

Secrets Of A Leak-Proof Product Launch

An invisible protection to visibly protect your business

IMATAG



01

Why protect your brand from leaks?	04
How does a leak impact your brand?	05
LEAK STORY - Apple iPhone 13 release	06

02

Working with third-party agencies:	
How to raise awareness on content leaks?	07
How does a leak impact your agency relationship?	08
CASE STUDY - Production agency	09

03

How do leaks happen?	10
Usual sources of leaks	11
LEAK STORY - Nintendo & The Pokemon Company	12

04

How to maintain trust within product launch teams?	13
Building leak-proof workflows	14
CASE STUDY - Licensed Collectible Toys	16

05

How to prevent leaks?	17
NDA & embargos	18
DAM & DRM	19
Metadata	19
Invisible Digital Watermarking	20

06

How to choose a leak-prevention solution?	22
Imperceptibility	23
Robustness	23
Scalability	24
Easy integration	24
CASE STUDY - Consumer Electronics	25

INTRODUCTION

Today, businesses across the globe rely on their online presence to build and grow their brand. Digital marketing, press relations, and creative campaigns provide a wealth of opportunities to build excitement around a new product or service launch. However, creating successful product launch campaigns is a delicate process because it revolves around brands' most valuable asset: their intellectual property.

This guide is for professionals involved in preparing launch campaigns, such as branding, marketing, and communication managers.

If you're overseeing your brand's launch campaigns, your role is to ensure the success of the company's online strategy and product launches in your market.

The production and delivery of creative content and launch campaigns include many sensitive steps and can involve a multitude of third parties. Therefore, you'll need to control the risk of content leaked at each stage, analyze content sharing, and track campaign performance. If a leak occurs during the production process, not only can it damage your launch plans, but it can also have negative consequences on future sales and brand image. Therefore, **setting up the right solutions to protect your digital assets is critical.**

In this guide, you will learn how leaks happen, their consequences on your business and organization, and what solutions exist to prevent content leaks.

Ready? Let's get started!

A close-up photograph of two hands wearing black nitrile gloves. They are gripping a large, circular metal object that features a prominent, stylized letter 'R'. The background is dark and slightly blurred.

01

**Why protect your brand
from leaks?**

WHY PROTECT YOUR BRAND FROM LEAKS?

In an era of virtual events and livestreams, building customer engagement and excitement requires a new way of building launch campaigns. **This growing trend means businesses rely on their digital image to grow their customer base and sell their products.**

Advertising spending worldwide has increased steadily over the past few years and is expected to surpass \$630 billion in 2024, according to a report published by Statista.

Considering your investment, there's a lot at stake. And unfortunately, **as the demand for high-production virtual launch campaigns continues to grow, so do the risks of prelaunch leaks of confidential information.** Therefore, securing prelaunch digital assets is critical.

HOW DOES A LEAK IMPACT YOUR BRAND?



Fall in sales

- Drop in sales of current models
- Loss of competitive advantage
- Contractual issues



Costly launch campaigns are damaged

- A compromised launch due to diminished 'buzz' surrounding the launch
- Loss of valuable time and money
- Compromised trust among teams



Bad press

- Damaged brand image by the amateur quality of communications by fans or leakers
- Reluctant and frustrated customers
- Uncertain adoption of the product due to the poor quality of its presentation



Counterfeits and fakes hit the market faster

- Risk of the new product design, feature, or price revealed before launch
- Non-compliance with the brand's standards
- Brand image degradation

As a professional in charge of your company's launch campaigns, your role is to protect your brand's intellectual property, buyer trust, and reputation to preserve brand value and future sales.



LEAK STORY

APPLE iPhone 13 RELEASE

Despite Apple's tight rules and iron-clad non-disclosure agreements, at the launch of the new Phone 13 models in September 2021, highly sought-after product features leaked on an e-commerce website—spreading like wildfire across news media sources and social media just days before Apple's annual September launch event.



We want the chance to tell our customers why the product is great and not have that done poorly by someone else.

Greg Joswiak

Apple product marketing executive



A photograph of an office environment. In the foreground, several people are seated at a long table, looking towards the right side of the frame. On the right side, a man in a brown sweater is standing and writing on a large whiteboard. The whiteboard contains various hand-drawn diagrams and text, including "Planning Phase", "Project Plan", "Time management", "SMM Strategy", "Project Research", "Content Creation", "Promotion", "Analysis", "Feedback", and "Repeat". The scene is lit with warm, ambient light.

02

Working with third-party agencies : How to raise awareness on content leaks?

WORKING WITH THIRD-PARTY AGENCIES: HOW TO RAISE AWARENESS ON CONTENT LEAKS?

In today's hyper-digital reveals, the competition to create the most innovative and spectacular launch has never been so intense. As a result, many brands decide to delegate launch campaigns to outside agencies, trusting them with their most valuable asset: their intellectual property.

With the rise of online product reveals and launches, **ensuring complete secretiveness among key stakeholders is critical**. If you're working with creative production companies and digital marketing and advertising agencies, you need to ensure they understand what's at stake.

HOW DOES A LEAK IMPACT YOUR AGENCY RELATIONSHIP?

- Questioning the agency's loyalty
- End of the contract
- Finding and forming a new agency relationship can be very time consuming

Agencies must prove to their clients that their platforms, processes, and workflows are leak-proof and provide the latest technologies to track and **spot leaks immediately**.



Requiring heightened digital asset protection standards from your third-party agencies helps you **to maintain trustworthy relationships** while creating powerful and leak-proof launch campaigns.

CASE STUDY – PRODUCTION AGENCY



Challenge

An audiovisual production company produces various content for major automotive, fashion, and luxury brands. To preserve its trustworthy relationships with customers, the company had to guarantee the confidentiality of the content it produced until launch.



Solution

The agency needed to deliver embargoed visuals to media partners several days before the official reveal. To track their visual content, they chose IMATAG Leaks, an invisible watermark that marks multiple copies of the same content with different identifiers.



Result

If IMATAG Leaks detects an image or video's unique identifier, the agency can quickly locate the source of the leak to protect it against unauthorized usage. This traceability of digital content is reassuring, and relations with customers are more serene during product launches.

03

How do leaks happen?



HOW DO LEAKS HAPPEN?

With the heightened focus on hyper-digital product reveals and customer experiences, the investment in digital assets is often substantial. The teams preparing these campaigns need **to share images and videos of undisclosed models many weeks before the launch date.**

Ensuring a ‘buzz’ means making sure that digital assets are not leaked before the launch date and that images from livestreams are not stolen or misused.

USUAL SOURCES OF LEAKS

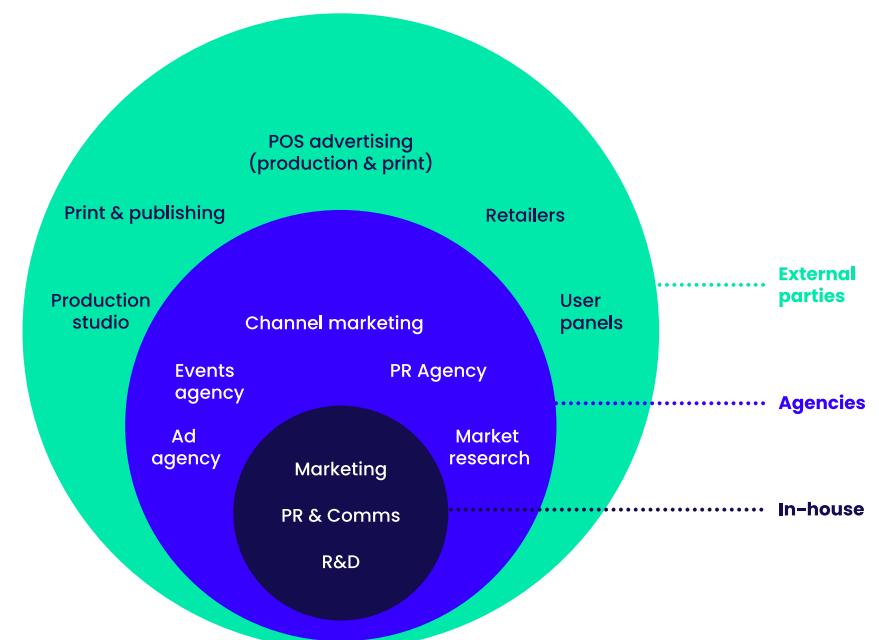
WHEN

- Market research
- Design, creative phases
- Preparation of launch campaigns
- Prelaunch

WHO

- Retailers, marketplaces
- Agencies (Creative, Ads, Digital, PR, Media...)
- Agency subcontractors
- Focus groups
- Internal

The challenge of a leak-proof product announcement is the sheer number of internal and external stakeholders who require access to images and videos in preparation for the launch date. Despite non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) and embargoed content, **controlling who has which digital image or video and the corresponding sharing authorization is virtually impossible.**



The level of control decreases as the number of stakeholders increases.

Today, protecting your brand means safeguarding highly sought-after images and videos from hackers and unauthorized sharing.



LEAK STORY

NINTENDO & THE POKÉMON COMPANY

In November 2019, Nintendo and The Pokémon Company publicly announced their intentions to no longer work with a Portuguese website that broke a review embargo and leaked photos and a video of an unreleased Pokémon Sword and Shield online — before the game's official release date. The leaked images created an incomplete picture of the highly-anticipated game, making some of the game's fans confused and angry.



Nintendo will always protect its intellectual property and brands. Leaks hurt not just Nintendo, but the thousands of employees who work hard to bring games to market, and the millions of fans around the world who look forward to news and surprises.

Official statement of Nintendo in November 2019



04

**How to maintain trust within
product launch teams?**

HOW TO MAINTAIN TRUST WITHIN PRODUCT LAUNCH TEAMS?

Maintaining trust within the teams preparing launch campaigns is essential to the success of new product releases.

As a product launch specialist, your role is to control the risk of your brand's content being leaked, from creation to publication. Creative workflows need to be secured, especially when handling confidential or embargoed information.

BUILDING LEAK-PROOF WORKFLOWS

When preparing product launches, the first step to protecting your company's confidential information is to **understand the importance of sensitive information**. It's important to discuss with the teams what information is critical (price, design, new functionality, etc.), in what formats it is to be made available, and when (launch date, embargo period, etc.).

No workflow is one-hundred percent leak-proof. The risk of content leaks starts from the moment you share information outside your organization. The more stakeholders involved, the higher the risk.

Thus, the second step to protecting your content is to **list all the third parties** involved who have access to confidential information and digital assets. You need to ensure everyone understands the level of confidentiality required and with whom the information can be shared.



Even if a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) has been put in place, it is not always sufficient because identifying the wrongdoer is difficult. Therefore, the person who leaked sensitive information doesn't fear the negative consequences of the NDA.



Did you know that...

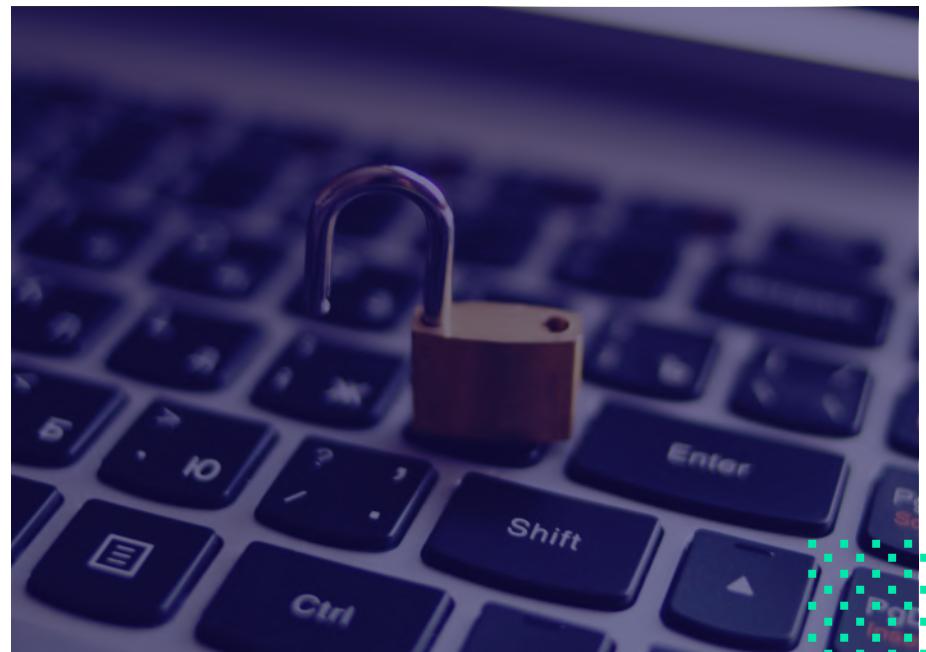
A majority of agency directors believe that an NDA signed with their clients is enough to maintain their confidence in the event of a leak

[Read more](#)

A third step to prevent prelaunch leaks is to **set rules on how critical information is shared**. To minimize the risks, map out workflows to spot where leaks could happen (internally and externally),

safeguard access to sensitive assets, and ensure that platforms used to transfer information are secure (avoid using sites like WeTransfer or sending sensitive content by email).

Sometimes a product launch is tied to specific constraints. For example, products dependent on the official release of a major film may have specific requirements and restrictions that must be taken into account when sharing images and videos with partners—as such, **giving special attention to the project's launch dates is critical** to avoid any license and contractual issues.



CASE STUDY LICENSED COLLECTIBLE TOYS



Challenge

Faced with a rising risk of counterfeit products hitting the market before launch, the creator of licensed consumer goods required a way to quickly spot leaks of images sent to its global network of distributors and retailers.



Solution

The timing of a reveal means sharing digital assets one month before a major film or video game launch. Using the IMATAG Leaks and Monitor solutions, the creator easily integrated the invisible watermarking process into its workflow. As a result, they can now securely share images to their external network before the launch.



Result

The creator seamlessly integrated invisible watermarking within its workflows, providing continual monitoring for potential leaks while assessing post-launch image usage.

Because information moves quickly online, the ramifications of a leak are substantial. Therefore, you'll want to understand how a leak happened (when, where, and by whom) to ensure it doesn't happen again.

The good news is that technologies and solutions are available to help reduce the risk of leaks. By simply integrating them within your processes, you can provide greater transparency and protection to your content.

05

How to prevent leaks?



HOW TO PREVENT LEAKS?

To build successful launch campaigns and a positive brand image, it's vital to set up the right technologies and solutions to keep your digital assets safe from unauthorized usage and potential leaks.

In the following sections, we have listed the methods and technologies available today so that you can find the right one for your company and teams.

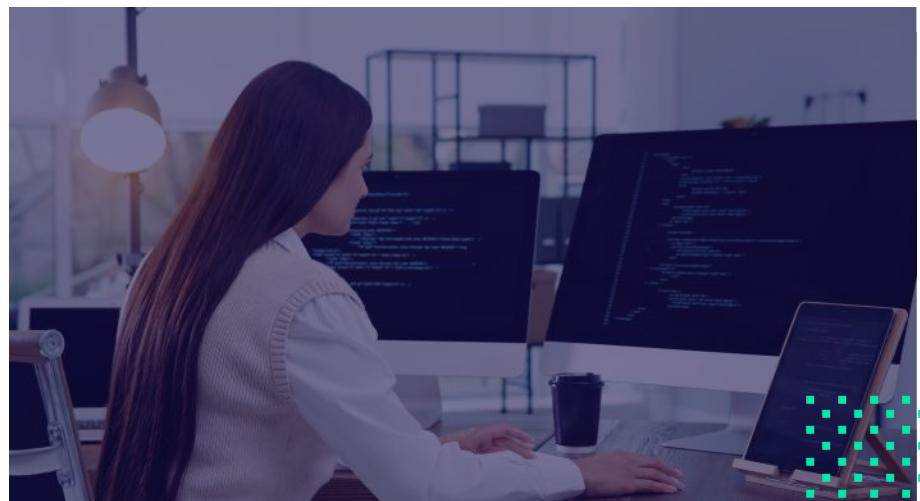
NDA & EMBARGOS

A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is a legal contract between two parties to protect shared confidential information. The goal of the NDA is to prevent a person or company from incurring losses or damages due to the disclosure of information. An NDA also aims to prevent the entity with whom the information has been shared from profiting from it illegally. Even though an NDA is a legal document, it **does not prevent a person from disclosing confidential information.** Instead, it sets out the consequences if the person does not comply with the NDA.

An NDA often provides little assurance that a leak won't happen. And usually, it can mean **adding a time-consuming process to an already complex workflow.**

Managing who has signed a document and ensuring it is understood and respected is built on trust and accountability. In addition, if your third-party stakeholders are located in varying countries or regions, laws and regulations can vastly differ regarding legal issues.

An **NDA doesn't allow identifying sources of leaks and holding them accountable.** Therefore, the person who leaked sensitive information doesn't fear the negative consequences of the NDA personally and can act freely.



DAM & DRM

If you're working with a digital asset management (DAM) or a digital rights management (DRM) system, you've already put in place a process to manage how images and videos are shared across your company's extensive network of production teams and outside agencies. But unfortunately, **this won't keep your digital assets from being inadvertently shared** outside your defined lists of recipients or by professional leakers intercepting and stealing them. While digital assets are safe and under your control in a DAM, no one knows what happens to them once they are distributed. Therefore, finding a solution that works within your company and your workflow is essential.

METADATA

It's often assumed that metadata (attached to a photo or a video) provides the tracking capabilities needed to monitor unauthorized usage of product images.

However, unbeknownst to brands is that **social media platforms and publishers often remove metadata or make it inaccessible**.

This can mean that leaked photos or videos are only spotted when it's too late.



Did you know that...

To keep track of prelaunch leaks, smartphone brands would change the screen wallpaper on their product images depending on the recipient ... until the entire leak community found out about the scheme!

[Read more](#)

INVISIBLE DIGITAL WATERMARKING

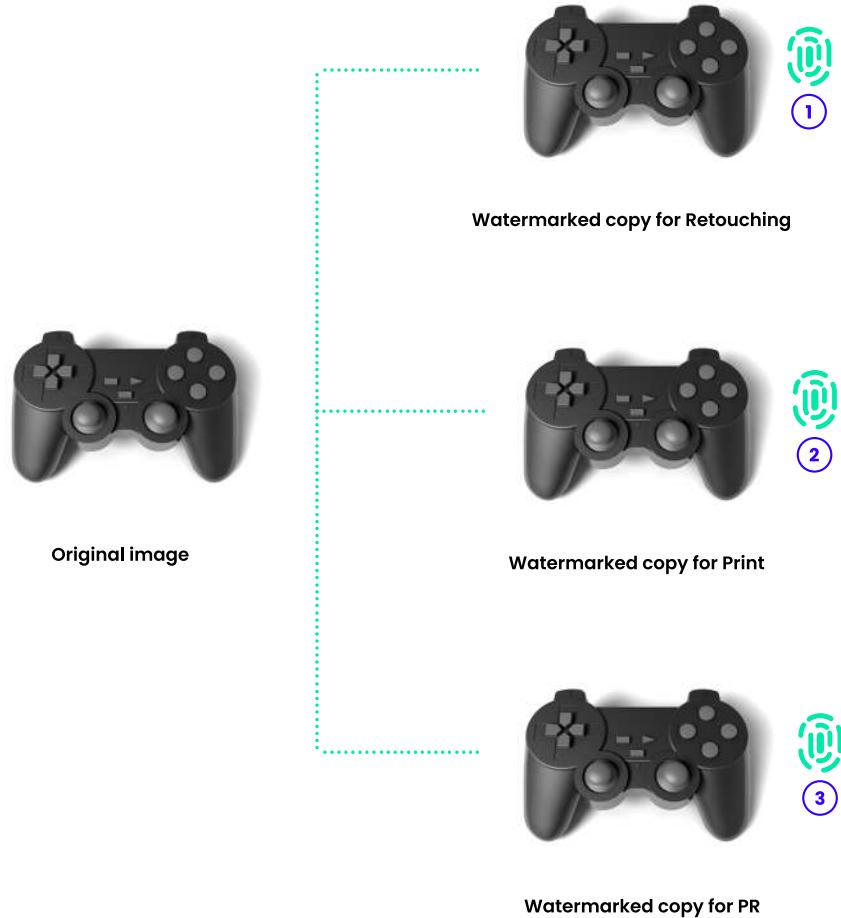
Today, protecting your digital assets requires a **robust technology that seamlessly integrates within your workflows and current tools.** This is why invisible digital watermarking is the smartest and most reliable way to combat against daily web attacks your digital brand content faces.

Invisible digital watermarking allows you to:

- Create multiple copies of an image and embed each with a recipient-unique identifier
- Crawl the web and detect leaks
- Determine the source of a leak thanks to the identifier specific to the image

To ensure that all parties are protected and that trust between internal and external teams is not jeopardized, invisible digital watermarking provides a foolproof solution. The simple process of securing the continual flow of images and videos with an embedded invisible watermark creates an environment **where all parties feel confident when sending or receiving digital assets.**

The source is immediately spotted in the case of a leaked image or video.



One image, three identical copies, but actually different!

INVISIBLE DIGITAL WATERMARKING IN 3 STEPS

01 Watermark your campaigns

- Upload your assets, register your recipients
- Generate a unique watermarked copy per recipient



02 Send marked copies

- Download your files (one per recipient) and send them
- ... wait for leaks



03 Detect the source of leak

- You spot a leak somewhere online? Upload the suspicious file
- Identify the original source of the leak



By placing an invisible watermark on your brand's digital assets, you'll be able to track how they are being used online, by whom, where, and when. This **deep level of intelligence** means you'll be able to precisely track and continually monitor where and how your digital assets are used.

The next part explains how to choose the right leak-prevention solution for your brand.



06

How to choose a leak-prevention solution?

Digital Watermarking: Is your content safe online?

Protect your business from unwanted use of your images and videos.

Trusted by

SAMSUNG TOYOTA AFP radiofrance

HOW TO CHOOSE A LEAK-PREVENTION SOLUTION?

To select the right technology to protect your brand against leaks, you can either do a benchmark of existing solutions or hire an external expert to compare and find the best solution for you.

Either way, to properly evaluate how well a solution matches your company's needs, you'll want to look at the following important criteria.



IMPERCEPTIBILITY

The magic of an invisible digital watermark is that it is **imperceivable and does not distort or degrade the quality** of the monitored or protected medium.

Due to its virtually undetectable and indestructible nature, it is a fail-safe approach to protecting and monitoring a brand's images and videos, whether digital or print.

IMATAG uses an invisible modification of pixels, meaning that the digital watermark is perceptually shaped to remain invisible to the human eye.

As our invisible digital watermark does not obstruct or alter the visual appearance, it provides a way to ensure usage compliance and intelligent monitoring **without compromising your company's product and brand beauty or appeal.**



ROBUSTNESS

While selecting a leak-prevention solution, it's essential to ensure that the watermark **will still be detected after various alterations of the image** on the internet.

Most watermarking solutions available today are often useless due to the systematic compression of JPEG images on websites, social media, and marketplaces.

Employing its proven watermarking algorithm, IMATAG's cloud-based platform embeds a recipient-unique, invisible, and indelible code to each frame or image. This secret message is written in a binary code that only a computer can decode.

This technique is so robust that even if an invisibly watermarked photo or video is **cropped, color-edited, compressed, inverted, reframed, recalibrated, screen-shot, or even printed**, the embedded binary code remains intact and traceable.



SCALABILITY

An efficient leak-prevention solution must be able to **differentiate several copies of the same image**. For example, if you're planning a product launch, you may need to send the identical embargoed visual to 15 journalists. Therefore, you will have to «mark» the same image 15 times, i.e., produce 15 visually identical unique images, each secretly carrying the identifier of each recipient.

With IMATAG's Leaks solution, **an unlimited number of copies of a single image can be automatically generated**, each with its recipient-unique invisible digital watermark.



EASY INTEGRATION

If you use a DAM system, you'll want to look for a leak prevention solution that provides **seamless integration**.

You can link your company's DAM to an invisible watermarking service through an application programming interface (API), a software intermediary that allows two applications to talk to each other.

With IMATAG's API, you can **integrate the best traitor tracing (or forensic steganography) technology** into your workflows. Use the API to hide an invisible identifier to your sensitive images or videos—all without altering the quality or evoking suspicion by the recipient. In the event of a leak, use the same API to detect the identifier of the leaked content.

CASE STUDY CONSUMER ELECTRONICS



Challenge

When a globally recognized smartphone brand faced a growing risk of pre-reveal leaks, it looked for a tamper-proof technology solution to secure its visual assets without diminishing image quality.



Solution

Using the IMATAG Leaks solution, the brand embedded invisible watermarks on all its prelaunch visuals, including those sent to employees, agencies, and commercial partners.



Result

The brand systematically and invisibly watermarked its visual assets, providing a more serene workflow and a secure way of detecting and stopping damaging leaks.



There was no question of deteriorating the quality of our renderings, we were looking for robustness and imperceptibility to secure our product launch contents.

L.Q.,

creative operations director



CONCLUSION

For brands, the stakes are high in ensuring their digital assets are safe in an ever-changing environment. By implementing sound practices plus leading-edge technologies, you can gain the peace of mind you and your teams deserve.

If you're looking for a way to monitor and track potential leaks of your digital assets, then invisible digital watermarking technology is the optimal solution for your brand. Whether you're worried about leaks of a prelaunch livestream, images, or videos, or you need to monitor the usage pattern of your digital assets, you'll need a single-source-of-truth approach.

Protecting your digital assets is the key to a successful and leak-proof launch campaign. Now that you understand how leaks can occur and how to prevent them, you can better control your future product launches.

Ready to take the next step? Book your free demo today and see why leading companies use our leak-proof solutions.

[Book a demo](#)



iMATAG

in f

www.imatag.com