Examining Twitter Engagement in Sports Newspaper
Beat Reporters’ Live-Game Coverage

Jeremy Shermak

Dr. Margaret Duffy, Thesis Chair

Abstract

Newspaper sports beat reporters have experienced challenges to their workflow as social media, such as Twitter, has emerged as an essential tool in the reporting of live-game events. The purpose of this study is to assess the ways newspaper sports beat reporters meet consumers’ needs for information during these live events. Using retweets and likes as measures of engagement, this study found that sports information consumers are more responsive to newspaper sports beat reporters’ Twitter content during live-game coverage when it includes analysis, opinion, entertainment, and visual content. This study suggests that newspaper sports beat reporters should capitalize on their exclusivity and insider access to create Twitter content beyond mere play-by-play results that are typically available to those following the game through more traditional means such as television, radio, or in person. These strategies could distinguish newspaper sports beat reporters in an increasingly crowded sports media landscape.