

Exploring the Potential of Social Media in strengthening Indian Sports Practices and Promotion with special reference to Olympics 2020

Dr Kulveen Trehan

Assistant Professor , University School of Mass Communication , GGSIPU , New Delhi

Abstract

The paper explores the potential of social media in the advancement of underrepresented sports like Shooting, Wrestling, Badminton and Hockey. Owing to its massive popularity in the Indian Sub-Continent, Cricket in India gets premium sponsors, broadcast rights, media mileage and viewership often creating an imbalance in the sports ecosystem where other games struggle for funds and promotion. For the purpose a qualitative inquiry through a snowball sample of twenty-two in-depth interviews with sports persons, sports journalists and digital content creators was conducted. Findings reveal that players from the non-cricketing world feel empowered with the increase in social media because of direct access to their fans leading to strong emotional bonds and identified online sports communities. Social media is resetting the agenda for the sports media in India resulting in increased representation in the mainstream. Empirical insights reveal factors such as award winning performances, globalization of sports, player connect on digital media, sports marketing on social networking sites, sponsorship streams in sports economy are creating a strong push towards Olympic Sports in India

Keywords : Social Media , Sports , Non-Cricket Sports , Qualitative Inquiry , Olympic Games

Introduction

Recent Indian performances in Olympics 2016, Commonwealth Games 2018, Asian Games and World Championships have reaffixed the spotlight on several games like Shooting, Hockey, Badminton, Archery, Boxing, Wrestling and Athletics in the last few decades. Increase in medal tally and star performances have contributed to revival of public curiosity in non-cricket sports. Sports represent both existing societal mass and the contemporary issues of mass audiences, where sports media have negotiated questions of gender inequality, performance and disparate attention on sports and players. For long Sports media exclusively shouldered the responsibility of informing, educating and promoting the game, at times being the voice of players, or presenting the spectators point of view, in addition to playing the role of sport critic and game reviewer. This may change in the digitally networked society. Sports communities have found a new public place of mass conversations: social media.

In 2015, It was reported in the Sports Industry Business Report that sports in India is cricket led with commercial sporting format leagues, proactive sponsorship opportunities and talent pool. Hockey, Badminton Wrestling and Shooting (HBWS) though medal intensive games yet losing out to the cricket craze' for training and promotion is the core of sports development underlining the low prominence given to non-cricket sports given by Indian media coupled with inadequate public resources. All that was about to change as Khelo India Programme was launched India is a valid site to review social media in redefining and repositioning sports (issues and events) firstly because of rapid adoption of internet and smart phone technologies (503 million internet users in India by 2017, IMAI report 2014) and secondly as the policymakers plan to broad base sports beyond cricket .

Commercial and structural restraints vis-à-vis media coverage of non-cricket sports in India (Business of Sports KPMG&CII Report, 2014) provoke us to examine sports production, communication and consumption while reconfiguring media sport in the online world (Hutchins & Rowe, 2010). If TV globalized sports, Internet has become an encyclopedia that provides all the written and pictorial information on sports (Boyle & Haynes, 2002). Social Mediascape too is sports oriented as 'half of the twitter affiliated social activity is sports' (Smith, 2014). Creedon (2014) called London Olympics 'the Twitter Olympics' since in the first social media games mainstream media used online conversations to select news. Social media creates more active relationships between sports consumers, media industry and participants unlike traditional mass media models (Bruns and Shirley, 1999). Social media in women sports is vital as finding a broadcast partner remains a challenge (Vann, 2014). Sports fosters understanding of gender, fan and communities (Wenner, 2013) besides presenting the images of a nation (Bernstein & Blain, 2002). Recent studies highlight the role of new media w.r.t women sports (Creedon, 2014; Tang & Cooper, 2012; Schmidt, 2015). While social media builds ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 w.r.t user generated content (Kaplan & Haenstein), it ends in convergence culture (Jenkins, 2006) where technology empowers the fans to become co-creators of meanings.

Rapid Progression and Expanding Bouquet of Sports Ecosystem in Asia

Sports construct neo-social reality as consumption, communication and commercialization converge to create a mediated sporting environment across the world. Peoples' increasing emotional need for adventure, thrill, and involvement is evidenced by escalation in sporting contests and events across the world. The number of mega sporting events in the last six decades presents a direct relationship between entertainment and sports (Westerbeek & Smith, 2003). At present, Asia is emerging as the hub of sport centric activity. John Cappelletti, International Vice President at International Management Group (IMG) indicates that the World Cup Korea/Japan 2002 and the awarding of the Olympic Games to Beijing 2008 and Commonwealth Games 2010 in India is a further testament of the increased proliferation of sports experience industry in Asia (*Hosting major international sports events: comparing Asia and Europe, Wolfram Manzenreiter and John Horne*). This scalar development in sport industry ushered in the era of sporting events of three types; mega, major or hallmark especially in the Indian sub-continent. In India, mass media has concentrated greatly on the rise and rise of cricket in the past several decades resulting in growing apathy towards non-cricket games quite popular in the past.

Media, Sport and People

Popularity of social media has altered the way professional sport is presented and promoted to mass audiences. New media has restructured the way sport is consumed across the world including India. Sports fans, organizers and media are adopting a new dictum of communication in sports defined by blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual social worlds, virtual game worlds and collaborative projects (Kaplan & Haentin, 2010).

Chris Ballard of the Sports Illustrated summed up the discourse on social media and sports as "The Web is rapidly changing the relationships between athletes, fans and journalists, reapportioning access and power, redrawing boundaries," bringing out the need to look media sports from the perspective of source, author and receivers alike. In Europe and USA, various studies have focused on sports management, sports as a profitable business, social

media and fandom sportspersons branding strategies vis-à-vis self and symbolism and the impact of social media on sports news coverage. Gilady in an interview to A. Bernstein stated that most sport is not attractive to television therefore reinforcing the argument about marginal coverage of minority sport in US. Rupert Murdoch the world's most powerful broadcast sport proprietor, has stated unequivocally that "sport absolutely overpowers film and everything else in the entertainment genre" (quoted in Eckersley & Benton, 2002, p.20). In India both movies, sports in India make for mediated celebrityization of performers. Both conjure up celebrities whose lives, loves and laughs are celebrated, critiqued and consumed at daily basis regular reports, special features and exclusive coverage of personal and professional lives of sports stars by the media has created a need for and of celebrities in India. In the words of Boorstin "Only media can create die celebrity". "Therefore, the role of mass media in the process of celebrityization is irreplaceable. (Macková, V. –Trunečka, O. 2015)

Review of Literature

Peter English (2014) while exploring the influence of twitter on sports journalists in Indian, Australian and British newspapers found that a lot of Indian Sports Journalists have Facebook accounts instead of Twitter because of greater penetration of the former in the market.

Kian & Clavio (2011) in an empirical study found that online journalists were less emphatic in creating male dominance in sport as compared to newspapers.

In 'Sport and the Media: The Emergence of a Major Research Field' Bernstein & Blain (2002) point out that most studies on gender, media and sport find underreporting of female athletes and issues with Olympics 1996 being a rare exception along with tennis.

In a structural analysis of Marca, the most popular online sports community in Spain, Gonzalez, Guerrero-Solé, Larrea (2014) 98% lurkers (those who are members but do not comment), 63% participated only once with high degree to abuse and trolling related to sports wars and fan conflicts.

Hutchins & Rowe (2010) in their report presented the challenges by media sports institutions and actors: Sports Organizations, Broadcasters, News media outlets, telecommunications, digital and mobile media companies, fans and users along with the conflict, transitions commercial, cultural and legal formulations arising out of shift from print to new media with key emphasis on balance between commercial and public interests in sports news with the advent of convergent media.

Limited scope of social media writing in sports was highlighted by Hardin & Ash (2011) argue that mainstream journalists relied on official sources, added background to a story and went beyond "breaking news" epitomized by the sports blogs.

Limited literature on social media and sports in India in general and w.r.t underrepresented sports by mainstream in particular prompted this study.

Research Questions

RQ1: Is social media a platform to build strong following for sports underrepresented in Print and TV in India?

RQ2: Is sports communication on social media creating conversations on ethics in Indian sports?

RQ3: How is social media affecting sports journalism, especially of HBSW in India?

Methodology

Conceptual Framework:

While the concepts of social presence and social process (Short, Williams and Christie, 1976) in relation to social media validate the need to converse with sportspersons, fans and other stakeholders in media sport., it is Chad Whitkempers'(2014)quadrant of social media uses: Competition Community, Cooperation Community, Proactive Community and Passive Communitythat aided the researcher in understanding the functions of sports communication on social media

Research Procedure

In order to understand the potential of “ new media “ in sports ecosystem , a qualitative study guided by an inductive approach was most suited. A snowball sample of twenty two (22) sports journalists, coaches, sports writers, and sportspersons and sports academicians was subjected toin-depth interviews with the help of a semi structured interview schedule. In this paper definition of social media is limited to content and use of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Myspace , Youtube etc. In the Last six years Facebook and Twitter based studies have analysed athletic Usage, Celebritisation of Sports, Sporting events, social media consumers and popular sport.

Sample and data collection

The snowball sample consists of Sports Journalists (working in Print,TV & Online media): 15 ;Sports bloggers/fans: 03;Players &Coaches: 02 ;Sports academicians:02

Findings & Discussion

Social Media creates a level playing field for underrepresented sports In India

Players, fans and followers of HBSW (Hockey, Badminton, Shooting and Wrestling) almost unanimously said that all other sports except cricket get step motherly treatment from mainstream media with ‘international feats’ being exceptions:

‘Sports other than cricket are facing struggle to get adequate limelight or highlights as the demand for cricket has grown more past so many years...rest of the sports despite getting glory and victory for country hardly catch an eye of a common man. While name of cricket players,their performance rating ..team rating...is a common talk of common man household...no one really knows other players’.....“There are stories regarding various sports discipline like fencing, wrestling archery etc which are promising and sports for future but still get overshadowed by cricket glitz !” (Interview 1 : Player/, Shooter).

Lot of optimism was reflected by the players themselves on social media’s role on increasing following of non-cricket sports. Players are now directly interacting with fans, followers, sports writers everyday via twitter, Facebook etc. creating an emotional bond via ‘mass self-communication’(Hutchins and Rowe,2011) reducing the role of a journalist in the diffusion of information. Indian players are sharing professional stories as well as exposing their human sides to create a dialogical loop. Players, especially shooters, wrestlers in India feel that fan base is going up steeping ever since they got active on social media.

“It has increased the fan base Hockey for example. Social media apps and mobile apps with rich and fat content on the sport have led to the increase I believe.”(Interview 19, Saifuddin Khan, Sports Blogger, Fan)

However, the journalists were split down the middle. Some sports Journalist feel that while celebrity players' fan clubs may be a visible market of social media, focus on underrepresented sports has not really gone up because of social media:

"I won't say non-cricket sports news is on the rise among the Indian news consumers, but certainly social media helps keeping all sportsmen in the news as they engage with their fans through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Stars like Saina Nehwal, Sania Mirza, Vijender Singh, Abhinav Bindra are widely followed on social media platforms" (Interview 2, Jaspreet Sahni, Deputy Sports Editor , News18.com)

It is the performances that have compelled the sports media to cover games other than cricket. Others admit that since stories are now broken on social media, it becomes almost impossible for the mainstream media to continue with their gatekeeping:

'Media is divided, editors are biased ... they are close to certain players and give more coverage to them Regional biases are also there ... like recently in who should represent Indian in wrestling in Rio Olympics controversy Sushil Kumar is given more coverage and positive slant by North Indian sports media while west Indian sports journalist aligned with Narsingh Yadav'.(Interview 11, Sabi Hussain , The Tribune).

Sports Editors and Correspondents from leading Indian newspapers hold a contrary view, insisting that Various sports are represented in print media on the basis of its current performance in competitions alone and shrug off the importance of online social space in sports.

"I don't need social media to gauge which sport is popular" ...There is artificiality in social media it is accessed by a privileged people ... "I say Hockey and Cricket both will make news ... whenever a team wins , it is news /it gets extra coverage...for example Indian media coverage of Shooting has increased since Gagan Narang's performance in Athens Olympics in 2004 and subsequent gold medal by Abhinav Bindra in 2008 Beijing Olympics".(Interview 5: Jaydeep Basu, The Telegraph).

" Fan following has increased yes but it is also because mainstream media has begun to give importance to sports. Some newspapers have three to four regular sports pages".... " An achievement on the field is the best news to be featured on the sports pages.It can be always be a subject of debate when it comes to judging the importance of news but to me it has been only and only a sporting feat'

"Social media is mainly about breaking news and the best medium for this is TV....Trivial writing on twitter or facebook can't be equated with a newspaper"(Interview 4 :Vijay Lokapally , Sports Editor , The Hindu)

Social media is better placed to unearth unethical practices in sports

Social media has become the hub of shared posts on discrimination in sports, controversial selection policies, on doping, harassment, financial irregularities, neglect or apathy of the sports administration. It seems that TV Journalism is like a fixed match with everyone on the same side pushing the pro- power agenda in sports. Free market, star struck and cricket crazed media often missing important developments in sports that may be ugly and may make the corridors of power uneasy, leaving it to social media stakeholders to break the story. However, the focus of the social space is not particularly on Indian stories but international sporting news.

The sports stakeholders especially the sports followers and academia interviewed during the study mentioned that they have shared a lot of posts on questionable practices and tried to weave a discourse on ethical conduct in sports. The attempts include sharing stories, reporting likes and creating a trail of comments on gender based discrimination, regional sports irregularities and sports scams

In the interviews, that social media is aiding in socially responsible journalism was also underscored. Some notable examples given during the interviews were:

- a) Discrimination against women sports:In 2012, Manipur boxer Mary Kom blew the lid off discrimination and neglect in women's boxing in India. She revealed that discrimination

and partiality within and outside the sport were the worst enemies of a sportsperson and they could kill the spirit of the game and drag down the players.

- b) Irregularities and Scams :Twitter in particular exposed Lalit Modi's dubious involvement propelling mainstream media to take note.
- c) Gender Discrimination : Equal class of travel in flights for male and female cricketers during the World T20 Cricket
- d) Corruption Fallout : Resignation of Shashank Manohar as President of BCCI due to corruption and influence of N Srinivasan
- e) Matchfixing: All tweets of Supreme Court hearings on BCCI spot fixing scam and Lodha Commission from court were tweeted by court reporters of major newspapers. Not all journals have access to SC hearings.
- f) Doping in sports that broke on social media: Suspension of Russia from International Athletics Associations Federation came online, Maria Sharapova's ban came online.
- g) Controversial selections /selection policy:The selection drama of Indian tennis team to Rio broke online on social media. Rohan Bopanna issued a statement on his partner of choice on twitter.

(Jaspreet Sahni, Deputy Sports Editor, News18.com recalled that a story about India's former football captain Sona Chaudhary alleging sexual harassment during her playing days was found on Facebook whereas mainstream media totally ignored it even after it first broke out on social media)

(Interview 16, Pranay Rupani , an avid sports follower, writer and blogger from Hyderabad cited the case of Syeda Falak from Hyderabad Karate competitor winning the US Open Karate Championship. The story first broke on Facebook and then the Government of Telangana gave her a cash award after which it was carried in all mainstream news outlets based in Hyderabad)

(Pranay also recalled a story on facebook that dealt with Non-disclosure of team ownership details of Premier Badminton League especially of the PVP Ventures in the Hyderabad HotShots team. It was not reported by the press.)

Impact of Social Media on Sports Reportage: Process and Practice

Journalists in main stream media and sports websites, sports teachers and sports followers view the change in sports reporting as significant in the social media era. Breaking news in sports has a new host: Social media with every story being first posted on social media and then carried out by TV and subsequently newspapers.

'All kinds of news related to sports are covered in social media... sometimes it seem that social media cover more stories than we journalist'...news on social media on issue other than win/loss of a sports tournament, infact social media emphasize more on other stuffs such as controversies which erupt from the sports. (Interview 7 : Amarnath Prasad, Sports Corropondent HT Media)

Personal stories of players, teams and even sports fans are becoming salient. A large visual and a caption is a window to a micro blog post thriving on "nugget" information and emotional outpourings. Strength of a story (to follow it up or not) is being determined by "trending on Twitter" and "Likes on Facebook". More importantly, sports journalism as a profession is undergoing a change in India post Facebook and Twitter, at times shaking the conventional ways of making news. Continuous monitoring of Facebook and Twitter has become a norm, making social media updates key leads and a top information source.

Yes, the sports coverage has visibly changed with the emergence of social media. Now, you don't need to interview a sportsperson in person, you can just take their quote on Twitter or Facebook and use it in the story. In the seemingly never ending 21st century pool of various social networking tools, we are now closer than ever to our professional athletes, sports media outlets and other fans, (Interview 6: Rohan Raj , Catch News).

The study reveals that social media has also hit the exclusive club (nexus) of famed journalists and sports managers. It has made sports information available to a lot of sports journalists who do belong to the elite list:

..social media gives better access to info...especially regarding events, competitions, scores which are the basics ... Information is now available so for a sports journo to say he or she missed any news because there was no information cannot be accepted.Another example is access to players...if they are abroad ,competing or training, their presence online helps in coverage- .you can contact them over FB, twitter , get quotes, or even chat with them. At times I have skyped with coach and athlete when they are training abroad.(Interview 12: Neeru Bhatia , Deputy Sports Editor , The Week Magazine)

Diversity of content that satiates curiosity, fills the knowledge gap, generates opinion and commentary, comprehends nuances and feeds onto gossip are visible across the entire sports ecosystem on the internet. Saumitra from Ndtv.com 'All kinds – reports, analysis, offbeat and blogs , Photos/videos make for good and interesting information are being posted' . Everyone is a content provider in many ways freeing the space for more formats of sports writing. The voice of sports journalist is being challenged (Hutchins & Rowe, 2010) in India as well by Player-Fan two way communications and shared journalism in Indian sports (a phenomenon more visible in political communication during elections or international conflict news) is on the rise.

'The advent of official fan pages and twitter accounts are quick to deny news reports or speculations, denting the credibility of a journalist reports. Therefore, it's more of a challenge to predict and report the right news' (Interview 8: Saurabh Das, Mobile ESPN)

Sabi H. says field reporting has been replaced by AC & Telephone Journalism. "I feel the real news is in the field. Social media gives quotes, but there is seldom any hard information". (Interview 20 : Debanjan Tiwari, Times of India)

"Traditional form of journalism is on its way out. Packaging and publishing information has undergone a lot of change. Now we publish news every minute. A journalist's job has become complex. The job has become more desk-oriented. You can get better, authentic and lightning quick information through social media. The traditional form still co-exists but packaging with the behind-the-scene information and with graphics and photos/videos add value."(Interview 3: Saumitra Bose, Ndtv.com).

Ways of newsgathering have changed radically feel the sports media persons. My conversations revealed that field reporting has taken a beating making way for armchair or telephone journalism (Prabhjot Singh , PTC news Channel & Sabi, H Tribune). Therefore, players or others who do have facebook and twitter accounts do not get covered.

Print journalists and editors lambast the nature of sports writing with the expansion of social media. They are critical of firstly sports writing not being confined anymore to a "qualified sports journalist" but becoming a public sphere where players, managers, fans all are writers and gatekeepers of own content. "No screening of the content" is the most common criticism with quality of writing following the lead. However the online journalists advocate the freedom of social space albeit with caveats:

'Captions accompanying the links need to tell the real story inside. These should not look like bait for the users to click. That can prove counter-productive in the long run'.(Japreet Sahni, news18.com)

Table 1:Opinion Matrix ofInterviewees onProduction and Consumption of sports content & issues

S.No		Typology of sports content	Agenda of sports content	Affiliation with Sports communities	Shortcomings of sports on social media
1	Sports Journalists in Print & TV	Prefer in-depth coverage of sports: a)humanitarian stories, b) Hard News c) columns on sports, politics and commerce d) sports news as entertainment	Salient Issues : National Team/Player victory Unique Development in international sports. Matchfixing, Sports Associations and Bodies New Developments in Game Rules. (news value and editorial policy of the media house is the key)	Sportskeeda.com, official FB pages of HBSW and star accounts but do not follow web communities	Unverified reportage/writing ; false news, biased news fandom and fan wars , abuse on social media and online trolling of players , teams and even journalists
2	Online sports Journalists	Game Updates , Live updates,local and small town player stories, player reactions,promotional features, Team profiles, emerging players,build up before the game stories, scoops, interactive stories.	Issues : Matches/Events in Progress, Injuries to players, team selection, appointment ofadministrators,Controversies and scandals, infrastructure limitations	a)ESPNCricinfo for Cricket; ESPNTennis.Com for Tennis and so on. Communities on twitter and linkedin. b)Indian web communities : @India_AllSports and @OGQ_India on Twitter c) Sportskeeda facebook page d)Givemesports, goal.com, espnfc, cricinfo, tennis.com, plaantik, footylounge,	Trolling and abuse of a sportspersons, Star wars , Planted stories , sponsored pages and communities by PR firms and sports managers, unnecessary hype around a game
3	Sports Academicians	Hard News and Soft News	Issues: Pro Government/establishment, winning teams , western nations and male players. Malpractices are not on the agenda	Lot of FB communities and twitter pages like Indian sports bloggers, hockey lovers, shooting pride etc.	Trolling , exaggerated stories on sensational news
4	Players & Coaches	Personality Based stories	Achievements , medals , image and personal lives of the sports stars	Online Fan Clubs , Fan Communities , Elite Player/Peer Groups , Sportskeeda.com	Trolling, Negative comments , hate mail, fan wars , morphed pictures and fake news
5.	Fans/followers and Bloggers		Virtually everything that is gratifying to sports consumers /fans	Sportskeeda.com	Trolling, abusive language is a problem, fan fights are not negative

“A lot of stories, now, are manufactured rather than produced” says Rohan Raj & ‘the trend to find news and paste it online sometimes backfires due to incorrect reports and immediate response from the clubs, boards and players’ (Saurabh Das) echo the lack of credibility concern of print journalists and editors regarding sports on the social web.

With regard to uses and functions of social media in sports, the ecosystem is clearly divided. The sports academia is high on interactivity and low on lead generation forming a niche proactive community while fans and followers in India is highly active and interactive as a large competitive community. Players and Coaches and Journalists are highly low on interactivity but high on activity forming a eclectic passive community.

Mainstream media misses, social media “hits”

The online sports journalists, sports followers, players and bloggers recalled many stories like Manipur’s Wrestler’s issue or the women’s Kabaddi team becoming World Champions and looking for autos at the Delhi airport went viral on social media that were either totally missing from TV and print or found delayed and marginal coverage however a few print journalist attributed “no show” in newsprint to lack of news worthiness and audience use and need:

While I can't recall, but there are always stories that'll escape mainstream media, since they are deemed 'non-interesting' for the wider audience (Interview 21: Sunit Kaul, Asian Age).

Conclusion

Freedom to lead conversations augment the social presence of stakeholders like fans, followers and independent sports lovers, this increased presence further contributes to escalation of their social influence in the process. The interviews with players, coaches value ‘Fandom’ because fans identify/ fantasize and follow celebrities by imagining a similarity with the star (Frazer & Brown, Sonkey 2006). Traces of increasing discomfort between sports journalist in print television and sports writers/bloggers/ fans online too was visible as conventional media journalist did not acknowledge the rise, potential or potency of social media in contrast to their online counterparts. The conventional sports journalist in India at the moment is discomfited with the dialogue or conversation being expanded to include all the sports stakeholders and going beyond the ‘dialogue of the deaf’ (Hutchins & Rowe, 2011). However, the change in sports journalism as a profession cannot be shoved aside as even the conservative sports editors and correspondents monitor, audit, screen social media content at regular intervals. Pavlik’s correlation of technological tools and news finds support in this study. The players and the coaches are rejoicing in the new found power to position themselves as unique brands, start and stop conversations without a mediator. Recognition of scope and strength of social media platforms is reflected in the collectivity and diversity in the availability of sports news and content on web communities. All the sports communicators recognize the misuse, abuse and unfair use of the expanding public sphere.

Implications of the study

This study will aid in formulating a sports communication model for India which may be extended to other developing countries to fulfill the need for creating dynamic sports cultures across Asia and Africa. It will also bring forth key threads to bridge the gap between sports as a business and as a heterogeneous multimedia package of mediated and participatory communication.

Notes

- Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow for the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (p. 61).

- Business of Sports: Shaping a successful innings for Indian Sports Industry was presented by KPMG and CII at “SCORECARD 2014 – National Conference on Business of Sports” organized by the CII.
- Media Richness Theory : The depth and dimensionality of media is directly related to its ability to resolve ambiguity and reduce uncertainty.

References

1. Cision(2009). George Washington University and Cision 2009 Social Media & Online Media Usage Study. Retrieved November4,2014,http://www.gwu.edu/-newsctr/10/pdfs/gw_cision_sm_study_09.pdf
2. Pavlik,J.(2013). Innovation And the Future of Journalism, Digital Journalism,1(2),pp.181-193.
3. Hutchins, B. & Rowe,D. (2012)Sports Beyond Television: The Internet, Digital Media and the Rise of Networked Sport. Pp.73-99;125-150
4. Hutchins, B & Rowe,D.(2010) ed. Sports Journalism and Social Media : A New Conversation, Boyle ,Raymand.
5. English, P.(2014).Twitter’s diffusion in sports journalism: Role models,laggards and followers of the social media innovation, new media and society,pp1-18.
6. McCarthy,B.(2014).A Sports Journalismof Their Own:An InvestigationInto the Motivations,Behaviours, and MediaAttitudes of Fan Sports Bloggers, Communication & Sport, Vol. 2(1) pp.65-79.
7. Pedersen,P.M(2014).A Commentary on Social Media Research From the Perspective
8. of a Sport Communication Journal Editor, Communication & Sport,Vol. 2(2) 138-142.
9. Whitkemper,C.Blaszka, M.& Chung,J. (2014).Establishing a Typology of Social Media Uses in the Sport Industry: A Multidimensional Scaling Study, Communication and Sport, Sage Publication pp.1-21.
10. Clavio, G. (2008). Demographics and usage profiles of users of college sport message boards.,International Journal of Sport Communication, 1, 434–443.
11. Clavio, G., & Frederick, E. (2014). Sharing is caring. Journal of Applied Sport Management,6, 70–85.
12. Clavio, G., & Kian, T. M. (2010). Uses and gratifications of a retired female athlete’s Twitter followers. International Journal of Sport Communication, 3, 485–500.
13. Clavio, G., Kraft, P. M., & Pedersen, P. M. (2009). Communicating with consumers through video games: An analysis of brand development within the video gaming segment of the sports industry. International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship,10, 143–156.
14. Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. Business Horizons, 53, pp.59–68.
15. Vann,P.(2014)Changing the Game: The Role of Social Media in Overcoming Old Media's Attention Deficit Toward Women's Sport, Jornal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media 58(3),pp.438-455.
16. Tang,T. & Cooper,R.(2012).Gender, Sports, and New Media: Predictors of Viewing during the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media.56(1),pp.75-91.

17. Hardin, M. and Ash, E. (2011). Journalists Provide Social Context Missing from Sports Blogs20 - *Newspaper Research Journal* • Vol. 32, No. 2.
18. Hutchins, B & Rowe, D. (2010). Reconfiguring Media Sport for the Online World: An Inquiry Into "Sports News and Digital Media" *International Journal of Communication* 4, 696–718 1932–8036/20100696.
19. Bruns, A. (2008). *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and beyond: From production to produsage*. New York: Peter Lang.
20. Castells, M. (2000). *The rise of the network society* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
21. Jenkins, H. (2006b). *Fans, bloggers, and gamers: Exploring participatory culture*. New York: New York University Press.
22. Wenner, L. (Ed.). (1998). *MediaSport*. London: Routledge.
23. Kian, E. M & Clavio, G. (2011) A comparison of online media and traditional newspaper coverage of the mens and womens US Open Tennis Tournaments, *Journal of Sports Media*, Volume 6, Number 1, Spring 2011, pp. 55-84.
24. Ballard, C. (2006). Writing up a storm. *Sports Illustrated*. Retrieved
25. Creedon, P. J. (1994). Women in toyland: A look at women in American newspaper sports journalism. In P. J. Creedon (Ed.), *Women, media and sport: Challenging gender values* (pp. 67–107). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
26. Bernstein, A & Blain, N. (2002). Sport and the Media: The Emergence of a Major Research Field, *Culture, Sports and Society* 5:31-30 DOI: 10.1080/911094213.
27. Schmidt, H. (2015) "Still a Boys Club": Perspectives on Female Sports and Sports Reporters in University Student Newspapers, *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 65–74.
28. LOPEZ-GONZALEZ, H., GUERREROSOLÉ, F. & LARREA, O., "Community building in the digital age: Dynamics of online sports discussion", *Communication & Society / Comunicación y Sociedad*, Vol. 27, n. 3, 2014, pp. 83-105.
29. Veronika Macková - Ondřej Trunečka (2015). "You Don't Have A Leg? Don't Worry, You Can Still Be A Star!": Media Image Of Cyclist Jiří Ježek, *Communication Today*, Vol. 6, No. 2.
30. BOORSTIN, D. J.: *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America*. New York : Vintage Books, 1992. 319 p. ISBN 06-797-4180-1.
31. Creedon, P. (2014) Women, Social Media, and Sport: Global Digital Communication Weaves a Web, *Television & New Media* 2014, Vol. 15(8) pp. 711–716.
32. Boyle, R & Haynes, R. (2002). New media sport, *Sports and Society*, 5(3).
33. Peter English (2015) Indian sports journalism's early online steps in web first publishing, *Media Asia*, 42:1-2, 83-94, DOI: 10.1080/01296612.2015.1072350.
34. Westerbeek, H & Smith A (2003), *Sports Business in the Global Market place*, Palgrave London