

PR Newswire®

The background is a solid dark blue. It features several concentric circles of varying radii, some of which are intersected by thin, light blue lines. Small, light blue dots are placed at various points along these circles and lines, creating a network-like or orbital pattern.

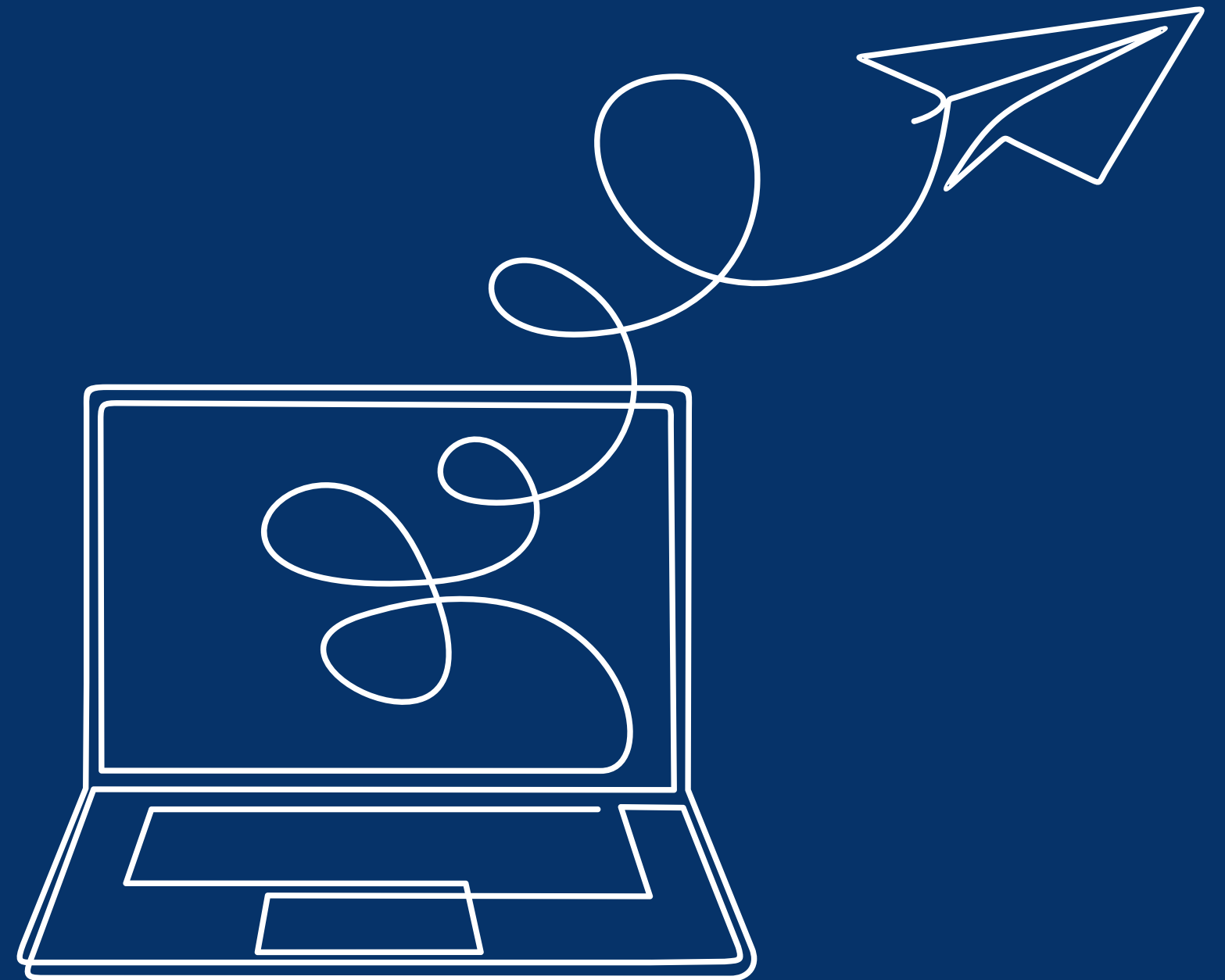
PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION

The “Who, What, When,
Where” of the Wire

Introduction to the Wire

Have you ever wondered why wire services are called that? What is “the wire,” anyway? And if you’re using a wire service, why are there some products that are specifically designated as “wire” products? All of this terminology and jargon can get confusing, but in a time of tight budgets and fierce competition, it’s more important than ever to understand what you’re paying for when you distribute your company’s news through a wire service.

In the industry, “wire” has a special meaning, history, and connotation. Understanding that background will help you to make the best decisions for your news distribution, whether you’re trying to speak to consumers, make a splash in the local news outlets, or attract curious journalists to pick up your story.



Down to the Wire: How Media Outlets Get Their News Stories

Online news publications, television stations, magazines, newspapers and other media outlets get their news from multiple sources. Some stories are created in-house, meaning that a staff writer develops a story by following a lead or building on a pitch or assignment from an editor. Others are submitted by independent freelancers who may send in a pitch first or just try their luck with sending in a story. Still others are obtained directly from outside sources.

Newswires or “wire services” have traditionally been a source of content that can be published in their entirety or serve as a jumping-off point for journalists. A press

release can be published as-is, quotes can be pulled from it for use in stories, or an interested journalist can reach out with questions to write an original story based on the announcement.

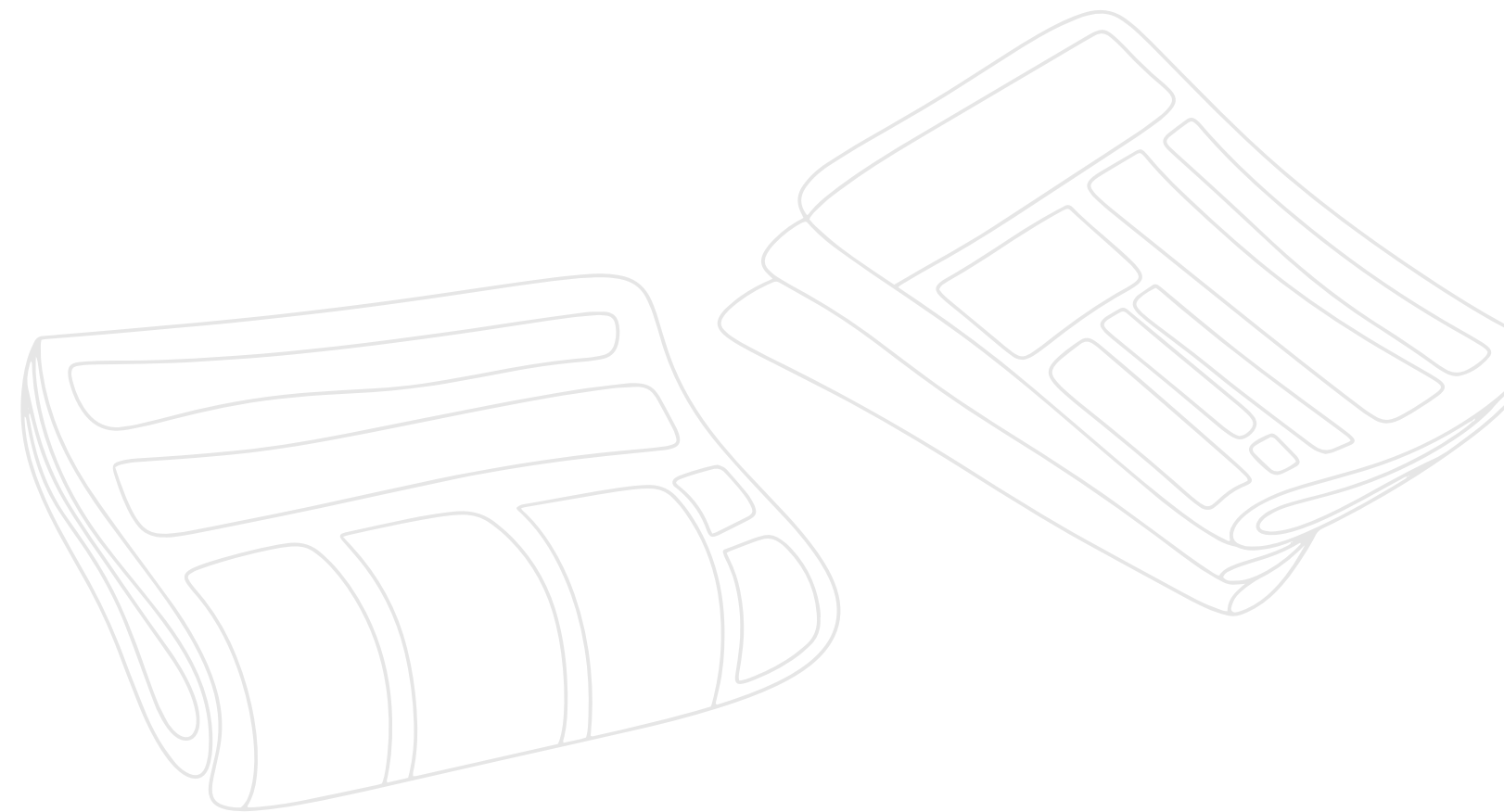
Traditional media outlets are shrinking or disappearing entirely, so journalists are being asked to do more with less. In an era of cost-cutting, reporters are assigned multiple beats and need to get stories out quickly with limited resources. Press releases can help save journalists’ time by providing them with story ideas and cutting down their research time.



A Brief History of News Wire Services

The [earliest wire services](#) started in the 1800s, appearing alongside the first national newspapers. They utilized the then-new technology of the telegraph in order to transmit news across the country – hence the name, “the wire.” Prior to the invention of the telegraph, there was no reliable way to transmit news quickly across a long distance. News tended to be local, often limited to a specific community, and there was little interest in knowing what might be happening in other areas. As technological innovations worked to make the world smaller and more interconnected, a demand for broader news coverage was born.

The press release, as we think of it today, has a history almost as old as the wire itself. In 1906, a train accident in Pennsylvania made history not just for its severity but for the way it was reported. A former New York Times reporter, tasked with managing the railroad’s public image, wrote an official statement about the accident; this statement was printed verbatim by many news outlets.



Soon enough, it became the norm for companies to craft news statements about their companies and disseminate them to media outlets to create a brand identity and keep the public apprised of developments. In 1933, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) made it a requirement for publicly traded companies to make all potentially market-moving news publicly available to investors, and for all such announcements to be made at the same time. This created an even greater need for direct communication between businesses, media, and the public.

In 1954, PR Newswire became the first wire service to focus largely on commercial news. By providing a broad and reliable channel for businesses to communicate with customers and investors, PR Newswire helped to shape the future of the wire. Today, commercial news wires remain the only reliable and approved way for companies to distribute material news to their investors and remain in compliance with the SEC.



How Wire News is Delivered Around the World

The first wire services used telegraphs, which transmit encoded information over a wire in the form of electrical current. Pulses of current would travel down the wire to a receiver, where it would be printed off onto a long strip called “ticker tape.” This is where the terminology of “ticker symbols” originates: Financial news about stock transactions would be delivered on ticker tape, with brief alphabetic symbols (ticker symbols) used in place of company names to save space.

As more sophisticated methods of news delivery started to develop, telegraphs became fully obsolete by the 1960s when telephones and fax machines made transmitting information much more efficient. The modern “wire” is more like an email feed; these fully electronic feeds display some limited information, such as a source name or part of a headline. These stories can then be opened and read in their entirety by interested journalists.



The Internet and Direct Communication

The internet didn't just make it easier to send news to newsrooms; this truly disruptive communication innovation changed the concept of media entirely. Blogs, online magazines, social media platforms and email newsletters have all erupted and proliferated over the past 30 years, redefining how traditional media operate. Now many publications operate without newsrooms or even physical offices, and digital publishing has eliminated the rigid space limitations felt by traditional print publications. The internet has also made it possible to disseminate news to consumers directly in ways that were not practical in a pre-digital age. Thanks to the reach of the internet, wire services could publish news on their own without needing to serve as a middleman for other media outlets.

Just as technology has changed the meaning of “the wire,” it has redefined the concept of the news release. No longer constrained by the limitations of traditional media, digital distributions are free to be more creative, incorporating multimedia or using more advertorial language to communicate with potential customers. Companies wishing to announce their news have more channels than ever before for making announcements – and that's why it's important to know and understand your options.



The Internet vs. Wire Distribution

These days, when someone in the industry refers to a “wire” distribution, what they really mean is that it targets primarily traditional brick-and-mortar media outlets like newspapers, magazines, TV and radio. The actual technology behind these distributions has been updated to match the 21st Century, but the concept is the same as it always was: Transmitting information across the country or even the world so that the news media can distribute and adapt those stories for their audiences.

By comparison, web-only distributions cater to the “new media” that proliferates entirely in virtual spaces. The cornerstone of these web-only distributions is the newswire’s own website, which acts as a publishing platform. News may also be shared by virtual and electronic feeds to other web-based publications, social media and other digital outlets. How is sending a press release to a web-only



distribution different than simply posting the news on your company’s own blog or website? First, an established newswire has a built-in audience of readers who know to turn to the site for news. For example, because PR Newswire curates its content, vetting its users and reviewing submitted news for quality, journalists and consumers know that they can trust what they find on the site. Established newswire services also have high site authority with search engines like Google, meaning that they have better search engine optimization and will be more visible. If you post the same press release to your website and send it to PR Newswire, the odds are good that PR Newswire’s version will show up higher on the search results page. For new companies and small businesses especially, this level of content promotion is extremely important.

Search engine optimization (SEO) was a huge driving factor in the growth of online news sites because it became a strategy for promoting a company’s own website as well as the distributed content. By sending a press release with links back to the company’s page, a site owner could boost their site’s search visibility and increase

their ranking. Because having backlinks to your website spread across multiple sites online was such a powerful way to boost your site’s visibility, several web-only press release distributors popped up in the 2000s.

These sites offered cheap alternatives to traditional wire distributions, but they didn’t provide any of the other benefits like wire distribution, content review, membership vetting that would build trust with journalists. For this reason, many of these SEO-focused press release services became ignored by traditional media.

This tactic peaked in the early 2010s, when search engines became more sophisticated and achieving SEO through links alone stopped working. Many of the smaller web-only press release services that didn’t offer any additional value to their users began to disappear. Distribution companies that could still offer a variety of services to their clients remained and flourished by doing just that. Having links back to your website spread across multiple sites online was such a powerful way to boost your site’s visibility, several web-only press release distributors popped up in the 2000s.

Why Choose the Wire?

Comms professionals prefer to reach out directly to media outlets to pitch stories or to share their news individually rather than through a distribution service. While this can be very effective if you have an established relationship with a journalist, it's time-consuming and labor-intensive. Sending your news through a well-respected wire service will get your announcement in front of a large audience without hours of legwork.

At PR Newswire, we include online distributions with our standard wire services, so you can enjoy the best of both worlds without paying a la carte pricing for each. If you're interested in learning more about our services or would like to explore the options available for distributing your news, [reach out to a member of our team today.](#) We'll be happy to answer your questions and work with you to set up the distribution option that's right for your needs.



Make your stories go further with the power and credibility of PR Newswire, the world's largest and most trusted press release distribution provider. To find out more, speak to one of our consultants today.

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About PR Newswire

PR Newswire is the industry's leading press release distribution partner with an unparalleled global reach of more than 440,000 newsrooms, websites, direct feeds, journalists and influencers and is available in more than 170 countries and 40 languages. From our award-winning Content Services offerings, integrated media newsroom and microsite products, Investor Relations suite of services, paid placement and social sharing tools, PR Newswire has a comprehensive catalog of solutions to solve the modern-day challenges PR and communications teams face. For 70 years, PR Newswire has been the preferred destination for brands to share their most important news stories across the world.