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**INFORMATION  
HIGHWAYS**

Canada's Magazine  
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## For Immediate Release: Value-added Global News Coverage

By Teresa Murphy

Business and industry worldwide know all about Ballard Power Systems. From stock information on corporate intranets in Tokyo, to real time radio news in the Australian outback, from electronic ticker tapes in the New York Stock Exchange to alerts delivered to desktops in Rio de Janeiro, news about Ballard is everywhere. Even U.S. President Bill Clinton has heralded Ballard as a pioneer.

The story began in June 1997 when this small Burnaby, B.C. developer of fuel cell technology issued a press release announcing it had signed an agreement with Germany's Daimler-Benz to bring a new electric car to market by the year 2005.

We all know that even the most finely crafted press release can end up as two inch filler on the back pages of a regional newspaper - even a press release with an attention grabbing headline, a brilliant lead and quotes from experts. To have value for those seeking competitive data on new developments from small, unknown companies, a press release must reach, saturate and become accessible to a broad marketplace.

How is this done? How did Ballard's single release enable the company to receive worldwide coverage in a variety of media and formats in many languages through multi-technology distribution channels? Here's what happened.

### On the Wire

Ballard sent its press release electronically to Canada NewsWire (CNW) at [www.newswire.ca](http://www.newswire.ca), a leading Canadian corporate communications company, which provides press release and communications services to more than 6,000 organizations. Clients include the media, the investment community, corporations, public and investor relations agencies, shareholders, governments, associations, unions and the public.

Ballard wanted the world to know that its zero-emission technology would power the first electric car, at the same moment that Daimler-Benz unveiled the prototype in Berlin. Ballard also wanted video footage of the Berlin unveiling showing the Ballard name and spokespersons, transmitted concurrently back to Vancouver for a video news release.

When CNW's News Operations received the Ballard press release, it was immediately proofed for accuracy. Within 20 minutes it was on the satellite wire service and delivered simultaneously to media and financial communities in North America and Europe complete with text, accompanying photo, audio and video. The release contained a newswire and broadcast video alert to signal subscribers that important news was coming. The release was coded with categories which alert clients in specific industries and occupational groups that the item is of interest.

In Canada, CNW distributed the release in both English and French languages directly via computer to all major daily newspapers, business and financial media and to all major radio broadcast and television networks including CTV News 1, Canada's first 24-hour headline news channel. CNW also delivered a translated version of the release in a broad range of languages to ethnic media.

Worldwide, CNW distributed the release through redistributors including PR Newswire in the U.S. and Two-Ten Communications in the U.K., and to commercial online database providers such as Bloomberg, Desktop Data, Dow Jones/Markets (formerly Dow Jones/Telerate), Globe Information Services, Infomart-Dialog, Knight-Ridder, Lexis-Nexis and QL Systems.

CNW moved the release onto its World Wide Web site, which is searchable by keyword, date, organization, stock symbol, industry, category and subject. It was also sent to corporate investor relations departments ensuring that tens of thousands of brokers were able to view the release in real time.

In total CNW estimates that the television audience alone on the day of the release reached 1.8 million in Canada and 1.4 million in the U.S.

### **The Reuters Connection**

Reuters ([www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com)), which supplies the global business community and news media with an array of products, including financial data, news and photos, received the Ballard press release electronically from CNW. Immediately it was sorted, filtered and made available electronically to 1,500 journalists in 161 Reuters bureaus worldwide.

The journalists, who cover different types of industries, put a local spin on the release, did background interviews and released their articles through Reuter's national and international newswires to 3,000 media subscribers, including newspapers, magazines, television and radio. The stories were coded with the Ballard stock symbol (BLD/TSE) and translated into as many as 25 languages.

Reuters Headline product, which delivers summaries of the top ten international news stories with fulltext links 24 hours a day, ran coverage of Ballard's news. Reuters Advertising and Media Briefing services which provide breaking news from Reuters correspondents plus access to a database of over 4,000 worldwide business sources, including press releases, newswires, newspapers, and trade journals with market prices and news pictures, also covered Ballard.

The same database is available to subscribers of Reuters Business Briefing which takes news and business information from thousands of sources and pushes it to subscribers in customized packages

including: Headline which covers top news stories; Target, a briefing for Reuters intranet users; Select, which delivers in-depth news up to 15 times in a 24-hour period; and Search which provides interactive access to Reuters Business Briefing database and is searchable by company, topic, industry and source.

Reuters delivers real time releases about new products, mergers and acquisitions directly to portfolio managers in almost 40,000 financial trading rooms. When news about the Ballard-Daimler-Benz partnership broke, the blinking Ballard stock symbol appeared on subscribers' computer screens.

Reuters' searchable MoneyNet site ([www.moneynet.com](http://www.moneynet.com)) which provides real time and delayed breaking news, company news, financial links, quick quotes, a portfolio tracking service, current market news and price history charts, also carried news about Ballard.

Reuters also delivers news to a number of online Web sites including America Online (AOL), CNET, Infoseek, Pathfinder and Yahoo. These sites further customize news for subscribers. For example, CNET at [www.news.com](http://www.news.com) carried news about Ballard which was delivered through customized push technology to desktops in a variety of ways: Desk Top News Updates, Headline Updates, and Alerts, which puts a small blinking icon on subscriber screens when news is received. Releases may also have accompanying pictures and audio.

On AOL Canada, the story appeared via the Reuters news service with accompanying picture, and via a link to the CBC news service.

## **Value-Added News**

In Canada, Infomart Online ([www.infomart.ca](http://www.infomart.ca)) received Ballard's fulltext press release electronically as part of CNW's distribution. Infomart staff converted the CNW category codes sent with the release, assigned an ID number, identified the originating wire service, indicated the length of the release and provided a headline. Infomart staff also provided keywords and assigned searchable fields, such as company and stock symbol. The press release was then put onto the Infomart system with no modifications to the text.

Infomart archives press releases and news stories from CNW into two databases. Today's News which ran the Ballard story, provides hourly media monitoring of the latest news from across Canada and the world, from wire services and 14 newspaper sources including the Calgary Herald, Edmonton Journal, Financial Post, Montreal Gazette, Ottawa Citizen, Toronto Sun, Vancouver Sun and Vancouver Province.

The Canada NewsWire database, available through Infomart, contains the full text of CNW and affiliates' content in English and French, complete with disclosure and financial information displayed in tabular format. Information on Ballard was fully searchable and could be viewed using Infomart's display commands.

Southam journalists receiving the information from Today's News and the Canada Newswire database did further research, added a local spin and delivered their stories to local, regional, national and international newspapers and magazines. As a result, Infomart's Canadian global database grouping called National News contains more than 350 fully indexed news stories about Ballard from publications including the Financial Post and MacLean's. The story also appeared in CBC and CTV news program transcripts available on Infomart.

Infomart also indexes the releases and articles for Dialog's Canadian Newspapers (File 727) and Early

Edition Canada (File 601), which is embargoed in Canada but available to international customers. News about Ballard appeared in both files.

When Dialog received the Ballard release from CNW it applied its search descriptors prior to entering it into Canada NewsWire (File 616). Articles about Ballard which appeared in any of over 500 Canadian business periodical and eight daily newspapers, were fully indexed and made searchable in Canadian Business and Current Affairs Fulltext (File 262).

Coverage of Ballard appeared in other Dialog files including New York Times Fulltext (File 472); Bridge World Market News (File 609); PR Newswire (File 613); Economist Intelligence Unit Viewswire (File 620); Financial Times Fulltext (File 622); Business Week (File 623); American Banker Fulltext (File 625); Journal of Commerce (File 637); and Latin American News (File 749). Depending on the file, articles about Ballard were available in abstract or fulltext formats, and fully searchable in a range of fields including company name, industry name, descriptors, section head, SIC code, and specialty features such as photos and ticker symbol.

### **Onto the Internet**

On the Internet, the range of value-added information about Ballard varied. The Daimler-Benz site at [www.daimler-benz.com](http://www.daimler-benz.com) and Calstart's Advanced Transportation site at [www.calstart.org](http://www.calstart.org) offer solid commentary and some analysis. Technology Transition Corporation at [www.ttcorp.com](http://www.ttcorp.com) details Ballard developments in its fulltext Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Letter.

Among the many stock information sites, the Silicon Investor at [www.techstocks.com](http://www.techstocks.com) provides a forum for discussion about Ballard. Stockmaster at [www.stockmaster.com](http://www.stockmaster.com), offers daily stock prices for over 4,000 Canadian securities, including Ballard, videos such as Wall Street Wrap Up, Nightly Business Report, and World Business Review, as well as information on top stocks and funds.

Of course, comprehensive information about Ballard can be found at its own site at [www.ballard.com](http://www.ballard.com). But how likely is it that researchers and other interested parties would have found their way to that site without knowing the company existed in the first place?

Ballard ensured itself a high profile and worldwide coverage by starting the process with a press release to a communications company with global reach. In unprecedented time frames, value geared to a variety of audiences was systematically added at each step. The media received video alerts and breaking headline services electronically. Brokers received a blinking Ballard stock symbol on their screens. Information professionals were given access by newswire and commercial database services that offered searching by company, industry, descriptors, keywords and other fields. End users were provided with information about the press release and various spin-offs such as commentary and forums through numerous Internet sites.

Beyond being covered in many newspapers and broadcasts, Ballard was able to reach multiple users who could use Ballard's news as a critical business resource. Now everyone knows about Ballard. Follow their lead and everyone will know about your organization too!