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A new model for press releases?

Most media companies have a love-hate relationship with press releases. As any journalist knows, they can clutter an inbox, but they're a necessary evil to know what's going on in your beat. The question journalists and the companies they work for should be asking is: How can we better organize and distribute all of this company information?

Marketers and their PR agencies are [producing more content](#) than ever before, which might be a headache for journalists to sift through — but it's also an opportunity for media companies to [boost their content volume](#). As one of the journalists trapped in the information jungle, I was intrigued by [noodles](#), a service claiming to organize the fragmented mass of official information distributed by companies every day. In addition to being a newsroom tool, the company sees value for media companies to distribute press releases in raw form alongside original content.

noodles' co-founder and CEO Giacomo Cambiaso thinks the term “press release” is actually an outdated way to describe news directly from a source. “The old press release model is dead — we're talking about news produced by companies,” he said in a phone interview.

The European developer set out four years ago to create a platform aggregating news from official sources. Last year the company officially rolled out the platform, which media companies can use behind the scenes to organize information or on the front end of their websites to distribute press releases.

Press release aggregation

Plenty of popular services already exist to distribute press releases (e.g. [PR Newswire](#), [Business Wire](#) and [Marketwire](#)). Noodles differentiates itself by running a vertical search engine to gather items, rather than relying on contributions directly from companies (though PR professionals can also submit announcements). The service crawls news released on the Web by 30,000 global companies, collecting thousands of press releases, announcements or other corporate news (such as official blog posts).

Journalists and media organizations can log into the aggregation platform and select the filters they want to receive company news (called “noodles”). I selected the “media & entertainment” feed in the U.S., which lets me scroll through the 500 active companies and organizations in this category and select the ones I want to stay in the loop with.

The screenshot shows the "noodles gateway to facts" web interface. At the top, it says "Welcome, Ellie Behling" and includes links for "Account and Settings", "Help", and "Log out". The main content area shows "105 noodles found" with a search bar and "order by: time of publication" dropdown. Under "ACTIVE FILTERS", there are buttons for "Today", "United States", and "Media and Entertainment". A "Remove all" button is also present. Below the filters, a "Newsroom" section displays a press release from "Newseum" dated "04/12/2011" with the headline "Apr 12, 2011 'Pictures of the Year' Opens April 22 at the Newseum". A "Smartlinks" section at the bottom lists categories like "Arts", "Travel and Tourism", and "Media and Entertainment". On the right side, there is a sidebar with "Feeds" (Media and Entertainment), "Filters", "SOURCES", "FULL-TEXT SEARCH", and "CHANNELS" (Media and Entertainment).

My first reaction was: cool! The service is a helpful alternative to checking company websites or clogging up my Google Reader.

On the downside, not every company I want is listed (although it's still more companies than I can usually see in one place, and I can request others). Also, I don't see it dramatically changing my relationship with press releases, which is OK. Embargoed releases of new products, for instance, are helpful, and might lead to conversations about a broader story. noodls wants to be a service for PR professionals to communicate with journalists, but I think it would take much wider adoption to happen.

Access to the [wire service](#) can be paid for as an individual or an organization. A basic account is \$19 a month and a media account with more services is \$39 a month; pricing is based on a sliding scale when organizations apply for multiple accounts.

Nonetheless, noodls seems like one useful way to aggregate everything happening in an industry and weed out the irrelevant stuff. (Now I just need it to organize my Twitter feed and e-mail.)

A place for press releases?

Cambiaso noted that there is generally a perception in the media that press releases are bad, and yet he's convinced 30 percent of news content today is the same as the source. Part of his ambitious project is to eliminate the notion of PR altogether and integrate company announcements alongside original content. This concept is already practiced heavily in the business and finance space (such as [Reuters](#)), where readers expect numbers directly from the source.

Using this service won't tarnish the brands of media companies, Cambiaso said; instead, it will keep them from wasting resources on rewriting press releases.

Rehashing PR content as news is a growing issue in the 24/7 publishing cycle of online media. [Churnalism.com](#) has brought new awareness to the media's growing reliance on repurposing official announcements. The site allows users to compare news articles with press releases to see how they overlap. An [On the Media](#) segment about the service demonstrates how even fake news, once in a press release, can get distributed through news reports all over the world. (UPDATE: Speaking of phony press releases, the [Associated Press](#) just fell for one, Business Insider reported.)

Is the merging of press releases and journalism really a good model? Services like noodls offer new tactics and tools to help media companies better control the churn.

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