

**CASE STUDY**

# WWE Powerhouse Fights Counterfeit Activity and Online Piracy with MarkMonitor



## **Industry:** ENTERTAINMENT

**Company:**  
World Wrestling  
Entertainment (WWE)

**Headquarters:**  
Stamford, Connecticut

**Products:**  
*MarkMonitor Brand Protection*  
*MarkMonitor Domain Management*

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## **OVERVIEW**

The global entertainment company World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) faced significant levels of online counterfeit and piracy. They addressed this problem with both MarkMonitor Brand Protection and Domain Management solutions, resulting in several hundred counterfeit sales shut down each week and greater visibility into their domain portfolio.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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*"It is important to protect your intellectual property even in a down economy. I am fortunate to be working for a company that recognizes that fact. Because of our executives' forward thinking, we are able to make a difference for our fans."*

Lauren Dienes-Middlen, Vice President,  
Intellectual Property

The global entertainment company World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) faces a constant need to protect its growing portfolio of intellectual property and content online, whether it is distributed in the form of online video, DVD releases, CDs, lms, or any other means. As WWE continues to expand its business, the need for online brand protection becomes even more important.

Realizing that online counterfeiting and pirated content was a problem, WWE enlisted MarkMonitor to help it gain more visibility into the scale of the abuse, as well as develop and implement an enforcement strategy to safeguard its brand and intellectual property online.

WWE recognized that tough economic conditions fuel increased levels of counterfeit activity and online piracy, posing greater risks to fans and the brand. With crucial support from senior executives, WWE expanded its enforcement program with the help of MarkMonitor.

## CHALLENGES

- Significant levels of online counterfeiting and piracy
- Extensive time and resources spent manually tracking online fraud activity in-house
- Brand equity erosion and reduced fan trust
- Lack of consolidation in domain portfolio management

## SOLUTIONS

- *MarkMonitor Brand Protection*
- *MarkMonitor Domain Management*

## RESULTS

- Several hundred counterfeit sales are automatically shut down each week
- Intellectual property personnel spend more time on strategic activities
- Automated system tracks and takes action against infringing parties
- Greater visibility of the domain name space and management of the WWE domain name portfolio
- Flexibility in meeting the demands of a constantly-updated stream of product releases

## CHALLENGE

With more than 160 licensees worldwide and a loyal fan base, the global entertainment powerhouse enjoys widespread sales of its content through legitimate channels and its popularity made it a target for online scammers who hoped to cash in on the WWE cachet. Due to its multiple product lines and distribution channels, both digital and physical, WWE recognized that its online brand protection strategy needed a dual approach to cover both counterfeiting and piracy.

“WWE intellectual property is one of its greatest assets, and we have to protect it vigilantly,” said Dienes-Middlen. “We are continuously reviewing and restructuring our enforcement program to ensure that we have the most aggressive brand protection strategy with the greatest return on investment.”

The company was concerned about sales of counterfeit DVDs and CDs on online marketplaces and e-commerce sites as well as the growing problem of online piracy on peer-to-peer file sharing sites and user-generated content sites. The original WWE anti-piracy strategy was implemented in-house but these manual efforts did not provide sufficient visibility into the scope of the problem. Additional manpower and technology support was required and MarkMonitor was able to deliver the solution. “When we received the very first report of the infringing user-generated content and illegal peer-to-peer file shares of our pay-per-view content, we not only knew how vast the scope of the problem was, but we knew that our work with an outside vendor was essential,” Dienes-Middlen says.

## SOLUTION



## Website Shutdowns

Example of a website (no longer active) that is not authorized to sell WWE goods.

The first step in the WWE brand protection strategy was to establish a thorough and comprehensive trademark registration program. WWE brought that same comprehensive approach to its online efforts, beginning with their domain registration strategy and selected *MarkMonitor Domain Management* to centralize its domain name portfolio.

The next step was an aggressive online enforcement program to combat sales of counterfeit goods, complementing its physical efforts. WWE selected *MarkMonitor Brand Protection* due to its combination of powerful online monitoring technology and comprehensive case management capabilities. By deploying MarkMonitor Brand Protection, WWE was able to secure e-commerce and online marketplaces, detect brand infringement and take aggressive action to protect fans and revenue.

“The technology involved, as well as MarkMonitor tracking capabilities, helped us deliver results that were astounding,” says Dienes-Middlen.

The results spoke for themselves and, during an executive review of the success of the online brand protection program, Dienes-Middlen recommended expanding their efforts to include premium digital content and online piracy. Based on the success of her past efforts the recommendation won instant approval from the senior management team and Dienes-Middlen expanded the WWE enforcement program with an anti-piracy component.

With actionable intelligence in hand, WWE successfully expanded its anti-piracy program with MarkMonitor to include pay-per-view events, home video releases, pay-per-view DVD and even CD releases. The enforcement strategy for premium content includes pre-event or pre-release monitoring, live streaming event

monitoring, and post-event and/or post-release monitoring. Because of its rapid product release schedule, WWE relies on the MarkMonitor Managed Services team for the flexibility it needs to shift coverage among its many brands.

## RESULTS

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When executive management at WWE saw the substantial enforcement results gained from working with MarkMonitor, they were obviously pleased that the interests of the company and its loyal fans were being protected.

“Executives first need to know that the problem exists, what the problem is, and what we’re doing about it,” says Dienes-Middlen. “Now we have a way to show the interests of the company and most importantly, our fans are being protected.”

MarkMonitor not only provided WWE with the technology and resources to aggressively combat online counterfeiting and piracy, it also helped demonstrate the ROI of using those solutions to protect the powerhouse WWE brand and its fans.

More than half the Fortune 100 trust MarkMonitor to protect their brands online.

**See what we can do for you.**

#### **MarkMonitor Inc.**

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## About MarkMonitor

MarkMonitor, the world leader in enterprise brand protection provides advanced technology and expertise that protects the revenues and reputations of the world's leading brands. In the digital world, brands face new risks due to the Web's anonymity, global reach and shifting consumption patterns for digital content, goods and services. Customers choose MarkMonitor for its unique combination of industry-leading expertise, advanced technology and extensive industry relationships to preserve their marketing investments, revenues and customer trust. To learn more about MarkMonitor, our solutions and services, please visit [markmonitor.com](http://markmonitor.com) or call us at **1-800-745-9229**.

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