

Media and Crisis Monitoring: A Buyer's Guide

*Full automation or human
curation – what's the best
route to success?*

INTRODUCTION

It's 7:05 a.m., and your comms team just received today's media briefing from your fully automated media monitoring platform. You've got a meeting with your CEO set for 7:30 to go over this week's media results.

The problem?

Along with missing a big story about your latest community outreach program (the story was covered by a paywalled website not included in the platform's content feed), your provider also served up a few dozen irrelevant results based on a keyword string set up several months ago. Your team now has to scramble to add the important story while filtering out all the bad results - not an ideal scenario.

These are just a few of the things that can go wrong when relying on fully automated media monitoring.

Avoiding the dreaded 'set-and-forget'

Indeed, while automating some tasks makes sense, successfully automating some others - particularly tasks requiring nuance, deep contextual knowledge, tact, and good judgement - is currently not possible. It's fair to say you probably wouldn't automate an upcoming pitch to your biggest potential client or investor. Why? Because even though you may save yourself a little time (although even that is negligible), the risk of failure would be far too great.

So-called "set-and-forget" automation - setting up your keywords once and letting your solution run automatically and indefinitely - can have serious negative consequences for your media monitoring program. In most cases, fully automated media monitoring leads to a frustrating combination of:

- Missed media hits of items not easily found using automated tools, such as subscription-only content
- Mountains of irrelevant results through unrefined keyword phrases and a lack of QA
- Ultimately, an erosion of client-provider trust as PR teams spend time fixing mistakes

In this buyer's guide, we'll explore exactly what media monitoring is, what parts make sense to automate and which ones don't, and why human curation provides the most value.



**'SET-AND-FORGET'
MEDIA MONITORING
USUALLY RESULTS IN
MISSED OR
IRRELEVANT HITS**

WHAT IS MEDIA MONITORING?

The definition of media monitoring is pretty simple: it's the ongoing monitoring of print, online, or broadcast media (social media is often included, although it's just as common to see it broken out separately), done on behalf of an entity such as a company, association or government agency.

It's sometimes done in-house by communications groups, but these days it's most often farmed out to third-party services and software platforms that essentially become an extension of in-house comms groups. Media monitoring companies regularly scan broadcast, print, online and social media for mentions of a company or organization's name, its important issues, or other relevant items. Most media monitoring companies offer daily reporting or executive news briefings - high-level news summaries with links,

descriptions and other info - delivered by email or mobile app. They also typically offer media analysis services, which aim to provide insights based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of the metadata generated by all that media monitoring.

Crisis Monitoring

Crisis monitoring - which is a type of media monitoring - is typically (hopefully!) an as-needed activity as potential issues arise for an organization. In crisis monitoring, organizations monitor relevant mentions of their brand during times of crisis to stay on top of developing issues, usually receiving more frequent, crisis-focused briefings and updates in order to respond to events in real time.

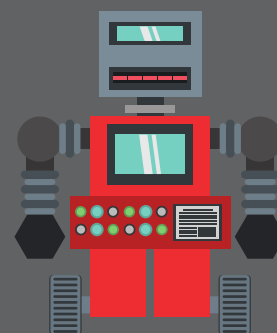
What do we mean by 'Human curated' vs. 'fully automated'?

Generally, there are three broad types or methods of media monitoring:

100% manual. Completely manual media monitoring using scissors, glue and a clipbook is practically extinct (although not totally), but completely manual media monitoring lives on for many small entities who use free tools to track their handful of mentions per year.

100% automated. This method relies on pre-programmed Boolean keyword strings to automatically search and harvest content electronically. It often produces bad results and is prone to missing important items.

Partly automated with human curation. A combination of automated processes and expert human oversight, this method typically gleans the best results by automating processes that make sense and imposing the human touch where required.



MEDIA MONITORING: A BRIEF HISTORY



Even though today most media monitoring companies are software-as-a-service (SaaS) platforms, it hasn't always been this way:

1852: The first known press clippings agency is founded in London, and is frequented by several well-known actors, musicians, and artists who browse its stock for mentions of themselves or their affiliations.

1879: A similar service is founded in Paris, but with a twist: the *L'Argus de la presse*, as it was called, offered a full-blown clippings service where artists could buy individual review clippings instead of the whole newspaper.

1888: Burrelle's Press Clippings Bureau forms in New York City, after the founder overheard two business people complaining about the difficulties of keeping up with the news.

1940s-50s: Eastern European governments in postwar Europe obsessively monitor letters-to-the-editor sections in newspapers, measuring sentiment towards the regime and analyzing the content to determine the most popular issues or subjects among regular people.

1960s: The emerging (and wildly popular) mediums of radio and television make their first appearances at press clippings agencies, who offer to monitor broadcasts and transcribe them if they prove relevant for clients.

1990s: The process of monitoring press clippings - which hadn't changed much in years and largely involved paper, scissors and a clipbook - goes digital, bringing in online news sources and experimenting with SaaS delivery.

2000s: Completely automated media monitoring services appear on the scene, to much fanfare. But clients discover that without human curation, these services often create as much - or more - work than they save by sometimes missing important hits and regularly inundating users with irrelevant clips.

2010s: Social media information, including real-time content, influencer data, and trend analysis, becomes a must-have in media monitoring platforms alongside traditional news data - adding to the exponential growth of digital information that communications teams must track on a daily basis.



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH FULLY AUTOMATED MONITORING?

Fully automated media monitoring isn't always a bad thing. For organizations who only receive a small number of mentions each year, or who have a high tolerance for media briefings that contain missing or irrelevant information, it's possible that fully automated monitoring can be good enough. However, most PR and communications professionals agree that fully automated media monitoring almost always creates more work than it solves:

a) It often results in irrelevant, redundant, or repetitive hits. Most PR professionals have experienced the pain and frustration of sifting through hundreds or thousands of media items, supplied by their media monitoring firm, that are completely irrelevant.

b) It misses important items. Content behind paywalls or sign-in requirements gets missed by automated news aggregators and feeds. These aggregators provide a diminishing return on investment each year as important publications deny access due to licensing issues, and are typically replaced by lower-value online sites.

c) It forces your team to do extra work. All those irrelevant or missed items mean one thing: extra work and late nights for PR teams, who must either spend hours filtering their media monitoring company's results (and tracking down missed articles) or risk the ire of the C-suite.

d) It leads to bad client-provider relationships. Relationships can deteriorate quickly when PR teams have to monitor their media monitoring provider. It usually doesn't end well.



e) It can lead to bad business decisions.

Data-driven decisions are great, but not if they're driven by bad data. If all those irrelevant hits served up by your monitoring provider make it into your quarterly or annual media analysis, your insights could be way off the mark.



The best media monitoring solutions bring together technology, people and process for the most relevant, contextual and affordable media intelligence possible. A human curated service uses automation where it makes sense and human-driven processes when it doesn't, with all monitoring and reporting services managed by dedicated media experts.

HUMAN CURATION PROVIDES COMMS TEAMS WITH FAR GREATER CONFIDENCE IN THEIR RESULTS.

These experts are knowledgeable with your account because they're constantly monitoring and curating your organization's media hits, leading to more accurate results; complete content coverage including paywalled, niche and subscription outlets not included in content feeds; and less time wasted by your team chasing or filtering results.

A typical human curated monitoring process is as follows:

Step 1. Your analyst performs a keyword search globally across print, online, broadcast, and social media sources.

Step 2. Dedicated human analysts get to work on filling gaps (including content from paywall, subscription or niche outlets not covered by content feeds) and eliminating irrelevant or duplicate coverage.

Step 3. Analysts tag and score media coverage to determine prominence and sentiment, and deliver custom reports based on that coverage.

This process provides PR and communications teams with far greater confidence in the results contained in daily briefings or analysis reports. After all, just one or two mistakes – especially if they involve syndicated coverage – can sometimes lead to completely skewed results with hundreds or thousands of irrelevant hits.

HUMAN CURATED MEDIA MONITORING IN ACTION

Shameless plug: Fullintel clients receive human-curated media monitoring services (including media briefings and executive reports, alerts, and other tailored offerings) each and every day. Because the news never stops, our human media analysts are up early every morning gathering, filtering, and sorting your media mentions so they're in your inbox the second you need them.

But don't just take our word for it. Our client engagements speak for themselves:

Miami Dolphins

Learn how the NFL's Miami Dolphins use Fullintel's human-curated monitoring to discover and evaluate news items that matter to them, instead of being buried under a landslide of irrelevant results served up by a fully automated platform.

Read the rest of the case study [here](#).

Shionogi

Fullintel was able to provide Shionogi with the intelligence and insight that they required, far more cost effectively, by leveraging their team of media analyst experts who worked round the clock to ensure their reports met every expectation.

Read the rest of the case study [here](#).

Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG)

With the help of the social media monitoring and influencer intelligence services provided by Fullintel's media analysts, Mitsubishi Bank is now taking a data-driven approach to media list development and PR opportunity pitching.

Read the rest of the case study [here](#).



CONCLUSION



In this buyer's guide we've explored the background, benefits and features of media monitoring and crisis monitoring. We've looked at why fully automated media monitoring and crisis monitoring, while beneficial in some situations, can actually create far more work for PR teams than it solves - especially for large organizations with thousands of media mentions per month.

Human curated media monitoring and crisis monitoring brings together technology, people and process for the most relevant, contextual and affordable media intelligence possible. Human curated monitoring services are managed by dedicated media experts who use automation when it makes sense, and human-driven processes when it doesn't - all in the name of providing the most timely, most relevant, and most valuable information possible.

If you'd like to learn even more about how human curated media monitoring and crisis monitoring can help your organization, click here or contact Fullintel at sales@fullintel.com to set up your free trial.