

Public Abstract

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Title:How Has Twitter Changed How Journalists Report on Sports? The 2012 Missouri Grand Prix

The theoretical framework of this study is gatekeeping and it specifically analyzes Twitter use by eight journalists during the weekend of the 2012 Missouri Grand Prix, which took place February 10 through 12, 2012. A convenience sample was used (n=249) representing all of the tweets posted by these eight people between 12:01 a.m. on February 10 and 11:59 p.m. on February 13. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to analyze all data collected. This thesis examined the number of tweets per day, the number of tweets per hour, the number of tweets per participant, the number of tweets per tweet category and the number of retweets per participant. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant to find out how Twitter was used during the weekend of the 2012 Missouri Grand Prix and how it is used on a daily basis in their jobs as journalists. A major finding is that these eight journalists use Twitter truly as a social media tool, meaning that they use it to interact with fans and colleagues through the personal messages, replies and retweets. This study contributes to a general lack of research about Twitter use by journalists that currently exists in the scholarly literature.