGS GRID

While these ratings are useful for evaluating the user experience, they include very few executive sponsor ratings. Use these ratings to get a sense of how easy a platform is to use, rather than its accuracy.

User Ratings Grid

	Burrelle's	Critical Mention	Cision	Intrado	Meltwater
Agencies	4.1 ★★★★★ (9)	4.2 ★★★★★ (23)	4.4 ★★★★★ (31)	4.0 ★★★★★ (2)	3.8 ★★★★★ (49)
Executive Sponsors	n/a	3.8 ★★★★★ (4)	3.8 ★★★★★ (6)	n/a	4.5 ★★★★★ (12)
Users	4.1 ★★★★★ (36)	4.1 ★★★★★ (74)	4.2 ★★★★★ (166)	2.8 ★★★★★ (8)	3.9 ★★★★★ (346)
Small Business	4.2 ★★★★★ (22)	4.1 ★★★★★ (37)	4.3 ★★★★★ (117)	3.5 ★★★★★ (4)	3.9 ★★★★★ (242)
Mid-Market	4.0 ★★★★★ (18)	4.2 ★★★★★ (39)	4.4 ★★★★★ (80)	2.8 ★★★★★ (6)	4.1 ★★★★★ (239)
Enterprise	4.1 ★★★★★ (9)	4.2 ★★★★★ (34)	4.2 ★★★★★ (71)	3.0 ★★★★★ (1)	4.0 ★★★★★ (124)
Overall	4.1 ★★★★★ (94)	4.1 ★★★★★ (211)	4.2 ★★★★★ (471)	3.2 ★★★★★ (21)	4.0 ★★★★★ (1012)

Data provided by G2 Crowd

User Ratings Grid

	Muck Rack	Signal	Talkwalker	TV Eyes
Agencies	5.0 ★★★★★ (2)	4.0 ★★★★★ (2)	4.6 ★★★★★ (21)	4.4 ★★★★★ (77)
Executive Sponsors	4.0 ★★★★★ (1)	n/a ★★★★★ (0)	5.0 ★★★★★ (1)	5.0 ★★★★★ (2)
Users	4.4 ★★★★★ (39)	4.3 ★★★★★ (8)	4.5 ★★★★★ (28)	4.3 ★★★★★ (276)
Small Business	4.7 ★★★★★ (23)	4.6 ★★★★★ (7)	4.5 ★★★★★ (47)	4.3 ★★★★★ (188)
Mid-Market	4.3 ★★★★★ (12)	3.0 ★★★★★ (4)	4.6 ★★★★★ (33)	4.4 ★★★★★ (161)
Enterprise	4.3 ★★★★★ (13)	3.6 ★★★★★ (8)	4.7 ★★★★★ (24)	4.4 ★★★★★ (102)
Overall	4.4 ★★★★★ (90)	3.9 ★★★★★ (29)	4.6 ★★★★★ (154)	4.5 ★★★★★ (806)

Data provided by G2 Crowd



MEDIA MONITORING PLATFORMS

Some of the platforms in this report were mainstream news media monitoring services first that added broadcast and social media options later, usually through acquisitions or alliances.

Talkwalker partners with news media monitoring providers to deliver social media monitoring, LexisNexis and Factiva partner with broadcast and social media platforms to deliver mainstream news media articles, and Critical Mention and TVEyes license their broadcast coverage to news and social media monitoring providers.

For all-in-one **PR enablement technology platforms** like Cision, Meltwater, Intrado and iPRSoftware — which offer integrated solutions with wire and email distribution, news media contact databases, online newsrooms services and analytics — news monitoring is just one piece of a much larger offering.

With the exception of Muck Rack, which takes a novel approach to news media monitoring by integrating a news media contact database that serves journalists and media relations professionals alike, this report does not get into the benefits of having your news media monitoring service integrated with other PR tech tools and services.



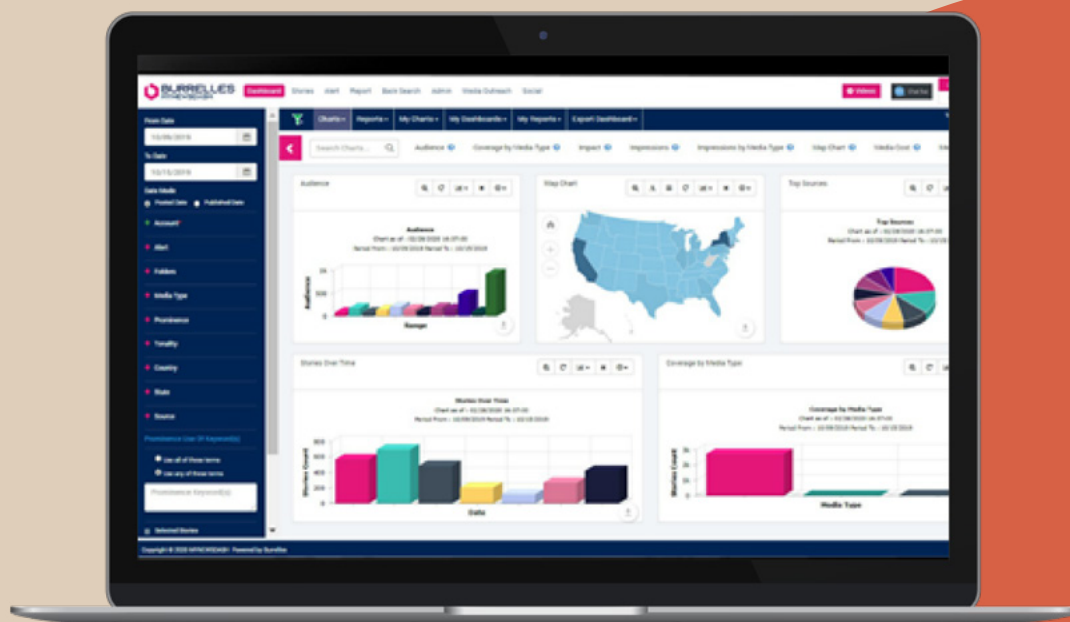
Burrelles

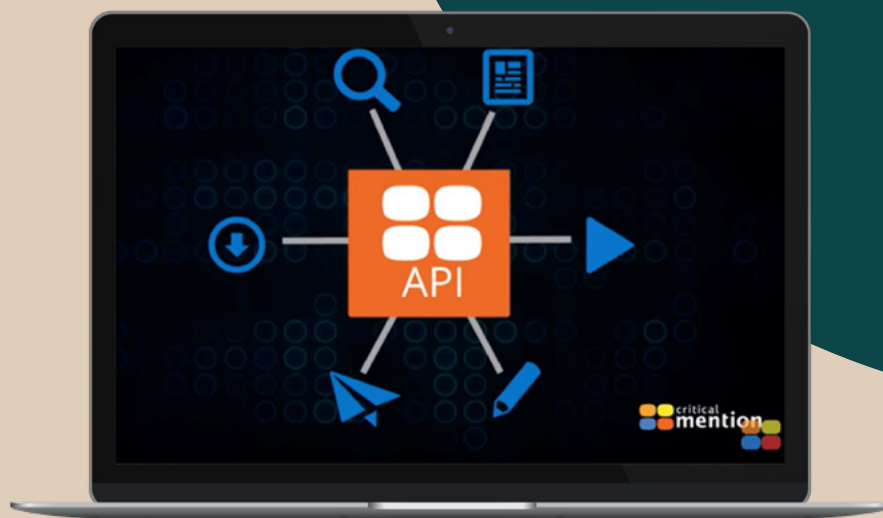
Founded in 1888, **Burrelles** is the oldest news media monitoring service, and the only remaining provider in the US that retrieves, scans and delivers print news clips so you can see the placement, format and layout of how the article appeared in print. In this regard, when it comes to monitoring print media outlets, Burrelles outperforms.

Burrelles' MYNEWSDASH is a self-guided solution with advanced Boolean keyword filtering that monitors print, online, radio and television sources, including many that require registration to access or are protected behind paywalls. Users praise the service's ability to find and return results from niche, local outlets.

Rather than rely exclusively on automation, Burrelles incorporates human insight to improve the relevancy of national and local print, broadcast, social media and online results. By supporting automation with human verification, Burrelles differentiates itself from the pure play automated providers. Dedicated analysts are available to set benchmarks and customize monitoring parameters for an additional fee.

Quantitative measurement tools generate charts with the number of stories, impressions, geographic reach, and trends over time, and can be filtered by top 10 DMA or impressions against media category.





Critical Mention

Critical Mention is a broadcast media monitoring platform that also delivers news and social media monitoring through partnerships. They claim the most comprehensive broadcast coverage in the United States and Canada, and also deliver broadcast media monitoring results to a number of news media monitoring providers through partnership agreements.

Unlike most of the other media monitoring providers in this report, Critical Mention has released an application programming interface (API), which is basically a tool kit that makes it easy for other software providers to import their broadcast media monitoring results directly into their applications.

Licensing their broadcast media monitoring feeds to third parties is a significant part of Critical Mention's business model. Critical Mention also has partnership agreements with leading broadcast news organizations, and recently announced a new YouTube integration feature that allows users to monitor mentions from hundreds of popular YouTube channels.

Like all broadcast monitoring solutions, Critical Mention relies on closed captioning text transcripts to find relevant clips, which can be inconsistent and rife with errors, making monitoring broadcast clips challenging.

Critical Mention is essentially an all-in-one media monitoring platform that provides coverage for TV, radio, millions of online news sources, Twitter, Facebook, and licensed content behind paywalls. The service lets you unlock subscription paywalls and access print-only content from tens of thousands of news sources and industry trade journals. Broadcast clips can then be downloaded in a variety of formats for an additional cost.

Cision

Founded in 1892, **Cision** is the second oldest provider in this report.

When I first started using them, they published an annual news media contact book as thick as old-school phone books, which eventually became CD-ROMs and, finally, an online database service. They currently track over 7 million online news, blogs, social, print and broadcast media outlets.

Through acquisitions and smart leadership, Cision has grown into the most feature-rich PR technology-enablement platform in the world. The company was recently acquired by a private equity firm for \$2.74 billion, is considered to be the largest PR tech provider, and probably has more market share than anyone else.

In 2015 Cision acquired PRNewswire, the largest paid news distribution service. More recently, they paid \$225 million to acquire TrendKite, the Austin-based PR monitoring, analytics and social influencer database company, widely considered to be one of the leading automated media monitoring solutions.

TrendKite is the nucleus of Cision's media monitoring service. It is global in nature and claims the most comprehensive global media coverage footprint available. Through the **acquisition of Falcon.io**, Cision now offers social-media monitoring, and their media monitoring service is strong when it comes to powering real-time news searches.



Cision provides metrics around unique views per month, publicity value, and is attempting to measure lead generation and website traffic from news media coverage as well. There are no limits on searches or online news clips. In regions outside the US where print is still big, Cision also scans and delivers print news clips to clients.

To support customer success, Cision has an onboarding process for new clients in order to teach them how to utilize their platform. They recently introduced a feature that lets you retarget advertising to journalists who have seen your press materials online.

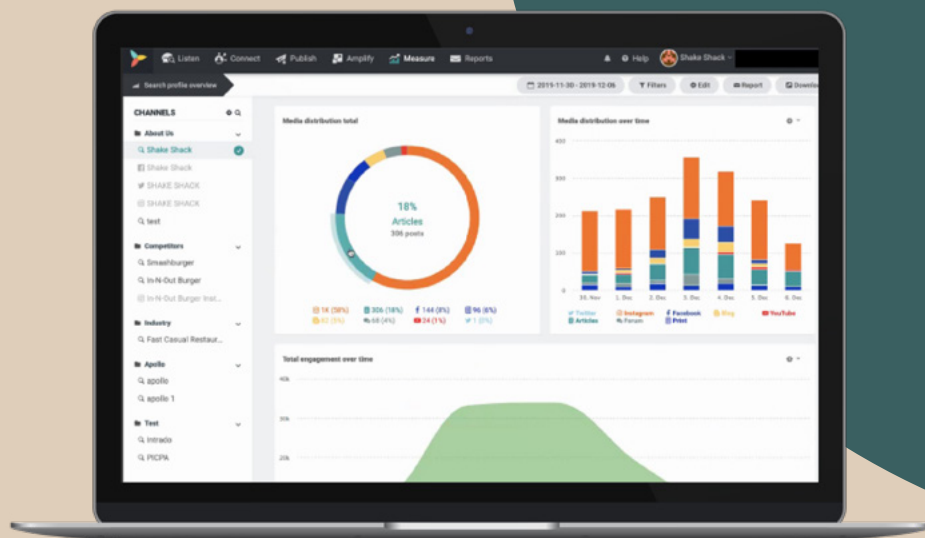
While this report stops short of recognizing the value of one integrated PR technology-enablement platform that does it all, it is important to note that Cision checks all the boxes. As is the case with so many **vertically integrated software products compared to best-of-breed solutions**, what they lack in niche capabilities, they make up for in productivity gains through integration.

To solve the automated sentiment-analysis challenge, Cision is working on developing entity-level analysis, which would allow them to tag each entity level in an article, add a sentiment on top of it, and then sentiment complexity over time, beyond just good, bad or neutral. Cision is currently developing these sort-of-automated 3D-tagging capabilities.

For an example of how entity tagging works, consider an article that says “Nike tops sales forecasts,” which might also mention competitors like Converse and Adidas at the close. In this article, Nike would be a “featured” entity that scores positively for sentiment in the article because they beat their forecasted sales numbers.

Converse and Adidas, on the other hand, would be “mentioned” entities scored as neutral for sentiment, because they were just mentioned as competitors. Scoring keywords and phrases at an entity level is what Cision calls entity extraction, and it’s how they’re currently approaching automated sentiment analysis.

In terms of how the Cision acquisition will impact customers, that remains to be seen. **According to** MarTech Conference Chair and HubSpot VP of Platform Engagement, Scott Brinker, “if they take an approach of aggressive cost-cutting or increase pressure on generating revenue from the existing install base, customers may feel the squeeze.” But to be fair, Hubspot is a Cision competitor, albeit indirectly.



Intrado

Intrado (formerly West Digital) released their new, all-in-one PR-enablement platform — anchored by **Notified**, an end-to-end workflow automation platform for public relations they acquired late last year for an undisclosed amount — at the PRSA International Conference in October.

The Notified interface leads clients through a listening, connecting, publishing, amplifying and measuring sequence, although users can start anywhere they choose.

West acquired Globenewswire from NASDAQ for \$335 million last year and integrated. They also acquired streaming provider Inxpo and online referral marketing platform Ambassador, putting their offering perhaps closest on par with Cision and Meltwater in terms of features and capabilities.

Intrado is a new offering bursting with potential, and West announced the new name to give their PR enablement platform its own brand identity. They're aiming to be the Hubspot of PR.

After a comprehensive review of PR tech acquisition candidates, Intrado bought Notify because its workflow-oriented user interface was easier to use than anything they'd seen before, and because of the innovative team of programmers that built the product.

“What Adobe and Hubspot did for the marketing cloud, we want to do for PR,” says Ben Chodor, President of Intrado Digital, who predicts that the ability to monitor the outcome of public relations activities, by measuring the degree to which press releases and other communications trigger online conversation among influencers, will drive growth throughout the sector.

The top three benefits of using Intrado's integrated solution for news media monitoring, news media journalist database, press release distribution, social media engagement and analytics are as follows:

Single sign-in, so no need to manually move data between multiple services.

Metadata from all activities in one database for running comparative analytics.

Listen, connect, deliver, publish, amplify and measure PR in one workflow-oriented solution.

The biggest challenge PR people have today is making sense of their metadata, since it's usually sequestered in the reporting features of so many different services, which makes using pivot tables to compare data sets a real pain.

The number-one cause of customer churn in the PR tech software-as-a-service business today comes from offering a full-stack solution with limited integration, which means the different services don't connect well. This is a common customer frustration that Intrado is committed to addressing.

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What Adobe and Hubspot did for the marketing cloud, we want to do for PR.

Ben Chodor

President of Intrado Digital

Meltwater

In 2001, CEO Jorn Lyseggen founded **Meltwater** in Oslo with just US\$15,000. Initially, the service started as a news media monitoring solution, which added social media as it rose in popularity. Soon after that, they started experimenting with the use of AI to organize information and identify trends.

Today, Meltwater provides clients with an automated, AI-driven media monitoring technology platform for tracking relevant media coverage. The company has more than 32,000 clients, 1,500 employees and 55 offices all over the world, and is probably the second largest all-in-one PR technology-enablement platform provider.

Through an international network of partnerships, Meltwater provides access to news and online conversations on social media at a local, national and global level.

Meltwater recently announced a partnership with Amazon AWS Data Exchange to help businesses across multiple industries refine their data-driven strategies through access to a range of packaged data products they offer. These products are available through Fairhair.ai, which allows software developers to tap into the same data layer of news and social media content that Meltwater delivers to end users through its web-based media monitoring service.



Fairhair.ai is not a product that PR specialists would use directly, but it is indicative of the level of sophistication Meltwater has developed, and their commitment to artificial intelligence. The service also provides likely insights into how their end-user media monitoring service combines Boolean queries with artificial intelligence to deliver relevant results.

By choosing which open web and licensed sources to monitor, the Fairchild.ai platform lets developers apply advanced Boolean filters and then select from a list of NLP enhancements, such as:

- The ability to determine the concepts (relevant terms or topics) that the document is most likely talking about.
- The ability to tag the most important terms in a document.
- The ability to detect the geographical origin of editorial documents and social media posts.
- The ability to assign a sentiment polarity to each sentence in a document and derive an overall sentiment for the document as a whole.

According to a [video tutorial](#), Fairhair.ai exports overall sentiment, but since they're deriving that total from all the different sentence scores, Meltwater appears to be in a position to implement automated, multi-dimensional article scoring in the future.

You'll probably never develop or integrate Fairhair.ai yourself. But understanding how Meltwater is licensing their news feeds and data-processing engine to third-party developers provides insight into how the underlying technology works, and offers a glimpse at how the company is currently utilizing AI.

Meltwater combines manual Boolean keyword filters with automated, narrow AI, which takes data from a specific source and analyzes it for a given outcome.

"Analyzing numbers is something computers are very good at, but analyzing text is a much harder thing to do with a computer," writes Lysegeen in his book [Outside Insight](#), which argues that the ability to accurately understand unstructured data will form the basis of a new software category, destined to radically reshape how business gets done. But first we need AI that's as good at understanding natural language as it is at analyzing credit scores.

Meltwater's media monitoring service covers online, social, broadcast and print media, combined with advanced analytics, reporting and email alerts. They offer custom enterprise solutions with professional services. Meltwater does not include podcast monitoring, but nor do most of the others, with

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Jorn Lyseggen
Meltwater Founder

the exception of Intrado and TVEyes.

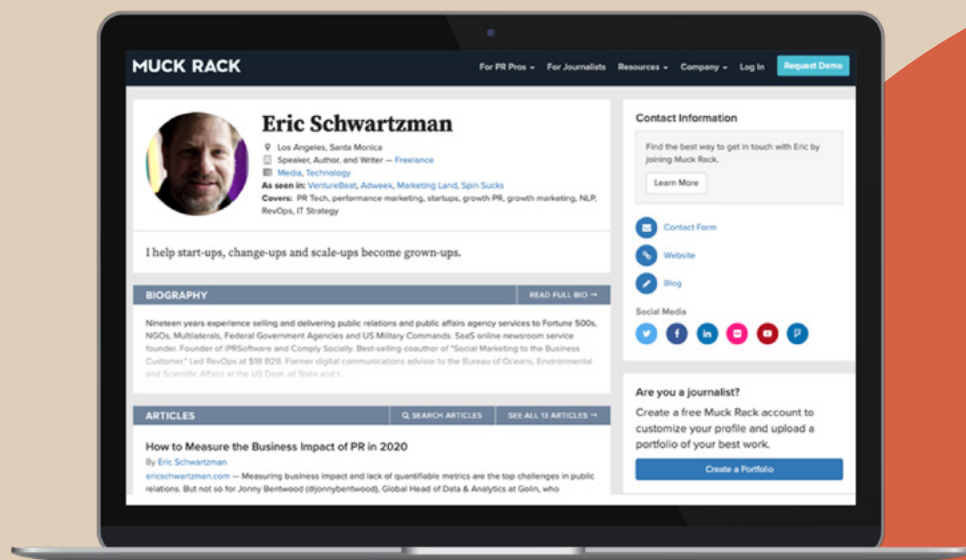
Their media analytics and reporting services include an online dashboard that allows users to filter results by geography, sentiment, share of voice, top journalists and influencers, audience reach and engagement. The integrated reporting features help users keep stakeholders informed.

I demoed their solution at the PRSA International Conference in San Diego and found it to be among the slickest, with well-appointed, intuitive filters to slice and dice the results.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the biggest investments an organization makes when they acquire a new media monitoring platform is training everyone to use it, and the Meltwater interface is easy to learn.

At the same time, the number of filtering options makes it easy to over-filter and miss some results, and the keyword recommendation tool is known to make some irrelevant suggestions.

Nevertheless, Meltwater is a PR technology-enablement platform that checks all the boxes, outperforming best-of-breed solutions when it comes to providing an all-in-one integrated suite of PR tools and services.



Muck Rack

Albeit not transactional, Muck Rack founded by CEO **Gregory Galant** is the first company to take an online marketplace approach to connecting media relations professionals and journalists.

Without accurate news media contact coordinates, media relations can't get the earned media portion of their job done. News media contact information has always been dynamic, but it's changing even faster these days for a number of reasons, but let's start with this one.

Over the last 10 years, the press corps has been steadily diminishing. Reporter, correspondent, and broadcast news **jobs declined 10% in 2018** and the industry **cut 3,000 more jobs in 2019**.

What's different about Muck Rack is that their service combines verified journalist contact information and media monitoring in a single interface. This may not seem like a big deal, but if you're in media relations, it seriously accelerates your productivity. You can build a media list based on actual news search results without having to click from one screen to another. Plus, if you can segment journalists based on their recent coverage, you don't have to manually check to make sure their title is up to date.

Muck Rack shows you what that person has been writing or tweeting recently, consolidating media monitoring, news media contact information, personalized email distribution and corresponding analytics into a single service. "We don't believe your monitoring and database should be separate," says Rob Shapiro, VP Product Strategy at Muck Rack.

Muck Rack takes a marketplace approach and keeps their news media contact details up to date by serving the needs of journalists and PR representatives at the same time. They build **profile pages for journalists**, so they get a free online portfolio of their work, which they can also update themselves. “We have the most up-to-date directory of journalists,” says Shapiro.

Since Muck Rack serves up links only, you can see the snippet where your keywords appear, but you have to click over to the publisher’s website for the full story, assuming it’s not behind a paywall. However, Muck Rack questions just how valuable it is to have access to the entire text of an article, since the snippet usually gives you a good sense of what the story’s about, and you can always click through for more information if need be.

By adding an archive of past coverage to each journalist’s profile, making those profiles claimable and giving a way to build media lists based on news coverage, Muck Rack has created a very useful product in a class all its own.

Their media contact database has **verified journalists** and others who publish articles, but perhaps not as their main job. Profiles also feature a journalist’s social media activity, and you can search the text via any of the links a journalist tweets, giving you a quick way to see what they’re interested in.

“The people who produce news are different now. News and journalism is not as black and white as it used to be,” says Shapiro. Muck Rack allows you to search and distinguish among verified journalists, which means those who are manually approved based on public criteria and online influencers. You can add contacts to Muck Rack as well.

Muck Rack’s mission is to outperform when it comes to helping media relations professionals with the following tasks:

- Finding the right journalists and sending them personalized pitches
- Monitoring news
- Reporting on the impact of their media relations efforts
- Collaborating with co-workers online.

The service offers integrated email alerts and is launching a **trending stories** page to help journalists and public relations professionals see what stories are trending in the news media at any given time. The new trending stories feature also includes a “who shared my link” tool, which shows how many times an article was shared on social media, and if any journalists in their database shared the story.

PublicRelay

On the other end of the spectrum is PublicRelay, which offers an AI-powered, human-assisted media monitoring service. For clients with a desire for rich analytics and a low tolerance for error, PublicRelay provides a human-assisted alternative to fully automated solutions.

As an example, consider an article comparing two competing mobile phone networks providers. Such an article might cover how the two providers stack up against each other on price, network coverage, wireless data speed and handset subsidies. If one provider has a better price and richer handset subsidies, but loses on network coverage and wireless data speed, PublicRelay would assign multiple nesting tags with separate sentiment scores for each of these topics and sub-topics.

PublicRelay offers three-dimensional topic and sentiment analysis, which they insist still requires human assistance in order to perform reliably.

According to company CEO Eric Koefoot, “Public relations is about delivering multi-dimensional ideas and concepts to key stakeholders in an effort to manage corporate reputations. Automated keyword monitoring based on Boolean queries is too drastic an oversimplification. When it comes to making consequential business decisions based on data, AI is still incapable of consistently reliable natural language processing.”



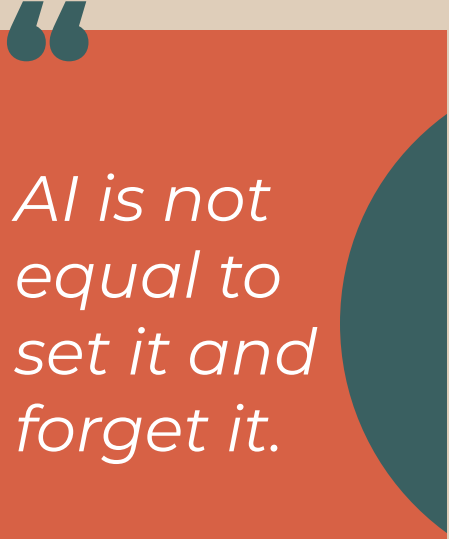
The challenge for clients relying on fully automated solutions is the risk of drawing conclusions from bad data. PublicRelay serves a segment of clients who have grown tired of inaccurate analysis. The company, which has partnered over the years with the MIT Media Lab, rejects the notion that AI alone can be used to accurately determine complex topics and sentiment, and insists human oversight is required to interpret unstructured, rich text.

"It's difficult to take the same algorithm and apply it to another brand's media coverage because every organization has different priorities, challenges, opinions, and in some cases, a completely different perspective on coverage. Unless analysis is trained specifically to your business, the results won't be accurate or actionable," adds Peter Walker, Head of Marketing at PublicRelay.

We think of AI as an engine that can be left alone to create insights for us by itself, but this is not true. AI requires a great deal of human time and effort to train it and, most importantly, ask the right questions. According to Allyson Hugley, Vice President, Analytics & Market Research, Global Communications at Prudential, who spoke on a panel at the AMEC Global Measurement Summit, "AI is not equal to set it and forget it."

In a blog post, Wes Tyeryar, Director of Strategic Partnerships at PublicRelay, **recommends** you, "Identify which topics are reputation drivers for your business, and analyze the sentiment and volume against your peers over time. This allows you to quickly understand which programs are working and where you need to make adjustments. This type of information allows you to show executives that you are on top of what is happening in your market AND your organization is agile enough to take advantage of gaps or change direction and close them."

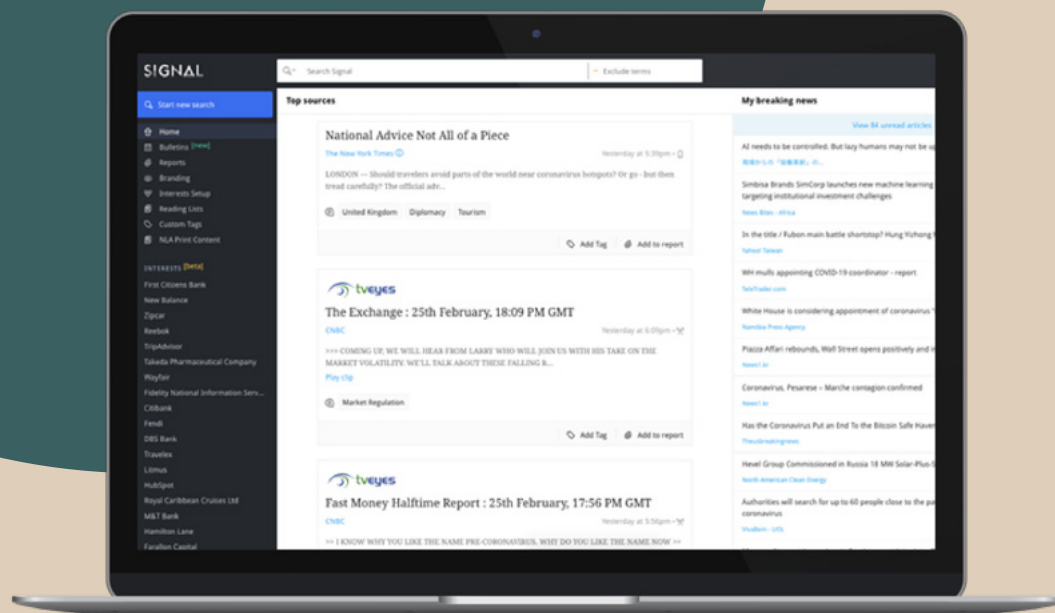
PublicRelay monitors print, online, social, and broadcast media. TV- and radio-monitoring features give users a broader set of relevant coverage in a simple yet powerful interface. And as it does with other media channels, PublicRelay provides not only noise-free, relevant video/audio clips (with transcribed text), but also accurate message and tone analytics every day.



*AI is not
equal to
set it and
forget it.*

Allyson Hugley

Vice President, Analytics
& Market Research,
Global Communications
at Prudential



Signal

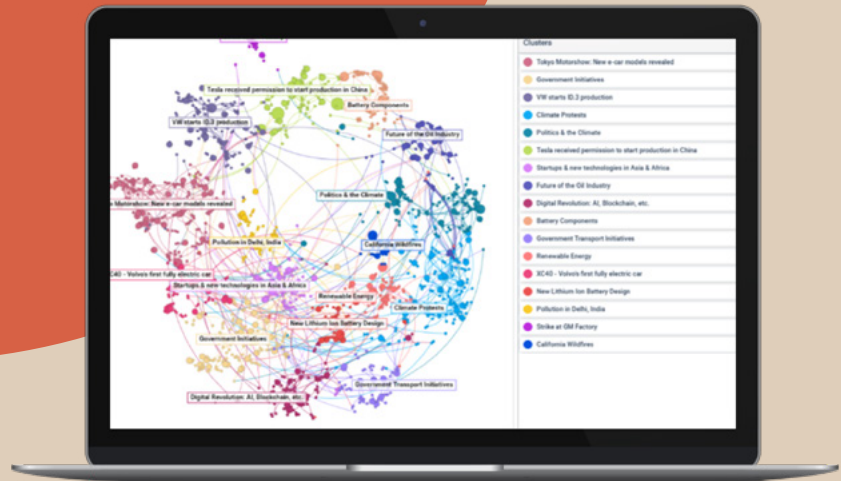
A newer media monitoring player called Signal was also exhibiting. I spoke with their Product VP, Amy Collins, who told me they're the only ones who have full access to premium news media content like The Wall Street Journal and Barron's.

Signal, which starts at \$650 per month, applies the latest artificial intelligence and machine learning technology to media monitoring, ending the need to rely on long, obtuse Boolean queries to laser in on the right news media content.

The media monitoring service features an AI-powered quote detection feature, which tells you who the most quoted individuals are at an organization, and also lets you drill down directly to their quotes in news media coverage.

Signal has a database of journalists with their coverage, but not their contact information. They do have a published API.

Like many others, Signal regards PR revenue attribution to be a fool's errand, so aren't pursuing this avenue. Instead, they want to develop an impact scoring feature, but they're keeping quiet about this for now.



Talkwalker

Talkwalker helps more than 2,000 clients monitor news and social media from disparate data sources in 187 languages from 196 countries.

Talkwalker applies machine learning technology to increase the relevance of its results, receiving its news media monitoring feeds through partnerships with LexisNexis and TVEyes.

Talkwalker recently added Conversation Clusters, which visualizes how different topics of conversation intersect with each other. The example below charts how sub-topics around e-mobility intersect:

Talkwalker has an image and video logo recognition feature that delivers previously hidden brand mentions. With the proliferation of misinformation on social media, clients use logo recognition to spot fake news and set the record straight through proactive engagement.

Talkwalker uses AI filters to improve relevancy and interpret sentiment, and clients can assign rules for their use cases. Their custom scoring engine can take multiple inputs — from price to cost-per-lead, earned media value, and custom metrics — and output a number.

Their Boolean search options include keyword proximity filtration and dozens of advanced scripting options. The Talkwalker Customer Success team helps clients come up to speed on Boolean scripting. While the tool makes collecting insights easier, the tough part is still convincing management to course correct based on what the data suggests.

In addition to the sources Talkwalker monitors, they also allow clients to input their own structured or unstructured data — such as sales results, surveys, chatbots, emails, and phone transcripts — and analyze the relationships between internal and external data.

Queries are built in Boolean first by the client, who can then apply AI to enhance the results and visualize the data to identify patterns, draw useful insights and improve data accuracy.

TVEyes

David Ives, CEO of TVEyes, is a former day trader who built his product to monitor CNBC to support securities trading. The service began using closed captioning, which is created by human stenographers in the US under an FCC mandate for the hearing impaired. TVEyes added speech-recognition technology to monitor international TV and radio.

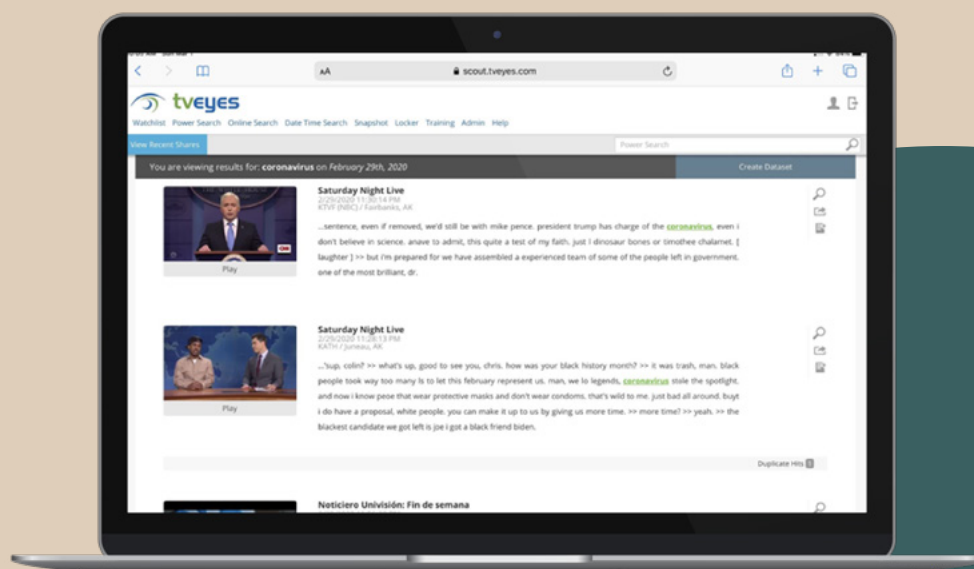
“Lack of turnover and a focus on global expansion are differentiators,” says Ives, who has been able to keep the same programmers on staff for decades. They monitor media in 16 countries in a dozen languages.

TVEyes is a B2B service starting at \$500 per month. They experimented with an ad-supported service, but it didn't generate enough revenue to make sense.

TVEyes maintains a searchable database of 90 days of broadcast media online for their customers. They are monitoring popular YouTube videos, but no other over the top (OTT) services as of yet.

In order to capture local news, TVEyes has hardware installed in each of the 210 US Nielsen markets. They recently added podcast monitoring and are ingesting 1,500 hours of podcast content each day, using speech-to-text software to create searchable transcripts.

TVEyes currently monitors 13,000 popular podcasts. Automatic advertising-insertion technology posed challenges to locating the portion of the podcast with the client's keyword, but they were able to develop a proprietary solution that allows clients to easily access the snippet with the spoken keyword.



In addition to searching by keyword, clients can also search for instances of their logo appearing visually in television broadcast and cable media.

The company says it's still too early for AI to replace Boolean queries, but TVEyes is using AI in their speech-to-text software to improve transcript accuracy through probabilistic analysis, which determines what word was likely to have been spoken by analyzing the surrounding words. This works well until you encounter a keyword which is not in the dictionary, such as new brands and elected officials.

TVEyes solves this problem with software they built that scours the web for missing terms and automatically updates the speech-recognition engine by adding the new terms to their dictionary. However, they are not currently using AI at the query level. TVEyes indexes broadcast content based on text transcripts, but leaves it up to the client to decide what interests them. They do not play an editorial role.

The primary discovery mechanism is keyword search coupled with the ability to enter the broadcast media clip at the point where the keyword is spoken. Users can create a watch list of keywords and phrases, which allows them to monitor predetermined search terms. The service also allows ad-hoc searches that can be filtered based on radio or TV, designated market area, or channel, so you can narrow down and focus on the right content.

TVEyes also monitors electronic advertising so clients can see what their competitors are saying about themselves through paid electronic media. The broadcast monitoring service also has many reseller partners that ingest their broadcast media monitoring transcriptions and apply their own AI algorithms to help clients find relevant clips. But, even in these cases, downloads are only available through the TVEyes service.

None of the partners that offer broadcast media monitoring coverage through reseller agreements with TVEyes allow for downloading of broadcast coverage. The downloading of clips feature is only available in the TVEyes service.

TVEyes was engaged in a multi-year lawsuit with Fox News, who sued for copyright infringement, reportedly because the cable news provider didn't want anyone to be able to easily keep tabs on their coverage. Under a settlement announced last year, TVEyes agreed to not monitor Fox News.

According to an article in the **Hollywood Reporter**:

“The defendant [TVEyes] told the judge, ‘Journalists use TVEyes to comment on and criticize broadcast news channels (including Fox), often by comparing and contrasting how the major news networks cover particular news events. Government officials and corporations use TVEyes to monitor the accuracy of facts reported by the media so they can make timely corrections when necessary. Political campaigns use TVEyes to monitor political advertising and appearances of candidates in election years. Financial firms use TVEyes to track and archive public statements made about securities by their employees for regulatory compliance. The White House uses TVEyes to evaluate news stories and give feedback to the press corps, including Fox News. Without TVEyes or a service akin to it, there would be no way to effectively accomplish these objectives.’

“At first, TVEyes appeared headed to success with the defense. US District Judge Alvin Hellerstein agreed with TVEyes that the indexing and excerpting of cable news programming is a transformative use of copyrighted material.

“But in a later decision, Hellerstein ruled that TVEyes had overstepped by letting its subscribers search, download and share clips and issued an injunction restricting the assisted dissemination of Fox News clips.”

TVEyes still monitors Fox News and Fox Business transcripts and makes them searchable and deliverable, but they don't have access to the video, nor do any of the other broadcast media monitoring services. This appears to be a strategic choice by Fox, so they can distribute fake news with impunity.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

The media monitoring platform you choose should depend on two things. First, base your decision on where PR currently sits in the hierarchy of your organization, as well as where you'd like it to sit in the future. And the second most important consideration is going to be your available budget.

If PR wants a seat at the boardroom table, it needs accurate metrics that:

1. Demonstrate the business impact of PR
2. Can withstand CMO or CFO scrutiny
3. Are presented in language the CEO cares about.

If you're talking about things like message pull-through and share of voice to CEOs who are focused on revenue and margins, or CFOs who are interested in operating costs and payroll, you're speaking the wrong language.

PR needs to change the narrative by using data to show how reputation impacts the customer journey, because the lead to revenue path, monthly recurring revenue and lifetime customer value are all impacted by the customer journey, and these are metrics that impact the bottom line. *"We need to switch from things like net promoter score and growth to sentiment and customer lifetime value,"* says industry-leading analyst **Brian Solis**.

If PR can prove it increased conversions or prevented customer churn through **CXPR** or by taking meaning from the intersection of multiple data sources, these are metrics the C-suite understands. In the old days, journalists triangulated truth against a handful of sources. Today, PR needs to triangulate truth against internal and external data sources.

"The problem isn't who has the most data right now. Companies are drowning in data," says **Converseon** CEO **Rob Key**. "A lot of it is social data but it's also voice of customer data like call center transcripts and surveys." So media monitoring platforms that allow you to import your own, external data sources provide huge advantages.

When it comes to media monitoring, understanding **how customer journeys drive revenue** requires an appreciation for message penetration based on three-dimensional sentiment analysis, rather than just share of voice based on keywords. For example, negative awareness can decrease purchase consideration. If you're measuring awareness volume without paying attention to sentiment, you're missing the KPI. If you're relegating sentiment analysis to AI, you're trusting bad data and missing the KPI as well.

This underscores the critical importance of accurate sentiment analysis and the risk of relying exclusively on automated solutions. Accurate data is required to determine that raising purchase consideration, rather than driving awareness, is the key performance indicator to measure.

While leading media monitoring providers augment their AI sentiment analysis with the option to manually override and correct inaccurately assigned sentiments, without the necessary resources to manually evaluate your coverage, an appreciation of the state of AI and the risks of bad data, unfortunately the mere presence of this feature may be a deterrent to successfully determining the business impact of public relations campaigns, nudging PR specialists to take the easy way out and adopt bad data.

Methodology

Originally, it was not my intention to write this report. I was going to write a blog post about **the State of PR Enablement Platforms**, which I did at the PRSA International Conference in San Diego.

But after talking to all the PR tech solution providers exhibiting at the conference and collecting so much interesting information about their services, I decided to roll up my sleeves and figure out the differences between the various providers when it comes to media monitoring in particular, because if you can measure it, you can optimize it and prove its value.

Proving the value of PR is becoming more important as organizations shift toward data-driven marketing, which is a topic of interest in my **online course on media monitoring**, and in the work I do **advising organizations on media monitoring strategy**.

The media monitoring providers interviewed for this report were asked **the same questions**.

For those providers that did not engage with me directly, I interviewed their clients, read their white papers, blog posts, annual reports and customer reviews, or watched video demos of their products online.

All of the customers I interviewed for this report requested anonymity, which I agreed to comply with.

Finally, many years ago I founded **iPRSoftware** (formerly iPressroom), which was one of the first online newsroom management services for public relations professionals. I sold the company and remain a shareholder, but am uninvolved in the day-to-day management.

I make this disclosure so readers are aware of my economic interest in iPRSoftware, which also offers media monitoring services and was intentionally omitted from this report to maintain objectivity.

About the Author

I help organizations set-up, optimize and use media monitoring platforms.

In addition to consulting with clients, led the center for digital innovation at a \$1 billion B2B, launched two PR tech SaaS start-ups, and directed promotions at a global PR agency.

I'm also a best-selling **author** and I currently produce a portfolio of informational PR tech trade media. More details below.

My library of self-paced, **online social media training courses** are used on **Udemy** by more than 300,000 public relations professionals worldwide.

Some of the clients I've advised include Boeing, Cirque du Soleil, City National Bank, Seminole Hard Rock Casinos, Johnson & Johnson, Korn Ferry, Lucasfilm, Marriott, Olympics, US Dept of Defense, US Dept of State, US Marine Corps and the Inter American Development Bank.

But I've also worked with hundreds of small- and medium-sized organizations as well.

If you need help with a media monitoring, strategic communications, digital reconnaissance or information operations endeavor, please contact me **here**.



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