

The impact of media digitisation on monitoring

 By [Jaco Pienaar](#)

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To misappropriate Aldous Huxley, we live in a brave new world. The connected lifestyle has changed the way people not only engage with one another but also how they consume content. But what does the digitisation of media mean for monitoring and analysis agencies?

Despite the fact that print publications are fighting for survival and the recent closure of several 'leading' magazines, there will always be a market for the more traditional ways of reading. However, print needs to realise that it is not a case of doing one at the exclusion of the other. There needs to be complementary services offered to cater for both print readers as well as those who want to engage with the content online or via a mobile device.



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Pushing online content

With the growth of things like e-readers, digital magazines, downloadable community newspapers, and daily newspapers pushing their content online, the landscape is considerably different from a year or two ago. Just think about the reach publications have thanks to the vast number of potential online readers. Of course, the inverse is true in the sense that people have become spoilt for choice and are not necessarily as brand loyal as they used to be.

There are many similarities between what is happening in print today and how the music industry changed thanks not only to online music stores but also the evolution of technology. Today, anyone with an internet connection and a passion for a topic can publish content, create an online magazine, and record and stream podcasts. Content generation is the easiest it has ever been.

Even publishing houses are seeing the sense in embracing digital. Online presents not only a more cost-effective channel (think zero printing and distribution costs) but it is also more immediate so readers have access to the latest news and information.

Additional challenges

But for companies trying to monitor what is being said about their brand and how they are positioned to the public, online presents a few additional challenges. It is no longer a case of hitting as many media (whether it is print, broadcast, or online) as possible. Instead, the focus is turning to quality coverage. Well, that is the theory. As many public relations firms can attest to, some of the more traditional organisations are still chasing column centimetres and viewing online as a nice-to-have.

Irrespective, the role of monitoring and analysis agencies are even more critical than in the past. They need to show value in the quantity of media they are able to monitor, as well as providing additional services in analysing that content in the context of the requirements of the client.

But while it sounds impressive if a monitoring agency tracks hundreds of thousands (or even millions) of online sources, does it even matter? Just as with print and broadcast monitoring, there are certain influencers that need to be tracked. The numbers might be higher when it comes to online, but those sources need to be carefully identified. It is not a case of just tracking and hoping for the best.

One thing is certain. Given how technology is changing the monitoring and analysis market on an almost daily basis, the

agencies to work with will be the ones who are the most adaptable to change and can offer the value-added analysis services required.

ABOUT JACO PIENAAR

Jaco is an MA Information Science graduate who specialises in research, analytical framework development, and content analysis. His thesis was on Intellectual Capital measurement and he applies this to his framework developments as well as knowledge strategies. Professionally, Jaco has worked in the journalism field, academic environment, multi-national research environment, and media analysis environment. He is currently the Chief Knowledge Officer at Professional Evaluation and Research.

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