

# Sandusky scandal revolutionized sports journalists' social network

21 June 2013, by Jimmy Sanderson

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Twitter has become a visible player in the sport media industry and a recently published journal article illustrates how sports journalists' social network developed and enlarged over the beginning phases of the Jerry Sandusky saga.

Using social network analysis methods, a core network of 151 journalists was identified. The results of the study reveal how quickly sports journalists joined the [Twitter](#) discussion around Sandusky. On the day the Sandusky news broke, 12 journalists were in the network and shared 43 relationships in the network. The next day, 42 more journalists joined the network sharing 585 relationships. On average, 10 journalists joined the network per day adding 185 relationships to the network.

Social network analysis also revealed a "Power 30," members in the network who were followed by an average of 28 other journalists and collectively a total of 1.7 million Twitter users.

Jimmy Sanderson, assistant professor in the Department of [Communication Studies](#) at Clemson University says, "Twitter provides access to networks that can increase a [sports media](#) member's network and visibility and there's perhaps not a better example than Sara Gamin who rose to national prominence during this story, which to some degree, was influenced by the promotion she received from other journalists encouraging readers to follow her coverage of the story."

The study also demonstrates that Twitter is a place where breaking sports news is obtained and it seems important for sports journalists to be active in this medium to then direct sports media consumers to their columns, websites, or talk shows.

"Twitter also provides a way for sports journalists to rise in the network, through promotion from their

peers. We are starting to see more of this when established sports media personalities encourage audiences to follow another journalist on Twitter or to check out their work, and this is a great way for sports [media organizations](#) to promote their journalists to a [mass audience](#)," commented Sanderson.

"Twitter has escalated the pace with which we receive news. Sports journalists in particular have established a strong presence on Twitter and use the platform to provide news quickly to their readers," said Marion E. Hambrick, assistant professor in the Department of Health and Sport Sciences at the University of Louisville. "With big stories such as the Sandusky case, journalists can offer a range of information from every angle, and Twitter has proven instrumental in helping them deliver this content."

**More information:** *Journal of Sports Media: Gaining Primacy in the Digital Network: Using Social Network Analysis to Examine Sports Journalists' Coverage of the Penn State Football Scandal via Twitter*, [muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal.../08/8.1.hambrick.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal.../08/8.1.hambrick.html)

Provided by Clemson University

APA citation: Sandusky scandal revolutionized sports journalists' social network (2013, June 21)  
retrieved 18 June 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-06-sandusky-scandal-revolutionized-sports-journalists.html>

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