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Mini review of LexisNexis Newsdesk - recent enhancements

Jinfo's view

LexisNexis Newsdesk is an award-winning, global media monitoring and analysis platform. The product continues to impress with the scope and diversity of its content, the newly enhanced Analysis Builder, and other benefits that continue to make the interface user-friendly whilst maintaining a high level of value and robustness for PR professionals needing to stay abreast of current news and social media on their companies and clients.

Introduction

LexisNexis Newsdesk is an all-in-one media monitoring and analytics tool launched in April 2015. It provides users, typically PR professionals and others involved in business development, marketing and communications, with almost "real-time" current information. The three key functions of the tool include:

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- Search

- Analyse

- Share

The ability to do all of these easily and quickly is part of what makes the product as robust as it is.

Newsdesk provides authoritative and up-to-date monitoring of topics from licensed articles, web-based articles, sources and social media platforms. The product offers cost and time savings for users who might otherwise have to turn to separate tools to monitor the combination of licensed content, internet sources and social media across multiple industries and topics. Earlier this year, Newsdesk won the CODiE Award for Best News Media Monitoring Company which puts them firmly in a leadership position in this segment.

Change and development

I last reviewed Newsdesk in March of 2016 and recall that I left with a very positive opinion of the product overall, specifically for its broad scope of topics, sources and channels. At the time, the only areas I thought needed a little improvement were related to the user interface and the fact that, while the overall analytics function was robust and flexible, I struggled to find an easy process to follow.

Outlined below are a few of the enhancements I've seen since my last review.

Analysis Builder

In late 2016, Newsdesk launched a newly revamped Analysis Builder to guide users through the process of chart creation and analysis. This new tool appears to have addressed my earlier concerns. Some search results are better suited to a specific type of chart and the interface helps identify these along with the various types of analysis available, including:

- Competitive analysis

- Industry analysis

- Market analysis

- Social media analysis

Each of the four is succinctly explained. (See Figures 1-4).

The user can hover over a chart for additional information and see the preview panel building the charts in real-time, which makes them easy to edit. The Analysis Builder has, according to the company, allowed users to create their analysis much faster: approximately 75% faster than before. It's now a much more streamlined way to approach the review of analytics.

Competitive Analysis

Charts focused on understanding competitor trends, strengths & weaknesses and strategies to help those companies monitoring their competitors identify opportunities and threats taking proactive measures to build or maintain a competitive advantage.

Charts included:
- Article Sentiment
- Share of Voice
- Media Coverage by Journalist
- Media Coverage by Source
- Coverage Over Time
- Unique Online Visitors

Figure 1: Competitor analysis - overview from Analysis Builder

Industry Analysis

Charts focused on evaluating a line of business sector, trade or profession (i.e. finance, automotive, pharmaceutical) and the companies involved it; used to gauge industry attractiveness and measure industry performance.

Charts included:
- Stock Symbols Mentioned
- Article Sentiment
- Industry
- Companies Mentioned
- MozRank
- Media Coverage by Journalist
- Media Coverage by Source

Figure 2: Industry analysis - overview from Analysis Builder

Market Analysis

Charts focused on understanding the dynamics of specific markets, regions and/or countries; used to gauge market attractiveness and measure market performance.

Charts included:
- Companies Mentioned
- Media Type
- Subject
- Coverage Over Time
- Source Location
- Article Language

Figure 3: Market analysis - overview from Analysis Builder

Social Media Analysis

Charts focused on better understanding the performance of your searches across social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, by visualizing those metrics with the highest social impact.

Charts included:
- Coverage Over Time
- Social Media Coverage by User
- Followers
- Hashtags
- Platform
- Engagement Over Time
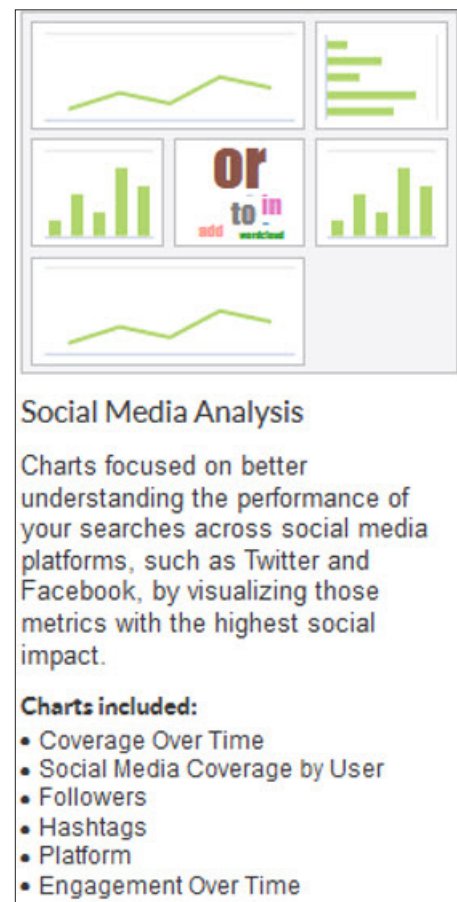
Figure 4: Social media analysis - overview from Analysis Builder

Current search status

In this review, I was alerted to the "selected filters" box in the top right corner of the screen. In the middle of a search, a user can more easily keep track of what filters have been incorporated into that search by watching this box. It doesn't include every filter that has been assigned to the search but does help to keep the current search parameters top of mind, which I previously found more difficult.

"What's new" icon

The "what's new" icon, also easily seen in the top right banner, allows the user to learn what new enhancements have been made to the product. This feature is updated every three weeks and two new features were highlighted whilst reviewing the product:

▪ Dashboard privacy icons let users see, based on the specific icon showing on the dashboard, whether or not that dashboard has been shared and with what parameters

▪ The ability for users to add a folder of searches to their newsletter via drag and drop features. This has made the newsletter building much more efficient and results in time savings.

Search phrase alert

This is my term and another feature that has been added in the search interface based on customer feedback. A green checkmark appears when a search is formed properly, but a red x alerts you if a search phrase is incomplete.

In this example, the final quotation marks have been omitted from the Boolean search and you're alerted to the error:

✖ "Super fruit" AND juices AND "market size

When it is added correctly, this is the result:

✔ "Super fruit" AND juices AND "market size"

Search interface

A slightly updated search interface now appears cleaner and simpler, with the ability to choose filters more easily than before. I found the best way to begin is still with a broad search either via simple or advanced search and select the type of source to search:

- Online news

- Blogs

- Comments

- Social networks

- Videos

- Forums

- Print

- TV/radio

- User-added.

Users can grasp the initial search results and then filter accordingly for:

- Emphasis (where in the document the terms should appear)

- Languages

- Locations (countries)

- Sources or source lists

- Topics and date.

There is even a tab called "extras" that lets you filter articles that show images or exclude articles that require free or paid registration. This last option is great for those on a time or financial budget.

Other changes have enhanced the downloading and sharing of information, whether it be in search result format, documents, charts and tables or in a customised, but easy-to-create newsletter format.

Key advantages of the product

I am still totally of the opinion that Newsdesk offers many advantages to its PR professional audience.

Not only is the content robust and diverse, but the ability to create a search and refine it with so many granular filters allows the user to not only develop a search but to obtain results that are more pertinent and relevant to their need. In addition to general filtering of sources, types of content, dates and areas of the publication itself, the optional benefit of SmartIndexing allows the user to be led to the optimal terms of the platform, creating a great benefit to newer professionals in the field.

From a technology perspective, the product offers:

- A user-friendly interface
- An amazingly large easy-to-follow help menu
- Processing speed and the ability to build charts
- Review the analysis and share information easily with other team members.

Analysis

The flexibility and speed that allows users to show and share information in a meaningful way is made possible by the Analysis Builder. A social media analysis screen is shown in Figure 5.
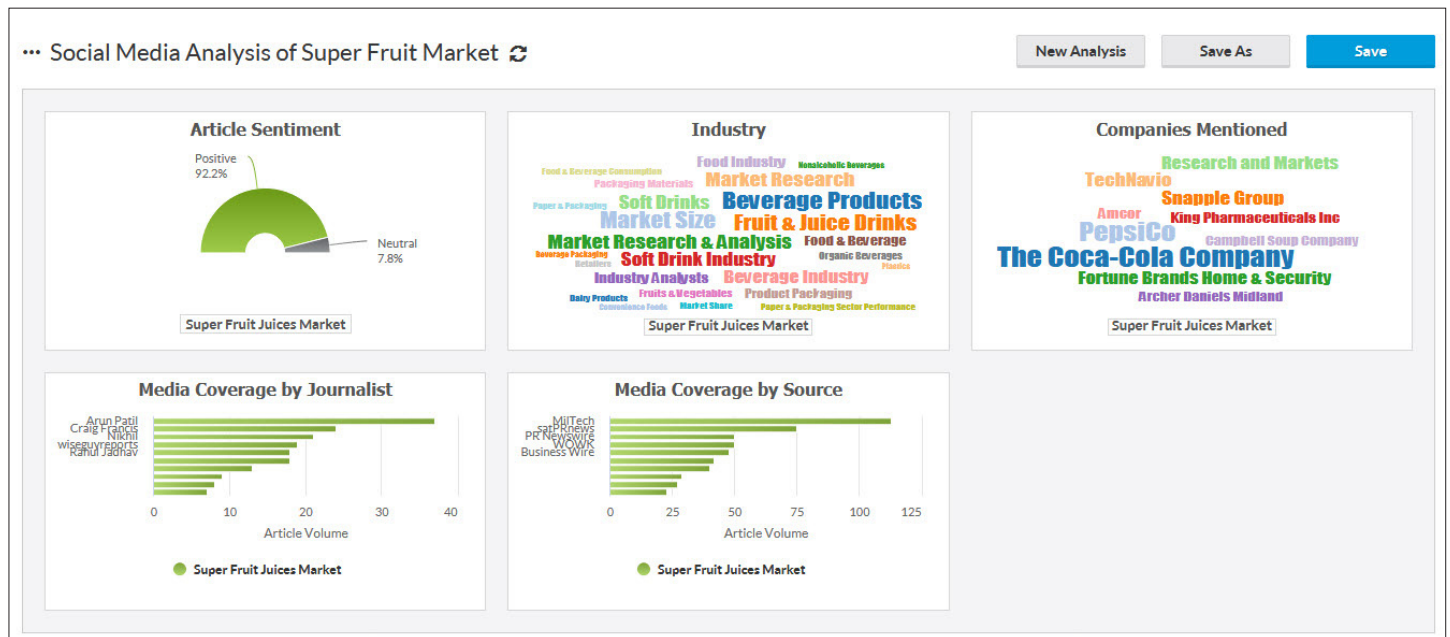

Figure 5: Social media analysis of a saved search. "Super Fruit Market"

From this display and the chosen charts, it's easy to grasp a few facts almost within seconds. The sentiment analysis on the topic appears to be predominantly positive, the word cloud of companies mentioned in the articles provides names of a few key players, all of which can be clicked on to find more information.

The media coverage by "journalist" and "source" can be reviewed further just by hovering the mouse over the line items. They can also be accessed with one click.

Dashboards

The dashboard can act as a user's customised homepage where the latest stories of interest, the social media feeds and news searches offer an easy, quick view. They can be kept private or shared with others.

Pertinent saved searches can be dragged and dropped into the dashboard and users just need to refresh the page to get the most up-to-date information.

In addition to the personalised dashboard of saved and ongoing searches, there is also a Newsdesk dashboard that highlights global news coverage, shows a clickable map of the world, and offers a word cloud of top industry activity, which allows users to click on individual articles.

From the point of view of a PR professional, the at-a-glance sentiment analysis icons (green and red faces) that help identify whether the topic at hand is being positively or negatively perceived, add value. The fact that the company's product team continues to work hand in hand with other departments, such as customer service, means that customer feedback is taken seriously and the platform is improved as it grows. According to Newsdesk, the "combination of technology and content is what makes it such a successful tool", and to my mind a very powerful one.

Content and sources

The diversity and scope of the content sources are impressive and range from global and international sources, such as the BBC, CNN, Le Monde and Die Zeit, to regional sources, such as the Manchester Evening News or the San Francisco Chronicle. Government, political and regulatory sources include the United Nations and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Industry and business sources range from trade journals, business magazines to press wires and corporate blogs.

Newsdesk has the most robust set of global content available across both traditional media and premium and licensed sources and their social media coverage continues to grow as new social media platforms are developed. I won't detail the numbers or breakdown of sources but I'll highlight a couple of them below, as more detailed tables of sources, categories and numbers can be requested from LexisNexis.

They have over 92,000 global curated news sources, of which about 20,000 are through licensing relationships. Their current set of social media coverage includes over 2.7 million social feeds. They tag, categorise and load to the platform about three to five million articles a day in over 90 languages. They also index content into 3,500 subjects and 3,600 industries.

Technology

The platform is easy to use and intuitive in most sections of the search, analyse and share categories. A few technological enhancements have been added in the past year and have been discussed in other sections. The Newsdesk interface does support most standard browsers but for an optimal experience, it's suggested that Chrome is used.

Help and training

The help menu is easily accessed by clicking on the arrow in the user profile area and provides a very complete, hierarchical display of topics. Subtopics can easily be found and the content is written in an easy to grasp, user-friendly manner. The user can also read about admin options, technical details and access a useful appendix from the help section.

Users can easily access usage statistics which identify metrics for the following:

- Newsletters

- Alerts

- Exports

- Newsdesk users

- Authorised readers.

Metrics on mobile app users will soon be added. These metrics can be downloaded into a variety of report types filtered by account, user, date, and even by alert and newsletter. From this same area, users can also access the settings to customise the results display and other interface options.

Demos and training are also available for new users and customer support is available via email or phone. I was also provided with two handy PDFs that were very useful and included a six-page quick start guide and a one-page Analysis Builder guide.

Competitive environment

Winning the CODiE award 2017 for Best News Media Monitoring Company solidifies Newsdesk as a major leader in this area. The fact that they have as much licensed, often difficult to obtain content is a primary differentiator overall. Also, outside of my own review, I researched what real users of the platform are saying and the feedback is also very positive. It appears that being able to monitor all the print sources as well as social media and more in one place, is one of the reasons that users appreciate the product.

Competitive products include [Meltwater](#) and [Cision](#), the two other finalists that Newsdesk was reviewed against when they won the CODiE award. Newsdesk appears to be one of the leaders when it comes to both the number of "behind-the-paywall" content sources it searches and the granular way in which the user can search those sources with the use of advanced filtering that provides for a very refined and relevant search.

Pricing

Newsdesk is available to customers on a per user/per-seat subscription basis and pricing varies depending on the content collections being monitored. Its pricing does, however, allow users unlimited searching, an unlimited amount of saved searches and the freedom to create as many folders as they need to cover the topics they are monitoring.

Value

For PR professionals specifically, it's very important to stay up-to-date with any press or social media coverage, whether it be for your own company or for competitors. The quicker a company can respond to negative press coverage or social media posts, for example, the better it is for their own brand. With customer reviews and comments "going viral" so quickly via social media, companies need to be even more aware in almost real-time, just what is being said and shared about them.

Part of the differentiation of Newsdesk is that clients can monitor both traditional media and social media in one tool. Whilst not unique, the time savings in the search function, as well as the data analysis and sharing of that coverage, is also a big differentiator. Users can very quickly review search results and then choose the best way of analysing that information with the Analysis Builder before sharing. Competitive intelligence and brand monitoring are made much simpler with this all-in-one platform and companies can stay abreast of competition more quickly than before.

As pricing is on a per-seat basis, even smaller companies, especially PR agencies, may find this a very cost-effective tool when monitoring topics and companies for multiple clients.

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