Media access to satellite imagery of worldwide breaking news events

When a news story breaks, speed and access to information makes all the difference to broadcast media. From civil unrest to human interest events, the audience expects their news provider to transport them to the scene and help them experience the impact of an event as it unfolds. Vizrt’s DigitalGlobe Online service provides on-demand access to DigitalGlobe’s Global Basemap and a gateway to newly-captured imagery of global events through its FirstLook service.

Changing expectations impact the news

Vizrt’s success lies in innovation. By providing forward-thinking solutions they equip journalists with information and tools that put them in control of their content and provide a competitive edge.

Technology has rapidly changed the nature of gathering news. Camera crews and journalists continue to race to hot spots, but getting reports out quickly and accurately that satisfy an increasingly demanding audience requires a vast arsenal of tools and technology. Satellite imagery has been an integral part of the journalism toolkit for the past 25 years, first delivered through the mail on hard drives.

“The lag time in that scenario was typically a period of weeks, which was acceptable for features planned well in advance,” said Petter Ole Jakobsen, Vizrt Chief Technical Officer (CTO). “In the last few years imagery has been available through streaming sources, but with many limitations unacceptable to some broadcasters, including attribution requirements and issues with quality and resolution.”

Company information

Based in Norway, Vizrt creates content production tools for the digital media industry. A leading supplier of real-time 3D graphics and asset management solutions, Vizrt has more than 3,000 customers in 100 countries, including flagship news organizations like CNN, CBS, ABC, Fox News, BBC, Sky, and CCTV.
CASE STUDY

Product solution for:
www.digitalglobe.com

Unprecedented access to information

In its quest to provide customers “information without boundaries”, Vizrt teamed with DigitalGlobe to develop this first-of-its-kind service. The two organizations worked closely together, first dedicating a single server to the task in a prototype for the Golf Channel to collect imagery of golf courses around the world.

“We proved that we could open access to high-resolution imagery of virtually any location anywhere,” Jakobsen says. “And we are able to provide the service at a cost that makes it accessible to journalists and media companies everywhere.”

News organizations have instant access

News organizations have jumped on the opportunity, embracing the solution to enhance real-time reporting on events of world importance.

“Two examples immediately come to mind,” Jakobsen says. “First, when North Korea was attempting a missile launch, DigitalGlobe caught it mid-launch, enabling our customers to broadcast the event to their audiences in real-time as the missile unsuccessfully exploded shortly after liftoff.”

“Second,” Jakobsen continues, “on the day of the raid on Osama Bin Laden’s home, incredibly we were able to supply images of the building that afternoon.”

“DigitalGlobe’s world-leading image archives enable us to open the boundaries of information we can offer journalists. And when a crisis event happens anywhere in the world, subscribers will also have rapid access to newly-tasked imagery. These capabilities allow journalists to consistently monitor events as they unfold, using high-resolution images from before, during, and after the event to maximize the impact and accuracy of their reports.”

PETTER OLE JAKOBSEN, CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER, VIZRT

INDUSTRY
» Media

USES
» Intelligence
» Human rights
» Damage assessment
» Change detection

PRODUCTS USED
» Global Basemap
» FirstLook

Challenge
Develop an easy-to-use and cost-effective solution to provide news organizations online, on-demand access to high-resolution satellite imagery worldwide.

Solution
A two-pronged approach: DigitalGlobe Online, providing Vizrt customers access to a vast archive image library, in tandem with FirstLook, a gateway to newly-captured imagery of crisis events.

Results
For the first time, journalists have cost-effective and unfettered access to high-resolution satellite imagery of virtually any location around the world, providing an unprecedented near real-time reporting resource.