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Mat Release – Old Tool, New Day

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The term mat release is sort of a blast from the past. Unlike typical press releases, the mat release approaches the “news” more from the end-user’s perspective, melding consumer-gearred verbiage with a journalistic writing approach. In its original form, the early mat release firms mailed formatted articles on glossy paper to participating newspapers and the newspapers would choose among dozens of articles from that particular mailing.



Are PR pros still using mat releases? They are, but the tools have evolved to meet the needs of the online world. One company, [ARAcontent](#), has “digitized” the release of feature articles through a focus on media web sites and backlinks to client sites.

According to the company’s materials, ARAcontent matches topics with editorial calendars, which improves the chance of the story being published. In addition, they provide rich analytics that provide insight into editor accesses, placement results, circulation and ad dollar equivalency (if you are into that). The idea appears to be to save the practitioner time and energy. Hundreds of editors use the service after an easy registration.

According to [Matrelease.com](#), you can expect mat release stories to appear in suburban and community papers, though articles do appear in the top-100 newspapers with regular frequency; however the top newspapers like [USA Today](#) and [The New York Times](#) probably won’t use them because they have the staff needed to generate editorial in-bulk. That said, in today’s environment, when staffs are increasingly slimmer, many newsrooms may gladly welcome additional content. And coverage in the top 100 dailies is significant.

An ARAcontent spokesperson told us a major keepsake company created a mat release using the company’s tools in order to boost awareness of some new online offerings. Hundreds of online newspaper and television-based outlets ran the coverage in major markets across the U.S. In addition, days after the feature article was released, the companies said Web site traffic jumped by 20 percent.

There are other services offering forms of mat releases, including [NewsUSA](#), [North American Precis Syndicate](#) and [PR Newswire](#). PR pros are always looking for the newest tools to help them reach influencers efficiently and effectively, and because today’s mat release incorporates tools to increase online visibility, it might be worth considering for your client or company. Have you used a mat release? What successes (or lack of) did you experience? We’d love your comments below.



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