

DIY Media Monitoring

A step-by-step guide to setting up
your own media monitoring program



SECTION 1: KEYWORDS

The right keywords are the foundation of any monitoring program. If your keywords are shoddy or don't bring in what you're looking for, you won't have success — it's that simple. A few tips to help you get started...



GET ORGANIZED:

Use our handy keyword spreadsheet tracker, which helps track keywords while monitoring and reduces the chances of missing a keyword, spokesperson, competitor, or product.

DO YOUR RESEARCH:

Make sure to review the name(s), stakeholders, products, and other relevant information about the organization for which you're monitoring, and make an initial keyword list. And don't worry if it's too long — you can always shorten it later! Easier to have too many and remove, than to have too few and get stuck scrambling for more.

Keyword	Inclusions	Exclusions	Common Misspellings
Muffins	muffins AND (doughnuts or donuts)	NOT "english muffins"	muffn, moffin

❑ **COMPETITORS:**

If you're planning on monitoring for your competitors to determine share of voice, do your homework and pay attention to keywords used by your competitors.

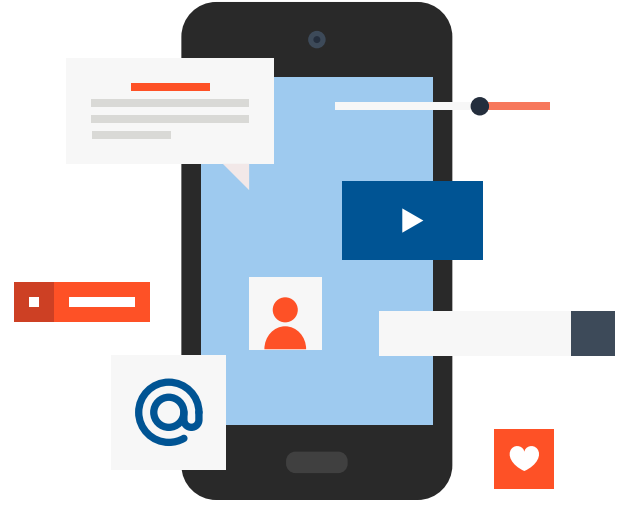
❑ **DON'T BE GENERIC:**

Terms that are too broad bring in a lot of irrelevant coverage. Use Boolean [search operators with qualifying terms](#) to filter the noise (but more on that later).

❑ **AVOID TYPOS:**

Misspellings at the outset can sink a monitoring program fast, so be ultra careful when initially creating keywords to search different [media types](#).





BROADCAST MONITORING:

If broadcast is on your list, also ensure you have alternate keywords spelled phonetically (automated speech-to-text transcription can be messy, and if not accounted for is an easy way to miss relevant hits).

SOCIAL MONITORING:

Same goes for social, where spellings can be as varied as users. When monitoring for company handles, do your research — organizations with longer names often use acronyms to cut down on handle length.

SET REMINDERS FOR REVIEW:

Monitoring is not a set-it-and-forget-it service. Review all keywords at regular intervals throughout the monitoring period, especially if the project spans multiple months or years. Be sure to watch for spokesperson, product, and key message turnover.

SECTION 2: SEARCH

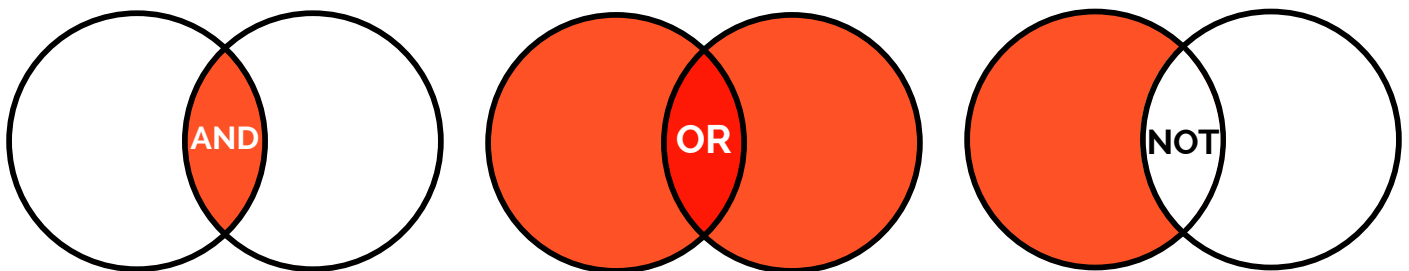
In the age of Google, you might think you know everything about search. But in the media monitoring world, simple searches are going to return a lot of irrelevant coverage. You need to fine-tune your searches, so you're not wading through irrelevant noise to find what really matters.

□ GET YOUR BOOLEAN ON:

Many monitoring platforms typically use Boolean logic for creating search terms. This can be intimidating for first-timers, but you can get a crash course on using search operators [here](#) (it's a little like creating a math equation out of words).

- Be sure to review you're using OR/AND, NOT, and parentheses operators effectively.

(keyword **OR** keyword) **AND** ("key word" **OR** keyword)



□ GEOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING:

It's crucial to determine which [regions](#) to monitor. Review your past coverage to discover regional trends, along with where your operations take place. For example, if you're a local organization with no operations outside your city or state, there's probably no need to monitor all of North America.

SECTION 3: CONTENT

An effective monitoring program is nothing — I repeat, NOTHING — without good content. You need to determine which content sources matter the most to you, then find tools or buy subscriptions to enable you to easily mine those sources for information.

SOURCE YOUR CONTENT CAREFULLY:

There are many news and content sources to select, from online news aggregators to broadcast content providers.

If you're using (or are thinking about using) a monitoring tool or service, find out what outlets and content sources it supports well in advance of starting a program, to make sure you can monitor the content you need. (Psst, we have access to any and all content, from the biggest to the most specialized content providers. If it's out there, we will bring it to you.)

Here's a list of just some of the content providers we work with at Agility PR Solutions:



provides print, online and broadcast sources



provides print and online content and focuses on legal sources



provides print and online sources



provides broadcast monitoring for TV and Radio



provides print, online and broadcast sources



provides print, online and broadcast monitoring



provides print monitoring in the form of a virtual layout of actual print publications

❑ **DITCH THE IRRELEVANT STUFF:**

Plan which types of content you'd prefer to leave out of your monitoring, such as republished digital press releases, and be diligent about keeping it out. Diligent and ruthless.

❑ **BE CAREFUL WITH COPYRIGHT:**

Some content subscriptions are extremely strict in terms of user limits and ability to share. Consider whether you've purchased enough licenses to cover your organization's most important stakeholders. You'll also have to buy subscriptions to paywalled sites, if necessary.



SECTION 4: ANALYZE AND EVOLVE

The whole point of a monitoring and measurement program is to know what's working and what isn't...and to learn from the data and improve the next time around.

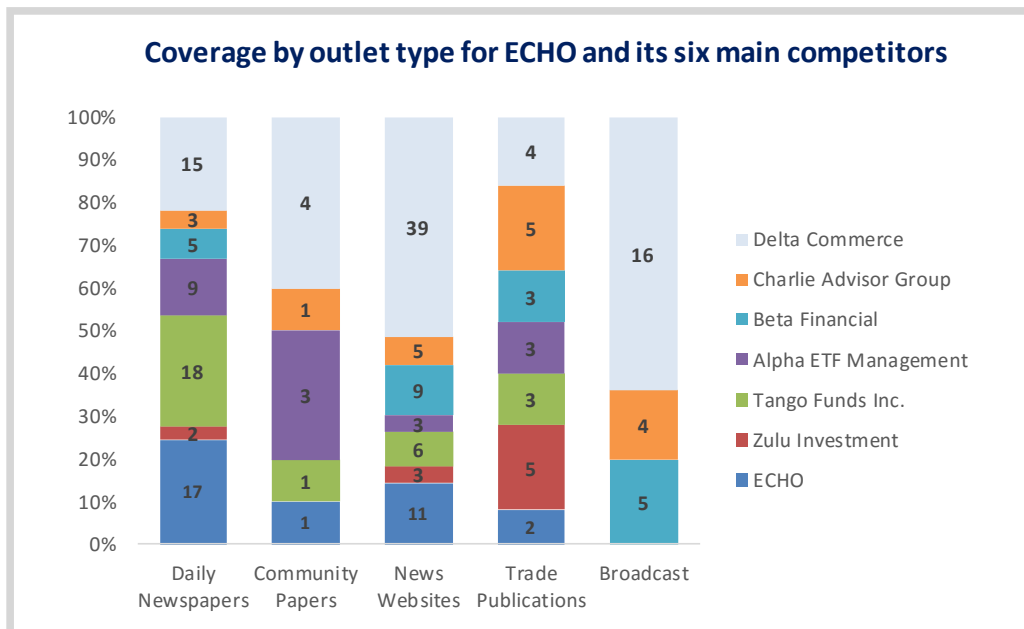
MAKE SENSE OF YOUR RESULTS:

If you're using a media monitoring tool, be sure to investigate its ability to collect, save, share, and analyze results. Can you export results in a presentation-ready format? Does it provide charts or timeline graphs of information so you can compare coverage or see trends over time?

A product like [Agility Plus](#) monitors content *and* lets you export graphs or PDFs of results for ludicrously simple sharing with your executives or key stakeholders.

There are plenty of metrics to consider when analyzing your results, including:

- Coverage trend**
- Sentiment/tone:** overall, by competitor, sentiment trend over time
- Mentions/circulation/readership/impressions**
- Top outlets/journalists**
- Share of voice:** by competitors, issues, products, properties, stakeholders, spokespersons, etc.
- Benchmarking:** month over month, quarter over quarter and year over year trends



The metrics on the last page are all well and good — that is to say, using them and them alone is a fine place to start — but when it comes to getting the absolute most out of your media monitoring program, you need to take it a step further. You need to measure quality as well as quantity.

Quality coverage — that stuff that checks all the boxes for what your organization wants out of earned media — can change everything. But how to measure quality?

Try creating a handy little rubric like the one we’ve so kindly provided, substituting the simple criteria here with aspects that mean most to your organization. (Or don’t, and just use these. They’re damned good, in our opinion.)

Value	If Yes	If No
Published in Tier 1 Media Outlet	1.5	0.5
Published Online	1	0.5
Contains 1 or more message points	1.5	0
Contains Positive Visual	1	0
Contains Call To Action or URL	1.5	0
Contains Negative sentiment	-2	0
Factual Accuracy	0	-1

The issue with applying a media quality score is actually applying it. It’s time-consuming. In fact, it can be time-devouring.

Insert shameless pitch here

Now, we know this is a DIY guide, but if your team just doesn’t have the time, applying unique media quality scores is something that Agility PR Solutions can do for you. Our Client Success consultants are experts at analyzing media coverage. The human curation means that the media quality data — arrived at after the consultants score each article based on the presence or absence of each of your chosen elements — can be fully relied upon.

STILL NOT SURE WHERE TO START ON YOUR OWN MEDIA MONITORING PROGRAM?

[Contact one of our experts](#) at Agility PR Solutions — we're more than happy to get you on the road to monitoring the right way, so you can start to see the impact of your efforts, and learn from them to truly become tomorrow's communicator.

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