



Agility | PR Solutions

Media Monitoring in the Public Relations Industry:

HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

Media monitoring should be a staple activity for public relations practitioners.

Whether you work for a PR agency or inhouse for an organization, media monitoring can give you insight into the public discussions about you and/or your client's brand, competition, and more. So what do you do on a regular basis to make sure you're not in the dark? And notably, what is everybody else doing? Why does it matter?

Getting a grasp on the media monitoring habits of your organization and PR peers is a great way to benchmark activities and make decisions about how and when you spend your time and resources. Because if you're not keeping up with the rest of the industry when it comes to media monitoring, then you're missing out on some key opportunities that your peers (and your competition!) are capitalizing on to make better campaigns and smarter business decisions.

As a media database and monitoring provider, we have a lot of time to think about the importance of these things. We're also a curious bunch, and we wondered how aware PR folks were of their media monitoring habits or lack thereof. So we asked, and we got answers. Lots of them. From PR pros across North America, Europe, and beyond. And what we now know (and you can too) is the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY of media monitoring across the industry.

Check out our findings below and see how you measure up to your industry peers, along with bonus pro insights from yours truly on how you can improve your media monitoring habits to keep your organization one step ahead of the game.

METHODOLOGY

All the juicy insights in this piece are based on answers from 299 PR and communications pros. The large majority (86.6%) of our respondents are from either the United States, Canada or the United Kingdom, with the rest coming in from regions across the globe.

Our full survey included 33 multiple choice questions (mix of single-response and select-all-that-apply-responses).

Surveys were completed anonymously through an online survey platform.

GLOSSARY BOX

Just to make sure we're on the same page, we've included glossary boxes to clarify what we mean by certain terms. Keep an eye out for these to avoid any semantic confusion!

Meet Liz and Gerry

Do they seem familiar? That's because you probably work with them. Heck they might even be you!

They're the poster-people for the average media monitoring habits of public relations pros working either inhouse for an organization, or with an agency.

Sound kind of like you? Read on! While Liz and Gerry have got the basics down, they're always learning and can still get more value out of their media monitoring activities.

Total strangers? You'll definitely want to read on! 95% of the pros we surveyed are doing some kind of media monitoring, and if you're part of the 5% who aren't, you'll want to learn a little bit about why it's so important, and how to get the most value out of whichever solution you choose.



THE INHOUSE PR PRACTITIONER

Gerry, the director of marketing at a private company is most likely:

- ▶ Using a self-service 3rd party media monitoring tool that his company pays for to measure brand, spokespeople, and industry mentions.
- ▶ He looks online, on social (mostly Twitter and Facebook), in print, and broadcast.
- ▶ He's also most interested in understanding coverage by media type, outlet, and mentions over time.



THE PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCY

Liz, a senior consultant with a public relations firm is most likely:

- ▶ Using a self-service 3rd party media monitoring tool that her agency pays for to measure brand mentions, spokespeople, and competitor mentions for the agency and their clients.
- ▶ She uses the tool to look online, on social media (mostly Twitter), in print, and broadcast.
- ▶ She's most interested in understanding the coverage by media type, outlet, and mentions over time.

For both Liz and Gerry, their biggest frustration is, by far, irrelevant and missing coverage in their reports.

Now that you've met them both, let's take a closer look at the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY of their habits to get a better understanding of media monitoring in the industry and ways to make it more effective.

PRO INSIGHT

In the world of media monitoring, good search terms are the difference between “ARRRGH” and “Ahhhh 😊”

Tired of reading every time your brand is mentioned in a stock market report, but somehow that major story about your product launch is nowhere to be seen? Irrelevant “noise” and missing coverage in media monitoring results are a major pain point for most pros in the industry. So how do you avoid this? You start by working with your media monitoring provider to make the best, most water-tight search terms possible. Most media monitoring solutions use Boolean search terms for their algorithms, and let me tell you, those things are a science. So don't be shy to ask your provider to help craft the search terms that are going to get you the most relevant results. And if they can't or won't help, you may want to consider a provider that will.

Unfortunately, even expertly crafted search terms will sometimes let a bit of “noise” through, so if it's something that really makes your blood boil and you've got the budget for it, you may want to consider a full-service solution that does all the dirty work for you. No duplicates, no excessive stock reports, just pure, quality media monitoring content delivered to your inbox.

GLOSSARY BOX

3rd Party Tool: Any media monitoring software purchased by the client from a provider. Includes self-serve tools and full-service solutions.

Free Tools: Free media monitoring tools exist online, and include things like Google Alerts, which send you an email notification every time your search terms appear in online news etc.

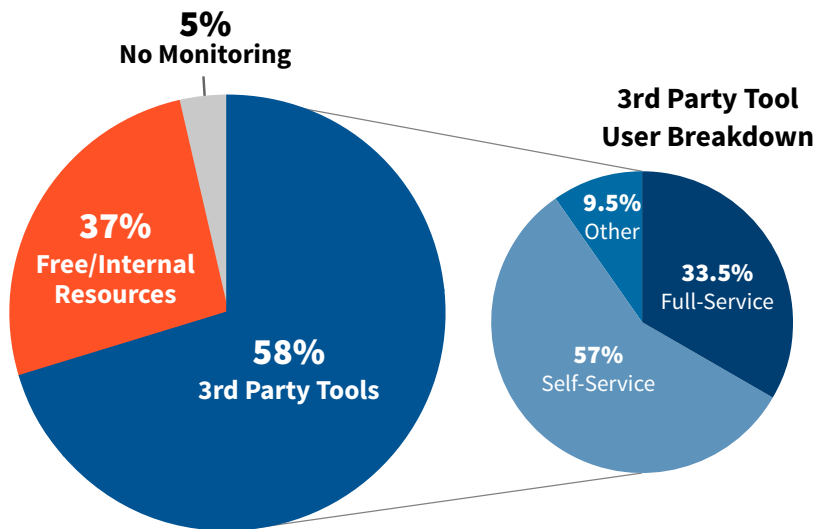
Self-Serve Tool: A 3rd party tool. After the initial set-up by the provider, the client manages their own search terms, results, research, and analysis.

Full Service Solution: A 3rd party tool. Everything media monitoring-related is taken care of by the provider. That means search terms, results, research, and analysis are all done by the provider and the client simply has to read the reports.

Boolean Search Term: Search terms that combine keywords using modifiers such as AND, NOT, and OR, as well as parentheses and other symbols. This system is what allows computers and software to find relevant, specific results.

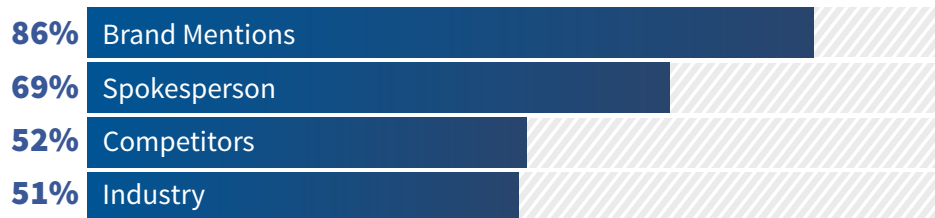
What's being monitored and what's being used to do it?

95% of PR professionals surveyed are doing some kind of media monitoring activity.



Brand mentions are the most popular topic to monitor.

The top four topics being monitored include:



PRO INSIGHT

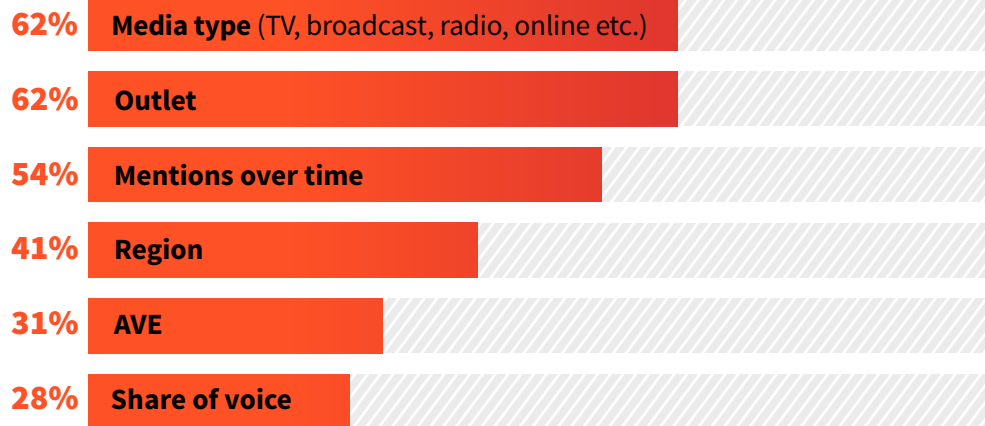
Monitor Your Competition. Seriously ... Do it.

Monitoring brand mentions and spokespeople makes a lot of sense. You want to get a feel for the conversation surrounding your organization specifically, which can help with decision-making related to stakeholder relations, advertising and marketing, crisis communications and more. You can't make smart business decisions without a solid understanding of how you're coming across to people outside your organization.

But what else? Only 52% of PR professionals are monitoring competition mentions, which means that **almost half are missing out on a major opportunity**. Monitoring your main competitors gives you a major leg up. You can see what's working for them and what's not and adjust your own tactics accordingly. Monitoring your competition means you avoid angry phone calls from the boss asking why nobody realized that the new product you just launched is almost exactly like the one your competitors released a week ago. Monitoring your competition will help you brainstorm and perfect ideas, inform both proactive and reactive business decisions, and generally make you look like a superstar. **In a nutshell, monitoring your competition means you're never surprised and you always have an answer.**

Most PR professionals are particularly interested in their coverage's media type and outlet, as well as mentions over time.

On average, PR pros are monitoring coverage by;



GLOSSARY BOX

Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE): refers to the cost of buying the space taken up by a particular article had the article been an advertisement.

Share of Voice: Measures your brand's exposure and conversation with target audiences versus your competitors.

PRO INSIGHT

What's in a metric?

While organizations and clients have different ways of measuring PR "success", looking at all the metrics shown here will generally give you the most complete picture. However, the usefulness of different metrics ultimately depends on your objectives, and should always be interpreted within that context. Do what works best for you and your clients! Some advantages of looking at each metric:

Media Type and Outlet: This gives you a good idea of your coverage's reach in numbers, audience and demographics.

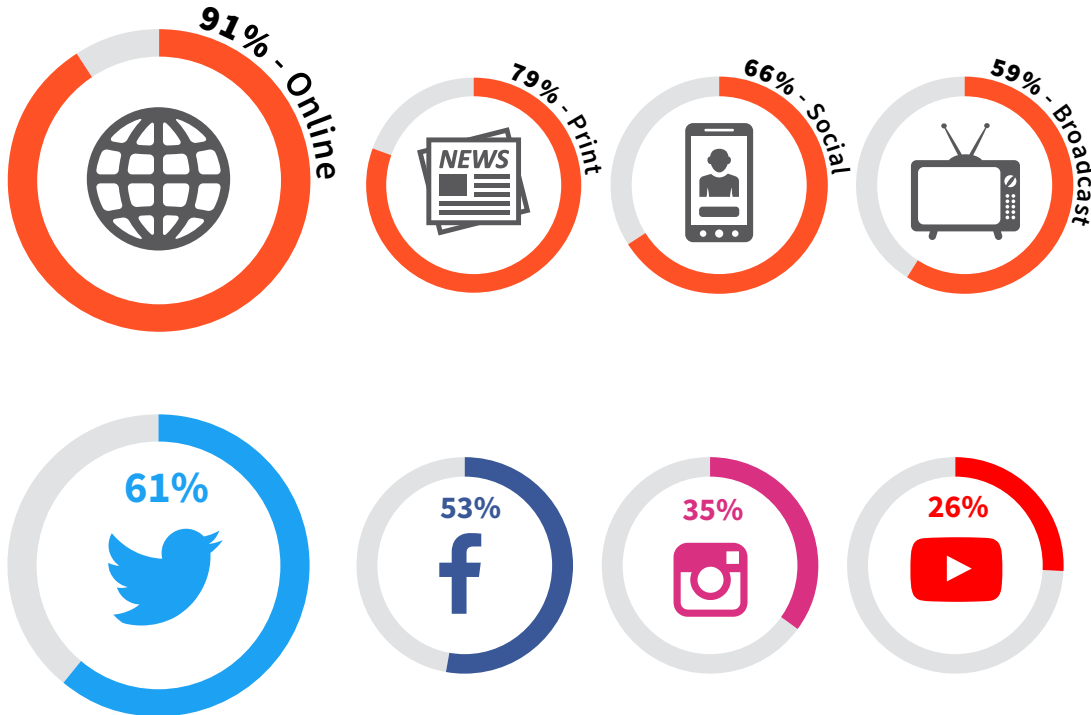
Mentions Over Time: What are the trends? Can you tie spikes in positive coverage to other factors that will help you replicate it again in the future?

Coverage by Region: Interested in measuring your impact in specific locations? Consider measuring coverage by region.

AVE: Need a quick and easy dollar value for a client to show off to their board of directors? While it may seem a bit shallow, AVE can be handy to have in your back pocket.

Share of Voice: Can be helpful when looking at how to effectively allocate resources. Need more work on SEO? Time to invest in other markets? Share of voice can help with the decision.

Where are they monitoring?



PRO INSIGHT

Not all channels are created equal

When you first start out with media monitoring, it's easy to get carried away and want to be looking absolutely everywhere. Ultimately, this may not be the best approach. Instead, you'll want to monitor strategically. Where does the conversation really MATTER for you? Who are your target audiences and where do they "hang out" in the media landscape? Find them, and focus there.

Generally, Twitter is a great social media channel to focus on for several reasons. In the media landscape, it's the king of live-streaming, instant updates, and a popular way for journalists to communicate with the public. Hashtags and Twitter conversations give excellent insights into public and popular opinions and trends, and any breaking news will likely hit this channel first.

When are people monitoring?

3RD PARTY TOOL USERS

Most people get daily alerts

91% of users receive emails/alerts with coverage briefs DAILY



Detailed Coverage Reports

43%
Daily

16%
weekly

21%
monthly



50% like to have real-time alerts of mentions

FREE TOOL USERS

79% of users receive alerts or briefs daily, **14%** weekly



Note: No data available for detailed coverage reports.

PRO INSIGHT

Is there such a thing as TOO much media monitoring?

Daily monitoring may seem like a lot, but it's a habit the large majority of PR pros tend to have. Daily alerts and briefs keep you informed on relevant breaking news stories, increases your awareness and can get your spidey-senses tingling on possible upcoming issues. More detailed reports are helpful for providing the data to make trend-based analysis and decisions. We believe there is no such thing as being "too" informed.

GLOSSARY BOX

Coverage Brief: Includes a summary of your coverage over a set-amount of time (daily, weekly, etc.).

Detailed Coverage Reports: Typically include charts and graphs and are used to track overarching trends and measure campaign success over time.

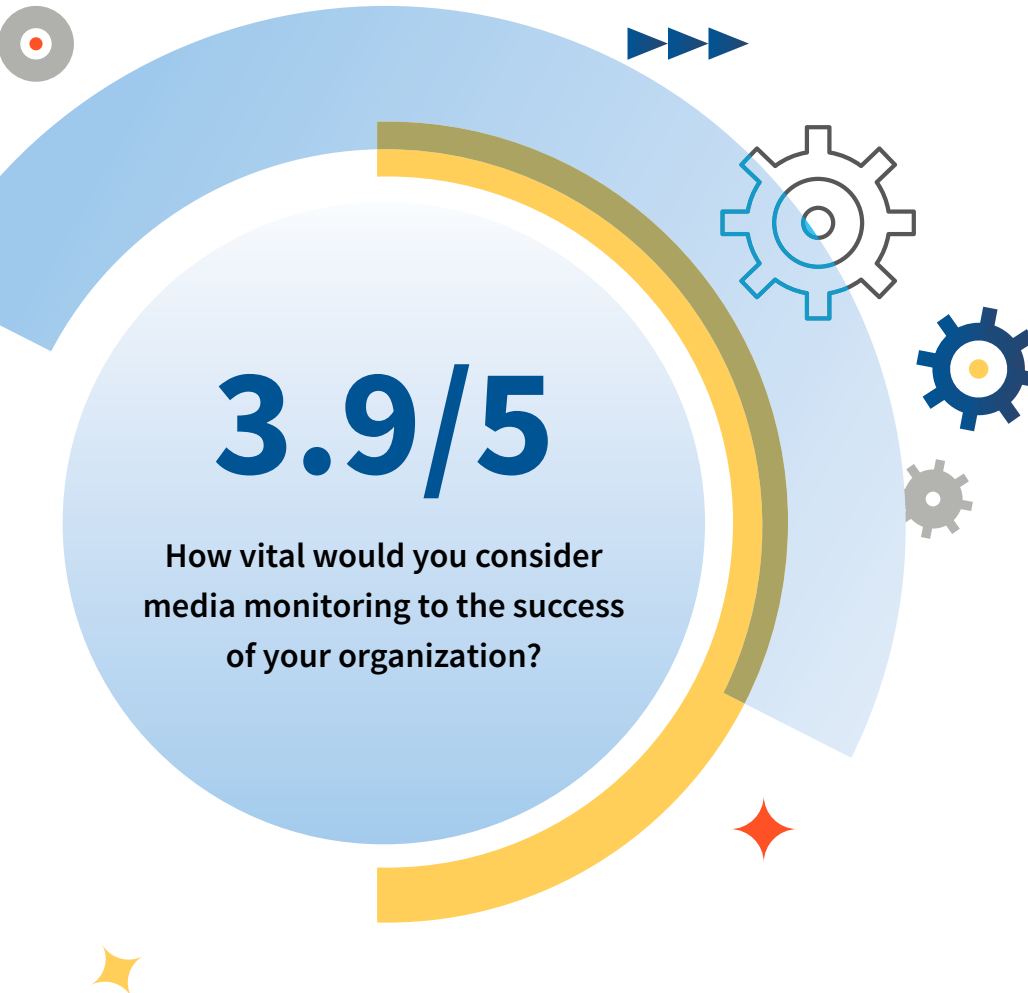
Who is doing the monitoring?

Most respondents receive monitoring reports themselves.

It's more common for PR pros using 3rd party tools to share reports with their executive teams and departments.



Why is it important?



3.9/5

How vital would you consider media monitoring to the success of your organization?

PRO INSIGHT

Why Bother?

Generally, PR pros using any media monitoring tool believes it is fairly important to the success of their organization.

Media monitoring is an investment, whether you're using a 3rd party tool or free tools. It takes time, and it can take money, but ultimately, it will always be worth it.

Media monitoring is what allows you to take control of your business's success, or that of your clients. It creates tangible data that allows you to plot progress, track value (both qualitative and quantitative), and make decisions. It can make-or-break the way you or your clients respond to a crisis situation, influence the tone and direction of your communications/public relations/government relations/you-name-it strategy, and create targets that will get you the results you're after.

Of all the PR pros surveyed, only 5% aren't engaging in some form of media monitoring, and of those, only half are skipping out because they think it's unnecessary. **Bottom line: If you don't want to be left behind, you need to be on the same page as 95% of your PR peers and set aside the time and resources for media-monitoring action.**

People using 3rd party tools are, on average, more satisfied with their media monitoring solution than those using free tools.

USER SATISFACTION (On a scale of 1-5)



Third Party Tool Users



Free/Internal Resources Users

////////////////////// **PRO INSIGHT** ////////////////////////

The decision to invest financially in a third-party media monitoring solution is always a big one. The most common reasons people choose to make the switch include:



Efficiency

Media monitoring solutions are built to make your life easier. Instead of scanning through social media, print publications, and online news stories yourself (a full-time job all on its own), media monitoring tools do this automatically. Once they're set up, they save you hours, and let you move on to all the other things on your to-do list.



Accuracy

Media monitoring solutions give you a better picture. Even if it were your full-time job to manually scan the media, there aren't enough hours in the day to get through all the content out there. Most free tools will help with this, but you're going to miss a lot of coverage. Third party media monitoring solutions have the technology to ensure you're getting a more complete picture on the topics you're interested in.



Benchmarking

Most solutions give you the option to track data and make reports. This is crucial if you want to provide quantitative measurements and track the success of your campaigns. They provide the metrics you need to evaluate your current activities, and plan for more efficient, robust campaigns in the future.

And there you have it! The WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY of media monitoring in the PR and communications industry.

Where do you stand? Are you pretty-well on par with your peers, or do you have some work ahead to get caught up?

Either way, there are lots of tools out there to help get the job done and stand out from the crowd, including at Agility PR Solutions.

Our [media monitoring software](#) lets you track and organize your coverage, create reports, receive email alerts, and help identify and connect with the journalists and influencers that matter to you, all with the support of our expert team any time you need it.

Short on time? Our [full-service solution](#) will take care of all the dirty work so that you can focus on putting those expert insights into practice. Custom, human-analyzed and curated reports and daily briefs, complete with in-depth analysis right at your fingertips whenever you need them.

Still not really sure where to start? Get in touch and we'll be happy to work with you to figure it out!

LET'S CHAT

In the meantime, for even more great insight and detail into media monitoring and what it can do for your organization, check out our [Ultimate Guide to Media Monitoring](#). This will give you a deep dive on the subject and help you move forward and do what's best for your organization and clients.

Happy Monitoring!