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# Keeping track

**Teletrax MD Andy Nobbs believes that we are witnessing the transformation of an industry where services such as Teletrax are becoming must-have video management tools. With over 20,000 TV channels now broadcasting around the globe, video content owners want fingertip-control to make rapid and informed decisions**

There was no more stunning example of the power of communications technology than the recent news coverage of succession plans for the leadership of an organisation with more than one billion members worldwide. The organisation announced its news via an email to major newswires and then provided exclusive live video feeds from its own television centre. This breaking news was actually the Vatican's announcement of the death of Pope John Paul II and its subsequent notices of events leading up to the election of his successor.

So even the Vatican has embraced modern broadcast communications in order to reach its target audience. Vatican Radio was founded in 1931, and its web site now offers live and on-demand audio programming in more than 35 languages. The Vatican Television Centre (CTV) was established in 1983 to provide daily live broadcasts, long-form video production and support services and facilities to other broadcasters, as well as to manage an extensive audio and video archive. However, requests to access those archives are still fielded by the CTV office via telephone, fax, email and regular mail. And the Vatican, like so many other organisations that have begun to harness the power of media asset management, has no scientific way to track usage of its content.

The journey from Rome to Charlotte, North Carolina is a world away both geographically and culturally. Yet, if you speak to Bob Horner, president of Charlotte-based NBC News Channel, about the challenges associated with managing an inventory of video content that is refreshed around the clock, it doesn't appear to be such a quantum leap from the Holy See to NBC. "We were flying blind, despite our best efforts to keep track of our material," said Horner, president of this division of NBC News that provides more than 300 live and taped news stories each day to NBC affiliates, MSNBC, CNBC, foreign broadcasters, and other news organisations. After a decade of searching for a viable solution, Horner turned to London-based Teletrax in 2003. Teletrax, the first and only global digital watermarking service, potentially holds the key to unlocking the value of video content for other broadcast and programming executives like Horner.

Launched in 2002 as a service developed by a joint venture between consumer electronics giant Royal Philips Electronics and Medialink Worldwide Inc., Teletrax's patented technology embeds an imperceptible and indelible digital watermark into video whenever it is edited, transmitted, broadcast or duplicated. Once watermarked, a global network of detectors then captures all occurrences of the embedded video being transmitted via satellite, cable or terrestrially.

NBC News Channel originally signed on with Teletrax for international tracking including 85 markets in the US, but later expanded its coverage to the top 100 US markets. In 2004, the NBC News unit took Teletrax on the road to the

Athens Summer Olympics, using the unique technology on its distributions of live and taped news stories from its onsite broadcast operations. The achievement of critical mass in worldwide broadcast coverage was an important reason NBC News Channel chose Teletrax, as no other existing video monitoring technologies offer a truly global solution.

Unlike Teletrax, alternative tracking technologies falter when it comes to surviving the changes in video standards - PAL, Secam, NTSC - found in different regions. Teletrax's international network is comprised of 12 "listening posts" or monitoring stations in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and South America, which monitor more than 200 channels being broadcast from nearly 50 nations. Its North American coverage includes Canada, Mexico and more than 700 television stations in the top 100 markets in the US, representing more than 85% of all US television households.

The Teletrax technology delivers on both accuracy and precision. Brief occurrences of video can be detected with split-second precision. Reports of individual broadcast airings are delivered online in near real-time to each client's custom-designed portal or in data file transfers. Broadcast activity is updated dynamically 24/7, enabling clients to respond immediately to reported results such as changes in end-user preferences or detections of unauthorised use.

Gaining access to the controls of such a powerful dashboard is of particular benefit to video content providers including news organisations such as NBC News Channel, as well as TV syndicators, motion picture studios, sport programmers, and major TV advertisers. Their business needs go beyond authentication or verification - rights management or proof of performance of advertising schedules - and instead have evolved into the more sophisticated application of media asset management. This varied group represents a significant ownership of valuable video intellectual properties, and they are keenly interested in protecting and leveraging content for maximum return on investment while ensuring good-quality client service. "Teletrax has enabled us to re-evaluate how our news items are produced and distributed," explained Horner. "It has become a vital component in our daily editorial process. Analysis of which stories are being used and, more importantly, which are not, has enabled NBC News Channel to gain an invaluable insight into the needs of our affiliates, leading to a more scientific approach to our news production and distribution."

In addition, video watermarking has grown in acceptance by this diverse group of content owners. World-class media and entertainment companies, legendary for demanding only the most pristine production results, have blessed the robust, yet innocuous technology offered by Teletrax and have begun to harness its



Image top right: REUTERS/Dylan Martinez

power to manage their video assets. "Teletrax provides up-to-the minute tracking information for all of our promos. The data is posted on their web site, which also has a unique search function that has been a tremendous resource for us," said Betsy Bergman, vice president, marketing and affiliate relations, NBC Universal Television Distribution. In 2004, the Los Angeles-based TV distributor inked a long-term deal with Teletrax to electronically monitor the broadcast of promotions for its entertainment shows by US TV stations.

In total, three NBC Universal entities - NBC News Channel, NBC Universal Television Distribution and The NBC Agency, the internal advertising agency for NBC Universal - are using Teletrax's comprehensive suite of video monitoring services. And they're not the only entertainment organisations with whom we have secured multi-year agreements; two Disney-owned companies, ABC Television Network and Buena Vista Television, have also signed on with Teletrax. This is in addition to working with world-leading news companies such as Reuters and the BBC.

We're also now seeing organisations beyond the news and entertainment space participate in trials of the Teletrax service. These include TV advertisers that have endured decades of dealing with cumbersome manual systems or impaired technologies to verify ad buys, as well as non-government organisations that are keen to ensure their advocacy messages are working effectively.

I believe that by providing transparency on what was aired, by whom, when and for how long, Teletrax contributes to a truly interconnected broadcast world. It reduces mystique and provides accountability and clarity. And with the growing adoption of digital watermarking, who knows, also Vatican City may take notice. Perhaps Teletrax holds the key to helping it unlock value from its own history.

Headquartered in London, **Teletrax** is a joint venture of Medialink Worldwide, Inc. of the United States and Royal Philips Electronics of the Netherlands. Teletrax is the world's first global video broadcast monitoring service for digital rights management. It provides clients with video watermarking services that enable them to precisely track and monitor where, when and how their content is being used. [www.teletrax.tv](http://www.teletrax.tv)  
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