

Stringr Whitepaper

Breaking News Platform Stringr Extends Local News Station's Reach

By: Kaitlyn Mitchell

Flood Communications had a problem. The news network collective of 15 radio and television stations headquartered in Eastern Nebraska couldn't source B-roll footage for real-time stories that were happening in rural locales. For any breaking news event that was more than a 40-minute drive from of the network's physical stations, it was not financially feasible for the station to send an entire crew to the scene. The state of Nebraska is roughly 430 miles wide and it takes about seven and a half hours to drive east to west.

Enter **Stringr**.

Stringr is a video marketplace that allows media organizations to buy video from both professional and amateur videographers. Anyone with a smartphone can be a Stringr videographer, which has prompted more than 75,000 freelancers around the world to download the app, shoot broadcast-quality footage and upload content to the platform, all in typically under an hour.

Stringr's Rural Videographers Help Western Nebraska's Stories Take Center Stage

With the use of Stringr's services, Flood Communications has become the sole news station in Nebraska to reach stories in smaller communities across the state. "Without Stringr, we could not have expanded our coverage to these rural locales," said **Mike Flood**, Founder of Flood Communications. "In Nebraska, most stories don't take place near where you are at. A few years ago, we would be rushing to get to a story that was an hour away, which wasn't safe for our crew; now using Stringr, we can have a local freelance videographer at the scene in 10 to 15 minutes."

Last fall, Nebraska experienced a major snowstorm and thanks to Stringr, Flood Communications became the only station to provide coverage of weather affecting the entire state. After seeing the forecast, the station put out 12 requests the day before the storm on the Stringr platform in different Nebraska towns—the station even included specific times to shoot the footage. "We had state-wide coverage of a monster snowstorm and didn't put people into harm's way," said Flood. "It was a win-win."

Flood Communications is now in its third year of operations and became a client of Stringr in June 2018. Most of the network's offices are located on the Eastern side of the state in Lincoln, Omaha, Columbus, Grand Island and South Sioux City. "Anything west of Grand Island, which geographically balances out as one half of the state, is not at all convenient to send our crew to," said Flood. "If there's a major accident in North Platte, which is a five-hour drive from us, we put out a Stringr request and receive the footage in under an hour." Flood Communications has even used footage purchased from Stringr in promos for the station.

During Midterm elections in November 2018, Flood wanted footage of election night parties happening in different Nebraska cities, with a definitive need for coverage of the Medicaid expansion on the ballot. “News stringers were able to capture the moment that the results were announced; people watching at a sports bar in Omaha started jumping up and down and holding hands,” noted Flood. Additionally, news stringers conducted exclusive interviews with the organizers of the petition effort that evening.

Stringr is also at the ready when clients have a need for out-of-town footage. Last November, the Navy’s newest littoral combat ship, the USS Sioux City, was scheduled to be commissioned in Annapolis, Maryland. The ship had begun construction in 2014 at the U.S. Naval Academy and was named after a town in Iowa closely bordering Nebraska. Flood Communications needed original footage of the ceremony on the east coast. “10 different local stringers responded to our request,” said Flood. “We got excellent footage of the navy men ceremonially crashing champagne glasses on the boat before it was sent out to sea.”

Through its partnerships with local stations like Flood Communications, Stringr has actively demonstrated that, as the premiere videography platform, it is poised to penetrate the most isolated news deserts in the nation. While obtaining footage from remote events on behalf of its professional clients, Stringr consequently places news-breaking skills into the hands of citizens on the ground who live in these rural communities.

Connecting Videographers with Media Organizations to Ensure Real-Time, Curated Content

When a client needs original content and cannot spare an in-house videographer, they submit a request on Stringr’s platform. Immediately, that notification is sent directly to Stringr app users nearby. The videographers can then choose to “accept” or “decline” the assignment. The stringers then head to the scene and shoot either cell phone footage and upload via the app, or use a video camera and upload via the online platform. Stringr’s curation managers are at the ready 24/7 to review the videos the minute they are uploaded and send the best content to clients via the seamless platform. This entire process, from client request to client download, can take as little as 10 minutes, and typically no longer than one hour.

Stringr’s Curation Manager’s actively provide feedback to improve the contributors’ skill sets. The company also publishes blog posts to explain basics such as screen aspect ratio, why a cell phone camera must be held horizontally, hacks for steadying a shot, how to capture sounds in a windy environment, an explanation of common news industry terms and what types of mics and tripods at different price points are best to use in different situations.

Stringr’s news clients may also submit “pro” footage requests, meaning only professional videographers that have been pre-approved by Stringr’s curation team will see the footage request on their app. This is useful in situations where clients need to carefully consider the quality of the video and be assured that the news stringer selected has professional equipment necessary for the job, such as tripods, mics, lenses and stabilizers.