

## THE ULTIMATE MEDIA MONITORING **BUYER'S GUIDE**

**THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU  
LEARN HOW TO CHOOSE A MEDIA  
MONITORING SOLUTION THAT  
PRODUCES THE BEST RESULTS  
FOR YOUR ORGANISATION.**

PR and comms professionals have been monitoring the media for mentions of their brand for years. Long before the days of digital, there were sophisticated efforts to curate news cuttings from across the world. “Press cutting services” would literally cut articles out of newspapers for brands to use. But with the digital transformation of the media industry, there is now an endless trail of content for communications professionals to monitor and report to their stakeholders.

Gathering metrics, analysing the data, tracking against competitors and measuring against business objectives can be more than a full-time job. That’s where new media monitoring solutions can help. But just as there are many different channels to monitor, there are many different solutions to choose from and they vary widely in what they offer to clients.

Before choosing a technology or service, it’s essential to have a clear idea of what your company’s monitoring needs are as part of an overall comms programme. While features can be tempting, the depth and sophistication of your monitoring may matter more to you – ensuring you never miss a piece of relevant content.

# UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

## Q1. WHAT IS MEDIA MONITORING?

Media monitoring is the process of reading, watching or listening to media source content and utilising the aggregated information to identify and analyse articles which contain specific keywords or topics on a continuous basis.

PR and comms professionals can now monitor for print, broadcast, online and social content. They can set up detailed searches (or have a software or service do it for them) to monitor for brand keywords, topics and even for competitors and their influence. PR professionals can also measure sentiment about their brand, product or services, as well as understand whether their mentions are positive, negative or neutral.

In this section, we'll cover the main channels that brands should be monitoring and introduce Boolean strings, the type of search that enables PR and comms teams to use terms and keywords to achieve the most relevant results.

There are a few fundamental monitoring types that your monitoring service should offer:

### MONITORING SOCIAL

Social media represents the biggest change in the digital monitoring space. The internet has empowered individuals to make their voices heard and ultimately have a business impact on what others think of your company or brand. Tracking what consumers and other organisations are saying about you on social media has become imperative.

In addition to monitoring major social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, monitoring for word-of-mouth content remains vital on blogs and micro-blogs, review sites, forums and video sharing sites such as YouTube. It is best to monitor all the different types of social media as widely as possible, since it is close to impossible to predict where or when vital market intelligence will appear or where it might be repeated.

It's important to be able to differentiate between "social media management" and "social listening" in these cases. There are a lot of vendors that provide social media management functions with a focus on

posting and engaging, rather than monitoring.

Services like Buffer and HootSuite allow users to post from multiple social handles at once and track engagement, but don't provide listening tools across blogs, forums and social media channels outside of owned ones. If this is something your company needs, these are fantastic tools to incorporate.

However, they do not provide a complete social monitoring solution, which is an important distinction. Those tools are only for publishing.

Many of the more advanced news monitoring services also provide integrated social media monitoring with the comms and PR professional in mind. Cision Social Media Monitoring, for instance, offers comprehensive daily coverage of blogs, message boards, forums, review sites and social networking channels like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. This is in addition to monitoring online and broadcast coverage — ensuring that you have a holistic view of the news that matters most to you and your organisation.

### MONITORING PRINT MEDIA

While press cutting services have been overshadowed as digital media has become more prevalent, monitoring for various print publications still makes up a significant proportion of the existing media monitoring landscape.

Free tools on the internet will not cover all of these mentions. Specific mentions in publications like national or local newspapers, consumer magazines or niche trade publications can't always be found online. Missing a critical mention through one of these mediums can still have a significant impact on your industry and even your brand. Other print publications include newsletters, business journals, university/alumni publications and various international newspapers.

Cision's print monitoring capabilities enable coverage for over 17,000 print publications through various global and national partnerships. Cision can provide digital context for print publications, ensuring that the print text from newspapers, trade journals, magazines and more are directly available within the Cision Comms Cloud™ for users to view along with the rest of their digital content.

## Q2. WHY DO YOU NEED MEDIA MONITORING?

Once you grasp the basics of media monitoring and the different types of monitoring your brand should consider, it's important to understand the impact that media monitoring can have on your communications efforts. You can assess your media monitoring requirements by understanding how successful companies use media monitoring services and how you could incorporate similar strategies.

For example, The Stroke Association turned to Cision analysis to aid in optimising PR outreach and monitored awareness of stroke among the general public. Cision was able to show that although its content and messaging reached 48% of UK adults, only 14% had been exposed to coverage featuring a link to the website. Following this feedback, The Stroke Association adjusted its activity and managed to increase the coverage featuring the website link, which doubled its original results.

As you think about justifying the addition of media monitoring technology and services, here are a few things to consider:

### WHAT ARE YOU MISSING? YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

With technology at the level that it is at now, ignorance is no excuse for any comms team. You need to be monitoring everything, all the time, that pertains to your brand, product or service. If a new competitor, product, or event happens that can potentially disrupt your industry, the last thing you need is to miss a potentially crucial piece of coverage which could alter the fortunes of your company.

### PREVENT CRISIS

No one likes a crisis, but robust media monitoring helps you become more adept at handling one. Your team should be poised to quickly identify and resolve PR issues, negative sentiment or potential pitfalls that could be brewing about your company, product or entire industry.

The right media monitoring solution empowers a company to stay ahead of these events and make sure the proper protocols are in place. The ability to identify a

crisis before it takes place is a huge advantage. Alerts that you can configure will help comms teams avoid and quickly diffuse crisis situations. It also acts as a barometer to help gauge real-time sentiment showing how people are responding to your advertising and content marketing campaigns.

### CONDUCT MARKET RESEARCH FOR CAMPAIGNS

Media monitoring solutions can serve as market research analysis for campaigns or new products your company is developing. By setting up monitoring searches around similar industry topics as a way to test the water, your team can then start to answer some preliminary questions:

- Is there any audience backlash against a product comparable to your own?
- What is the overall audience sentiment of the industry as a whole?

Comms professionals must be able to acquire and understand market research quickly to fuel content and campaigns that take advantage of emerging trends making them far more likely to resonate with your target audiences.

### EXECUTE AND ADJUST CAMPAIGN MESSAGING ON-THE-GO

Executing a campaign pitch, product launch, or new initiative is only the first step in the communications cycle. Effectively tracking efforts and making the right changes to messaging and content during a campaign is imperative to overall success. The right media monitoring solution enables your team to continuously track critical mentions, competitor reactions and overall audience engagement in an automated fashion that allows you to focus on the bigger picture.

### ATTRIBUTE VALUE FOR THE COVERAGE YOU CREATE

PR and comms professionals are always looking for ways to better map campaigns to the specific business objectives that their executive stakeholders care about and gain better insight into how they can build effective future campaigns.

A reliable media monitoring solution should provide analytics which illustrate your goals in an

easy-to-understand format. This includes staple PR metrics like share of voice, sentiment over time and coverage by media type. It can also tie into more sophisticated digital marketing metrics such as web traffic and conversion.

Analytics around coverage should also return audience demographic and firmographic data, which will help you to understand your target audience more effectively. While the goal may not always be to tie this back to a monetary amount, professionals in this space need to be able to attribute value from their campaigns in order to show that messages are resonating with target audiences and can support your organisation's key business objectives.

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### SMARTER OUTREACH

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Does your company distribute press releases on prominent events? Or look to engage with influencers to help boost campaign visibility? Complimenting your outreach strategies with an all-encompassing media monitoring solution can help your team further understand the messages which resonate best with your audiences and influencers and allow you to tailor your campaigns in a way to impact business objectives.

Additionally, using this information to pinpoint the most influential individuals can help you make better decisions on journalist outreach. Furthermore, this type of understanding establishes the groundwork for future content and helps contribute to your content planning for the year.

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### Q3. WHY PAY FOR IT?

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Smaller companies and organisations may initially be sceptical about paying for media monitoring, considering that there are some free services out there that provide automated news alerts and so-called 'media monitoring', such as Google Alerts.

As explained in this guide, gathering metrics, analysing the data and measuring against objectives and competitors can be more than a full-time job – one which simply cannot be done using free tools. That's where paid media monitoring services come in. Consider some of the following differences:

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### MISSING COVERAGE

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While a free tool like Google Alerts is an excellent introduction to monitoring the media for smaller, less critical topics, it is essential to understand that it is not a tool which can be relied upon to catch news mentions of key issues and messages with any sort of consistency or accuracy.

With Google Alerts, you are only receiving news from a limited number of online publications, leaving you with a fraction the information that is taking place around your key alerts in other media. Leaving critical gaps in coverage can have a big impact on crisis planning or campaign monitoring.

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### INFORMING BUSINESS DECISIONS WITH INSIGHTS

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Simple, free tools like Google Alerts merely notify you of mentions, which doesn't help drive any action as standalone points. Media monitoring should act as a medium to help identify trending topics over time through charts and graphs, categorise mentions by sentiment and benchmark and visualise data to give your team a clear idea of what is working, what isn't and what needs to be prioritised.

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### STATE OF THE ART AUDIENCE METRICS

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Gathering more granular metrics is something only achievable by more sophisticated media monitoring solutions. Understanding website traffic, leads and revenue generated, as well as demographic and firmographic data, can help your team dig deep into your earned media coverage.

This information goes a step beyond most media monitoring services and starts to bridge the gap between the PR and comms space to marketing metrics that are measurable across your organisation. Companies like Cision have made a point to invest in technology which further enhances the detailed insights that can be gained from media monitoring.

Are you ready for a specialised tool? Have you out-grown Google Alerts? Monitoring solutions like Cision's can help you weigh the importance of discussions happening about your brand.

## SET MEDIA MONITORING GOALS

So, you have decided that you are going to place a greater emphasis on media monitoring. The first thing you should do is consider what success looks like for your business. You should start by determining your goals.

Ask internal stakeholders for their input into what they want to see. For example, are you seeking to save your team time? Generate new earned media opportunities? Gather more market intelligence?

Do you want to capture every mention or merely understand trends and tone? Do you want your team to communicate more efficiently and stay on message? Do you want to gain a competitive advantage? Are there specific influencers or publications you'd like to track? Or do you want it all?

Having a clear picture of your short and long-term strategies will inform your decision. Here are some questions to ask yourself before you need to make that first call:

### WHO?

- Who are your target audiences and where are they talking about you?
- Who are your competitors and what are they saying about you?
- Who are your company's supporters and critics?
- Who are the key influencers in your industry?
- Who are the journalists and bloggers that are talking about you?
- Who is covering your senior leaders and how are they being viewed and discussed in the media?
- Who in your company will be monitoring coverage and conversations using the platform?
- Who will be viewing the reports?

### WHAT?

- What are the different media channels you are looking to monitor?
- What are the primary media outlets that are important to you?
- What is your crisis communications plan?
- What are your requirements today? What are your needs long-term?
- What type of training will your team need?

### WHEN?

- When in the day is monitoring most important?
- When would you need alerts of mentions?
- When will you be generating reports?
- When do you expect your breaking news to become visible on your platform?
- When do you expect to be trained on the new monitoring platform?
- When do you expect the platform to be ready for use after-sale?

### WHERE?

- Where will you access the media monitoring platform most often?
- Where do you need this data to be shared?
- Where would you like to see all of your data? Do you need an integrated platform?
- Where can I get customer service help if needed?

### WHICH?

- Which metrics do you believe are important to you and your stakeholders?
- Which global regions do you need to cover and in which languages?
- Which monitoring needs are flexible and what are "must haves?"

### HOW?

- How important is after-sale customer support?
- How important is budget versus the platform's performance value?
- How comprehensive is our requirement to justify the cost of monitoring?
- How do you plan on sharing your monitoring results with senior management?
- How do you keep your organisation on message?
- How does your team react to a crisis? Will you need multiple people to access the platform?
- How is your team measuring ROI on your campaigns and programmes?
- How many internal users will you have?

It's important to have a clear idea of what you need before you get too far into the buying process— and well before you contact companies for demos and presentations of media monitoring platforms. Otherwise, you may focus on flashy features that don't meet your needs, instead of the tools and content that will help you reach your goals.

Now that you've performed your internal "monitoring audit" and you have a couple of services in mind, make sure you're asking your potential monitoring providers the right questions. If you don't ask, you won't get what you ultimately need, so be thorough with your questioning process. You want to make sure the service you choose will perform the way you want and need.

You'll want to base your evaluation of the service on three key areas; **content**, **functionality** and **reliability**. Translate your answers from above to establish the criteria for these four areas.

## CONTENT

Media monitoring solutions are content aggregators. You will need to dig into the specific types of content the platform collects:

- What kind of content do they cover and collect? Social, print, television, radio, online news, blogs, etc.
- How is the content displayed on the platform? Which metrics are provided with content?
- Will there be dedicated people to assist with my search string setup?
- Can you manually add filters to remove your unwanted content?
- Does your content aggregate across multiple countries/regions?
- Does it cover different languages if required?
- Which outlets are monitored? Does the service cover the publications which are the most important to your business? Can you cross-check these?
- Is the content licensed for sharing?
- Can I add content from some of the other sources which my organisation subscribes to, for example, an industry newsfeed?
- Can I monitor archived content and how far back can I search?

## FUNCTIONALITY

Media monitoring solutions differ in look and feel. It's important to know how they compare. Find one that best suits how your department operates. Here are some of the questions you should ask about the software's functionality:

- How user-friendly is the platform?
- How many search terms does it include?
- How advanced is the functionality when creating search strings? Will my team need to be Boolean search experts? Will you provide one?
- How accurate are the results? Am I going to miss any critical mentions?
- How easy is it to organise, save and manage the content for future use (e.g. quarterly reports)?
- Can I address other business and comms needs within the platform, outside of monitoring, e.g. building media lists, engaging with key influencers or distributing content?
- How quickly can I generate my own reports?
- Can I customise the look and feel of the interface, e.g. personalised dashboards or branded reports?

## RELIABILITY

With a range of media monitoring solutions to choose from, you should make sure you evaluate how reliable the provider is when it comes to service needs and support. Here are a few questions to ask:

- What are other customers saying about the monitoring platform?
- What are other customers saying about support?
- What are their hours of support? Is it 24/7, or during business hours?
- What's the typical turn-around time for support to get back to their clients?
- How do you get help using the platform?
- What's the standard onboarding process?
- What kinds of support do they offer? On-site? Full-training? Tutorials? Resource centre?
- Can I have support when performing ongoing or on-demand monitoring and in-depth reporting on custom projects? How much will that cost?

## MONITORING WITH THE CISION COMMS CLOUD

After your preparation and research, it's time to contact a few providers for more information and a demo of their media monitoring solutions. What should you expect so that you can truly assess whether the platform will meet your requirements and organisational goals?

- The provider should ask questions to identify your core business needs and evaluate the context in which your company might use the platform.
- The provider should make sure a mix of media monitoring users, buyers and stakeholders are represented in the session.
- Using this information, the provider will prepare a demonstration to show how the solution provides relevant metrics and satisfies your requirements.
- During the demonstration, you'll get a chance to see how the platform performs and will be shown all of the bells and whistles – and how the solution will answer all of your questions.
- The provider may also provide you with some sample monitoring reports which you can then share with your key internal stakeholders.

You're taking your media monitoring management programme to the next level. But before you buy, make sure you're evaluating the providers from all angles. There are many things to consider when it comes to choosing a media monitoring solution that best fits your business needs. You just need to ask the right questions.

### HOW THE CISION COMMUNICATIONS CLOUD® STACKS UP AGAINST COMPETITORS

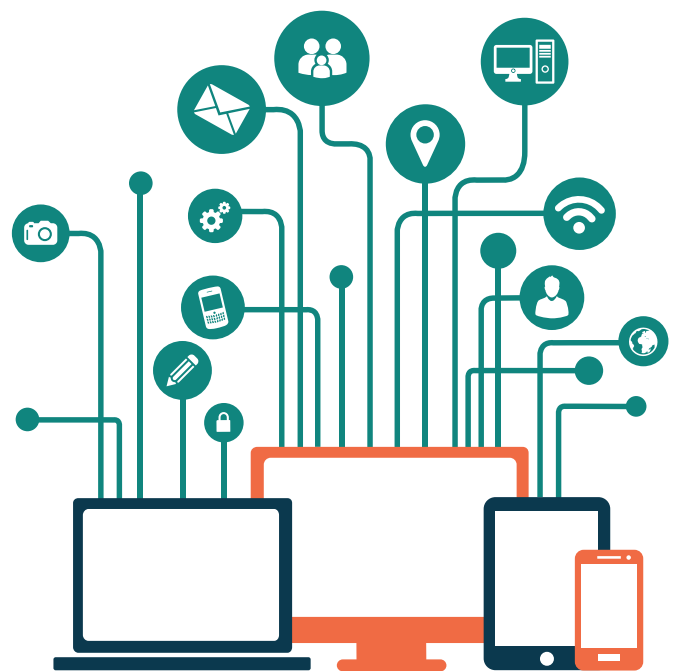
Enter the Cision Comms Cloud, the only fully integrated communications platform which delivers your PR and communications campaigns from pitch to placement to attribution. There are many media monitoring providers out there, but none that can provide as much meaning behind media monitoring as the Cision Communications Cloud.

In head-to-head competitions with other media monitoring providers, Cision continually comes out on top in:

- Integrated monitoring for all four core areas: online, broadcast/radio, social media and print.
- Overall data and content quality.
- Ways to customize charts and graphs.
- Simple, clean look and feel of a platform.
- Onboarding and professional services setup of Boolean searches that uniquely benefit your brand's goals.

Through acquisitions and partnerships and a strong software development team, Cision has ensured that its impact within the PR and comms industry continues to grow with investments in features and functionality that continue to set it apart from the competition.

Whether you are looking for a basic media monitoring solution, or an integrated communications platform to house all your workflows from monitoring to campaign creation, to distribution, measurement and attribution – Cision has the tools and analysts to grow with your company as your needs expand.



CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE **CISION COMMUNICATIONS CLOUD**:

[REQUEST A DEMO NOW](#)