

SendtoNews.com: advanced public relations for sports organizations

Featuring the experiences of Swimming Canada



SENDtoNEWS

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A SendtoNews success story: Swimming Canada's proactive approach to PR

Martin Richard had a problem. As the Director of Communications for Swimming Canada, the national governing body for competitive swimming, his job was to get media attention for athletes and sponsors. Outside of the Olympic season, the media just doesn't send reporters to swimming events, particularly when those events are overseas.

So Richard took a proactive approach. He began shooting his own high-def video and sending it directly to newsrooms using the cloud-based, B2B media distribution platform offered by SendtoNews (www.sendtonews.com). For Richard, this tactic was part of an overall philosophy of servicing the media. "Providing video clips and B-roll and interviews is just another way for us to service them properly," he says.

The response was phenomenal. When athletes won competitions on the road – in Singapore, Delhi, Dubai, even local venues in Canada – TV stations nationwide aired reports using Swimming Canada race footage and interviews downloaded from SendtoNews.com.

The end result was more media coverage and a higher profile for the sport of swimming in Canada, its athletes and sponsors, in the years between Olympics. "We've had a great response from national media, the sponsors are loving it, and it's a great incentive for our athletes," says Richard. "We've got some great exposure for our sport."

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DIY: The Future of Sports PR

Sports organizations are set to benefit enormously from trends in citizen journalism and “DIY” reporting. Traditional media with overstretched budgets have an increasing need for digital content to feed their burgeoning news platforms. It’s not just TV. Print and radio need high-quality video content for their websites too.

This rise of online journalism coupled with digital broadcasting’s growing number of sub-channels is resulting in a boom in programming targeted to the hyper-specialized and hyperlocal – such as home-team sports. CatchItKansas.com is one example of this phenomenon. It’s a web property of the CBS-affiliate station KWCH that provides statewide coverage of just high school sports.

SendtoNews has been developed by news industry professionals as a conduit for newsrooms and content contributors to share this much-needed multimedia content. For sports teams and other athletic organizations whose events did not previously attract media attention, SendtoNews provides the tool for get their stories into newsrooms and onto the air.

Introducing SendtoNews

A cloud-based B2B news distribution platform

SendtoNews was founded in 2008 by a former sports journalist, Keith Wells. As a veteran anchor, Wells recognized a convergence of trends. Television continued to be the most popular source of news, but rapid growth was occurring in demand for video footage to support new media, Internet and wireless applications.

With an explosion of information sources, the public increasingly expects instantaneous, ubiquitous news coverage everywhere from the global to the hyperlocal. Yet increased competition, lower advertising revenues, and budget and staffing cutbacks make it increasingly difficult for traditional media outlets to meet this demand by sending staff to cover every event.

At the same time, the emergence of broadband internet, high-definition video cameras and smart phones, cloud computer networking – as well as the ever increasing power in both computers and software – mean more and more organizations and individuals can produce and distribute their own high-quality video.

What Keith Wells saw missing was a fast, effective and reliable service that would help independent producers to feed digital content into newsrooms. And so, SendtoNews was born.

SendtoNews (STN) developed a proprietary web-based platform to provide its clients a fast, simple and secure way to share their stories (including HD videos, high resolution images, audio files and text) directly with print, television, radio and online newsrooms. It made media distribution truly accessible by offering free access to newsrooms, with a one-of-a-kind, affordable fee structure that charges users only if stories are picked up.

STN rapidly established itself in the media world as the most reliable video news distribution system in the market. Its core technology was put to the test as the media distribution system used by over 1,400 news reporters at the British Columbia International Media Centre (BCMC) during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. Canada and North America-wide rollouts of its platform soon followed with accompanying mobile apps for iPhone and Android.

Today, SendtoNews is one of the fastest growing multimedia news distribution services on the Internet. Hundreds of organizations – including government agencies, academic institutions and sports teams – use STN’s service to quickly, simply and securely distribute their high-

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definition, broadcast-quality video files to newsrooms. Newsrooms in turn have come to rely on STN as a free source of high-quality, trusted, rights-free content. SendtoNews has rapidly become a critical tool for public relations in the digital age.

The case study of Swimming Canada highlights the special value of SendtoNews for athletic organizations. Sports organizations need media exposure; they have front row access to dramatic stories and footage that audiences love. At the same time, the media has an ever increasing appetite for good content and limited resources to gather it. SendtoNews fills the gaps by providing a simple, fast and secure connection to reporters, assignment desks and feed rooms all over the world.

SendtoNews' sports clients include:

- Swimming Canada
- International Triathlon Union
- Canadian Professional Golf Tour
- Rowing Canada
- Rugby Canada
- Speed Skating Canada
- Edmonton FC
- American Hockey League (AHL)
- Western Hockey League (WHL)

Lightning-speed file transfer: another SendtoNews advantage

Another feature that sets STN apart from other multimedia news distributors is speed. SendtoNews allows athletic organizations to make video and other multimedia content available instantly and simultaneously to an unlimited number of media outlets after just one fast and easy upload. The result is increased exposure in both local and national media.

The SendtoNews platform is powered by the same high speed file transfer technology used by the world's leading film studios, post-production houses, and news and sports broadcasters. STN's technology transmits video, audio and still images up to 100 times faster than FTP or HTTP upload speeds and accepts files up to 2GB.

Stories from the field: how sports organizations use SendtoNews

Here are a few examples of how sports organizations are leveraging SendtoNews.

International coverage

- Swimming Canada sent home B-roll and interview footage from the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India – including Brent Hayden's record-setting gold-medal performance in the 100 freestyle.
- Rugby Canada posted video of the of the Canadian women's team winning their fifth straight game in one day to take the Hong Kong Sevens Tournament title in March 2011.
- Speed Skating Canada sent video to Canadian newsdesks from the 2011 World Championships in Germany and Great Britain.

Sponsor promotion

Media coverage is very important to sponsors looking for return on investment when they sponsor an event or team. With a public relations video program in place using SendtoNews, sports organizations offer vital exposure for sponsor companies. Martin Richard, Swimming Canada's Director of Communications, says, "The sponsors love it because we make sure to always include their logos in the background and provide as much visibility as we can."

Holding the spotlight

Sports organizations use SendtoNews to stay in the radar and break the old boom and bust cycles of media attention. For Swimming Canada's Martin Richard that means keeping swimming in the public spotlight during the media drought in the three years between Olympics.

For Jeff Harris, Assistant General Manager of Victoria, British Columbia's, Salmon Kings Hockey Team, it means maintaining a presence in the local media when the team's on the road. "It used to be we would fall into the abyss," he says, "and when we would come back we would have a good three or four games to regain our visibility. SendtoNews enabled us to shoot a little bit of video, do a couple of interviews, and stay relevant with our local newsrooms. We were on the news more, our stories were better in the newspaper, because it kind of raised everybody's level – and when that occurs, you really can't ask for more."

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Why newsrooms love using SendtoNews

SendtoNews works because its newsroom partners love it too. SendtoNews helps them to do their job, only better.

Broadcasters only wish they could send reporters and cameras to every event, but SendtoNews lets them be there virtually, by sending high-quality footage from hundreds of events straight to newsrooms in an easy-to-use format. SendtoNews complements the storytelling that newsrooms already do by providing the footage they can't get any other way.

That's why Swimming Canada's Martin Richard says that SendtoNews helps them "service the media." Because it does just that: it builds relationships with media by giving them the content they need and want, on a platform they trust.

Jordan Cunningham, a sports reporter and anchor at A-Channel in Victoria, British Columbia, puts it this way: "Covering our local athletes and our teams properly, especially when they are out of town, was prohibitively expensive – if not impossible. With SendtoNews, it comes right to your desktop and slaps you in the face – you get a notification on your desktop. It's basically one touch and you've got a story slotted right into your newscast."

When the media do send reporters, more and more of them are using SendtoNews to get video back to their own newsrooms. SendtoNews is faster than antiquated FTP and HTTP; less expensive than satellite, microwave and fibre optic feeds; 100% reliable; and so convenient, it even comes in an iPhone app.

Files can be uploaded from anywhere in the world and are delivered straight to newsrooms in North America, who access the content for free. For clients STN offers a unique pay-for-performance fee structure that results in a \$50 charge only when a story is downloaded by reporters – and the fee caps at \$200, no matter how many times a file is downloaded (meaning if a video goes "viral" and gets downloaded thousands of times, the creator still only pays \$200).

Additional features

- **Mobile access:** New SendtoNews mobile apps enable upload of 720p HD video from the field via an iPhone 4 or Android smartphone direct to a SendtoNews account – up to 3X faster than normal transfers over the 3G network. The app is presently being used by local, national and international media and is fully integrated into the SendtoNews platform.
- **File security:** SendtoNews protects the integrity of story files with secure endpoint authentication, on-the-fly data encryption and data integrity verification.
- **Control over distribution and timing:** Clients can control precisely when and how content is released to the media. Files sit securely on the server, able to be shared internally and edited while they are prepared for release.
- **Private backhaul:** Organizations can use SendtoNews's high-speed file transfer technology internally to send video files across town or from one department to another anywhere in the world at lightning fast speeds. Newsrooms use SendtoNews to replace expensive satellite, microwave and fibre optic feeds.
- **Long-term storage, data backup and archiving:** SendtoNews is also set up to host a comprehensive video archive, more than other service built on a news release model. SendtoNews stores all stories for 30 days, and offers the option to store files for a longer period, or indefinitely, through its archiving service. The backbone of STN is one of the world's largest and most reliable cloud computing networks, with uptime of 99.95% or greater. Data is stored at more than one geographical location to minimize service disruption due to localized network problems or natural disasters. And detailed metadata can be added when uploading files to make it easily searchable for future retrieval.

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Simple, fast, secure... how it works

Simple, fast, and secure are the three words SendtoNews uses to sum up its service. Martin Richard from Swimming Canada calls it, "really easy and fun to use." Here's how it works in a few simple steps:

1. **Sign up for a free SendtoNews account.** All users get free access to the SendtoNews system, paying nothing to send content to newsrooms. This is unlike any traditional wire service which charges users large fees to upload stories. And the low pay-for-performance fees apply only if a story is downloaded by reporters.
2. **Begin uploading digital content** (text as well as one or more high-definition video clips, high resolution photos, audio files and documents) to the web-based "news story management system."
3. **Select a target audience.** As part of each upload, clients can choose the newsrooms that will receive the story – identified by geography, topic (channel) and/or the client's own contact list. Or, sensitive material can be held on the SendtoNews site until ready for distribution.
4. **Begin uploading stories directly to newsrooms.** SendtoNews automatically optimizes content for easy preview by reporters and editors (including the creation of low-resolution preview files for videos and photos) and then notifies targeted newsrooms that the content is available.
5. **Send out text news releases with SendtoNews and add additional digital content.**
6. **Spread the word.** Clients receive a link that they can send out to media contacts, directing them to the SendtoNews site where they can preview and download the content for free.

Free signup: get started today

Organizations can start using SendtoNews by visiting www.sendtonews.com and clicking on "Get your free account." Or they can call a SendtoNews representative at 1-855-590-1991. Upload video, audio, still images and text right away for free. Enter target markets and the begin feeding digital content direct to newsrooms.

Video testimonial



A testimonial video from Martin Richard, Director of Communications for Swimming Canada is available via the following link:

www.SendtoNews.com/feedback

Or, find the video using your mobile phone with your favorite QR reader. Here's the QR code to scan:



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