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By Karen Freberg, [WVU Integrated Marketing Communications program](#) Instructor

**Abstract:**

WVU Integrated Marketing Communications instructor Karen Freberg gives tips on what to keep in mind when researching a social media monitoring firm.

**Name of the Game for Social Media Monitoring: Integration of Multiple Platforms + Strategic Insights of Future Plans**



CLICK on picture to visit KYOO

The power of integrating and combining multiple social media sites together on one platform is the name of the game. Many social media monitoring firms and companies are bargaining and are active in the social media market featuring their services and products. Some monitor only Twitter, Facebook, and Blogs – while there are others that offer more services and features. You have to look at the specifics of what you are actually getting in terms of return for monitoring the conversations and discussions emerging on social media. Do you want all of the conversations or set up specific filters to block out some of the “noise” (conversations that are tagged with specific hashtags and key words, but are not related to the core issues interested)?

When researching a social media monitoring firm, here are a few things to keep in mind:

**Research what are the features of the firm:** Are they more specialized or broad in their products and services? Are there differences that are dramatic between their price options? Who do they have as part of their team of experts and coordinators? How active are they in the social media community? These are just some of the questions that need to be looked when researching which firm to go with in terms of social media monitoring.

**Ask about previous social media monitoring case studies:** What were some of the cases that were analyzed and were using this particular platform in evaluating, listening, and engaging with specific audience members? Are there particular situations (ex. crises) that have used these in particular? These are just some of the questions that need to be looked at in terms of reviewing case studies involving a particular social media monitoring firm and platforms.

**Read the customer reviews and blogs related to social media monitoring:** We are in a peer-recommendation and reputation economy, so we are influenced by what our various

communities are saying about particular issues, products, and brands. Some of these firms have great customer services, but others may not. Talk with others who have used these services and initiate a contact with the firm to ask for a quote or their pricing.

**Look behind the curtain of praise from SMIs on social media monitoring platforms:** Make sure you think critically about what others are saying as well – some of these professionals are advocating a particular platform because they are using it for themselves as well.

**Show and glitz are engaging and interesting – but also recognize the substance as well:** You want to have a balance between a social media platform to be engaging through its visual features, but you definitely want to make sure that the information you are getting from this site is sound and relevant to the research and monitoring you are doing.

**Look to see if these firms are thinking about the future:** In social media and the emerging technologies market, the race to adapting is always constant. Focus and research on these firms to see if they are also looking at upcoming trends and technologies and how they can incorporate this into their social media monitoring platform. Facebook and Twitter monitoring is so early 2011 – it is now on to the next thing with these integrated crowdsourcing platforms with multiple platforms that access information through geolocations like KYOO. Just look at the options and discussions emerging just about the New Mexico Wildfires – amazing! These are the platforms to watch and see what they are doing.

Fundamentally, all of these firms and platforms are going to continue to evolve – but what is key for public relations professionals is to be open to these possibilities, research the company as well as what they have to offer (price, service, data collection), and be forward thinking with what are the next variables that need to be measured in this digital and emerging environment.