



BRAND CONTENT PROTECTION | MARCH 24, 2021

## How To Protect Your Brand From Costly Product Leaks

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In the era of digital events and livestreams to showcase new products, securing images and videos prelaunch is critical. How do digital watermarking technologies help brands curtail leaks while building trust among teams?

### QUICK READ

- How to Ensure a Leak-Proof Reveal
- How to Build Trust Prelaunch

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Image tracking and authentication are fast becoming the next central focus of brands. Once pushed aside as the inevitable, the illegal usage of a brand's photos and videos—whether in digital or in print—is finally finding a solution in digital watermarking.

Major brands are using digital watermarking not only to identify counterfeiters but also to detect any prelaunch breaches immediately.

It's generally held that product leaks decrease new product sales and give an edge to the competition.

As we've all seen in the highly competitive consumer electronics industry—notably smartphones—CEOs will blame a pause in current sales to leaked details of future models. Or in the case of the automotive industry, a leak of upcoming models can cause a drop in sales of models still on the lot.

Although the exact financial loss from prelaunch image leaks isn't known, some industry experts estimate it at \$35 billion per year.

The challenge of a leak-proof product announcement is the sheer number of people—both internal and external—who need access to images and videos in preparation for the launch date. Controlling who has which digital image or video and the corresponding sharing capability is virtually impossible.

Even more, with the proliferation of digital distribution and the growing reliance on third-party partners and platforms, the challenge of tracking and detecting (and subsequently stopping) prelaunch publication and sharing is tough. This is [where a digital watermarking solution like IMATAG makes the process seamless and foolproof](#).

It's often assumed that metadata (attached to a photo or image) provides the tracking capabilities needed to monitor the illegal usage of product images. Unbeknownst to brands is that social media platforms and publishers usually [remove metadata or make it inaccessible](#). This can mean that leaked photos or videos are only spotted when it's too late.

So how does digital watermarking help fight against product leaks while building trust among external partners, press, and employees?

### How to Ensure a Leak-Proof Reveal

As most marketing and brand professionals can attest, launching or revealing new products and services has changed in our current world of social distancing, remote working, and travel restrictions. Even Apple's launch events are now entirely virtual for the first time in its 30-plus years of big show culture. As Guy Kawasaki, chief evangelist for Canva and former Apple employee, wistfully commented, ["It's going to take a new kind of way to introduce products ... we should just go digital all the time."](#)

In this new era of digital events and livestreams, reliance on securing prelaunch digital assets is intensified as brands move to a hybrid of virtual and digital experiences. [A recent Capgemini Research Institute study](#) found that "62 percent of consumers expect to increase their use of touchless technologies even in post-crisis."

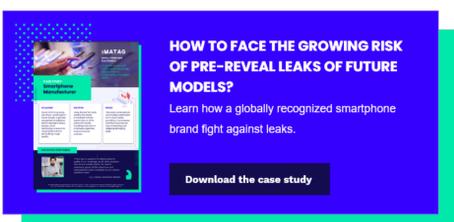
Building customer engagement and excitement requires a new way of building launch campaigns, which means reliance on virtual pre-release events to employees and partners, and distributing images and videos to prepare digital-only campaigns.

For example, earlier this year, a global car manufacturer showcased new models to employees and distributors in its first digital prelaunch event.

To keep leaks from happening, the automaker turned to IMATAG's patented digital watermarking solution to secure the video presentation and ensure any leaks would be spotted immediately.

Using [its proven watermarking algorithm](#), IMATAG's cloud-based platform embeds a recipient-unique, invisible, and indelible code to each frame or image. As digital assets are easily altered, the [automaker requires a robust platform](#) capable of detecting image leaks even if modified.

IMATAG's watermark resists significant compression rates and image editings such as resizing, filters, and screenshots, thus providing the client with a secure and scalable solution.



### How to Build Trust Prelaunch

Beyond avoiding leaks and [fighting serial leakers](#), building and maintaining trust among external partners, press, and employees is essential. Preparing for a new product launch requires an army of people to create, prepare and distribute digital assets across creative, marketing, and press teams. Brands often rely on formal nondisclosure agreements when working with third parties such as agencies, press, influencers, and resellers. This traditional way of working is sorely outdated.

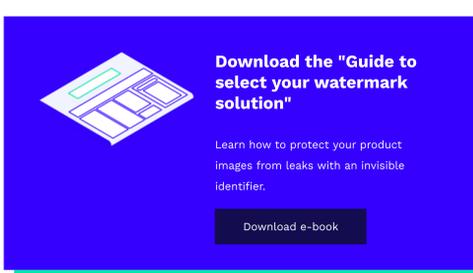
Long gone are the days of exchanging visual images through complex and often proprietary networks, or even in the mail. The flow of exchange among distant teams far reaches the imagination of product managers. And not only is the recipients' integrity in question, but also at risk of compromise are the sender and the platforms used to transmit valuable digital assets across internal teams and third parties.

Pro-leakers are capable of intercepting and snagging prelaunch digital assets even when senders and recipients are careful. To ensure that all parties are protected and that trust between internal and external teams is not jeopardized, digital watermarking provides a foolproof solution. The simple process of securing the continual flow of images and videos with an embedded watermark creates an environment where all parties feel confident when sending or receiving digital assets. In the case of a leaked image or video, the source is immediately spotted.

Product launches are stressful enough for teams. To ensure a successful launch and healthy post-launch sales, brands need beneficial trust among all parties. What better way than integrating new technologies that promote goodwill and trust, are foolproof, and are easy to implement.

In the months to come and most likely in the coming years, brands will rely on digital events and livestreams to launch new products. This paradigm shift necessitates new ways of securing and avoiding prelaunch breaches. Gone are the days of nondisclosures. Savvy brands utilize the latest technologies, like digital watermarking, to secure their digital assets against leaks and build trust among teams.

To learn more about our innovative digital watermarking solutions and how to protect your digital assets, watch our video [here](#).





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