

# A Study On Impact Of Online Journalism On Sports Journalism

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## Abstract

The sports departments of news organizations with both newspaper and website publications have been affected considerably by the evolving demands of online journalism. The over-arching focus of the research project is on sports coverage in print and web newspapers, and how online journalism has changed sports journalism. This includes some of the major issues the transforming environment has created for sports departments and its journalists. These involve elements such as the types of content in publications, and adoption and usage of innovations such as publishing methods and Twitter. Other key factors centre on the impact of commercialization and workloads in the changing field. The selected news organizations were: The Times of India and The Hindu in India. As a result, the study collects both data for interpretation at national, organizational and individual levels. The research methodology incorporates a mixed-methods approach. In-depth interviews have been conducted to discover how online journalism has changed the practice of sports journalism in the country.

**Keywords:** Online Journalism, sports journalism, print media

## Significance of the study

This research is the study of the impact of the online environment on sports journalism, and also includes an innovative, international comparative element. As a result, this research study has practical, theoretical and methodological significance. The practical significance centers on the examination of what is occurring in sports newsrooms and to their journalists in the nations with different geographic, 5 cultural and media-system traits. The sports department is a specialized area of news publications and sports journalists comprise the largest specialist area in studies conducted. Despite this, there has been a lack of extensive literature on sports journalism and sports journalists. Sport also holds significant importance to the community at local, national and global levels. This occurs through the economy with the amounts of money sport can generate and the developing of national identity. This research is occurring in sports journalism, which has a limited corpus of literature, enhances its innovativeness. Another practical significance is that by analyzing, through national, organizational and individual levels, what happens in sports departments in these broadsheet/quality newspaper organizations. The research will highlight important developments, techniques and outlooks in the newsrooms at micro and macro levels. This is particularly important in relation to online publishing strategies. The findings could assist news organizations to develop a lasting approach for the best way to disseminate contemporary news. Previously, newspaper companies have been uncertain of the most productive – and profitable – way to use their content, with no universal approach. Therefore, this research will be highly valuable to the academy and industry. The study builds on an honors thesis that analyzed how news organizations used their news in print and online.

## Introduction

The World Wide Web has been in existence for a little over two decades, but it has quickly transformed journalism by providing another major medium to compete with and, at times, complement existing media. Newspapers in particular have been severely affected by the online revolution, which has forced a dramatic shift in the outlook of companies that previously focused on print. As the importance of the technology grew, and new methods were adopted, it not only altered significantly the way journalism and journalists operated, but dramatically changed the landscape of the newspaper industry. By the second decade of the new millennium, there were concerns the age of print, a mass medium which had been a staple of society for hundreds of years, would be extinguished by loss of revenue and increasing demand for online publications (Bird 2009; Donsbach 2012; Hirst 2011; McChesney & Picard 2011; McNair 2011). Already the online impact has caused a decline in newspaper circulations in Western markets, leading some to describe it as a crisis for the industry (McChesney 2011; O'Donnell, McKnight & Este 2012; Pew Research Centre 210, 2011; Siapera & Veglis 2000). The pace of change has resulted in major newspaper companies concentrating more on their websites and a growing range of features, some of which include multimedia, iPad editions, Twitter, and user generated content. It has also altered the roles of journalists dramatically, with more work, more stress and in some cases, fears for their futures (Deuze 2007; Lowrey & Gade 2011; McNair 2011; Paulussen, Geens & Vandenbrande 2011). The speed with which news is delivered is another significant advancement from once-a-day newspaper printing. Technological change as a result of the internet has led journalists to being able to disseminate information almost instantly or as long as it takes to write a short story for the web or to post a message on social media. Minutes – and even seconds – matter to journalists, whose lives now involve filing and updating online stories in an effort to beat the competition (English 2010; Karlsson 2011; Phylips 2010). The ease and speed of publishing on Twitter has developed this aspect even further. In this environment, it is particularly pertinent to explore how these changes are affecting sports journalism and journalists. This includes analysis of the landscape at national, organizational and individual levels. The sports departments of news organizations with both newspaper and website publications have been affected considerably by the evolving demands of digital journalism. The over-arching focus of the study is on sports coverage in print and online newspapers. This issue encompasses major elements such as the types of content in various publications, and publishing methods, as newspaper companies deal with the extra web requirements. Previous research has shown news organizations are unsure of the best methods to employ in publishing English 2010, 2012. New approaches continue to emerge and complicate an already complex media environment.

Another key problem the research investigates is how the online environment in journalism has transformed sports journalism. Online news has increased significantly in popularity compared with traditional media and audiences have grown considerably (Pew Research Centre 2011; Press Gazette 2011; Sweney 2012b). As a result, web-based products have had a significant impact on media companies, especially for journalists (Hollifield 2011; Lowrey & Gade 2011; Paulussen at al 2011; Phillips 2010; Singer 2010, 2011a). Instead of providing a snapshot of one market, the project seeks to collect both domestic and international data for interpretation at national, organizational and individual levels. This will highlight similarities and differences in the nature of sports coverage in these nations, and allow a more nuanced discussion when considering the implications of the digital environment for sports journalism globally. Together these research problems and questions allow for a comprehensive analysis of the sports journalism field. Sports journalism is a journalism specializing in the coverage of sport. It is worthy of detailed study due to the amount of dedicated content in media publications, the large number of journalists employed in this area, the limited literature, and its economic and community benefits. How journalists and sports departments at major newspapers have adapted to these technological innovations is a crucial part of this research. It is intended that this research will deliver a wide-ranging empirical study, producing large amounts of evidence rather than brief outlines from newspaper management (Hartigan 2009; Rubridger 2007). This study

demonstrates how individuals and organizations have been affected by the shift from a print-only focus little more than a decade ago to a digital outlook.

## Literature Review

The literature of journalism is expanding and includes analysis of many different sectors of the field at theoretical and more practical levels. However, journalism is “a fast-growing field” that has developed into “a field of its own” (Wahl-Jorgsen & Henitzsch 2009), there remains significant gaps for research, particularly in online and sport. The current study focuses on the impact of online journalism on sports journalism and this review of literature explores a range of material to provide an extensive platform to help justify the approaches applied. Further, it highlights how the research is significant, unique and worthy of such in-depth examination. Firstly, a detailed analysis of online journalism is provided, including research, the state of the industry, convergence, publishing techniques, and content. Another major focus is sports journalism and sports journalism research, with both areas being criticized for their triviality. However, the sports department’s journalists, production methods and content are key elements of the field and the arguments in this section justify why scholarship into this segment of the industry is vital. A study involving the interviewing of journalists requires a background in studies of journalists, as well as knowledge of critical issues, such as expanding workloads as a result of online demands. The increasing use of Twitter is also relevant to contemporary journalism, with its strong relationship between online and sports journalism. The role of technology in journalism, the internet and web revolutionized contemporary journalism in less than two decades, building on numerous technical developments stretching back further than the printing presses. To understand the importance of the online era, it is necessary to place it briefly in a historical context. In terms of newspapers, India’s, The Bengal Gazette was initially printed in 1780 (Johar 2000; Lal 2010). The telegraph later provided major news-gathering and news-sharing advancement in the middle of the nineteenth century Kirk Patrick 2007; Mayer 1964; Ngugan 2008; Quinn & Lamble 2008). Other key technological innovations for newspapers followed and included: the telephone, videotex, teletext, fax machines, computers, and the internet. However, just as newspapers were becoming, as describes, a “true ‘mass’ medium” in the twentieth century, the journalistic field altered to include major media competitors in radio and television. Until the invention of these two media, newspapers had no challengers to their power to distribute information. In India, broadcasts occurred in Bombay in 1923 before the Indian Broadcast Company’s establishment four years later (All India Radio 2012). The emergence of television further complicated the media environment. The BBC became the first regular television service in Britain in 1936, while the first television license in Australia was awarded in 1955 (BBC 2011; Van Heekarsen 2010).

In India, television began with broadcasts first produced by All India Radio in 1959, but it was not until the 1980s it became a mass medium (All India Radio 2012; Mehta 2009; Rodrigues 2005). The new broadcast medium grew to become so popular by the end of the twentieth century that argued it was “the prime and most trusted source of news for the majority of the population”. Worryingly for newspapers, this change occurred before the internet emerged, and had already contributed, among other factors, to declining print circulations (Windschutle 1984; Briggs 2010; Ward 1989). A similar pattern has occurred with the internet’s influence on print readerships, in conjunction with other economic factors (McNair 2011). Online journalism has created significant changes to the way journalism is practiced but this revolution has caused both exciting new innovations and fears over traditional elements of the industry. The development of the internet and the World Wide Web led to a new medium, which in turn resulted in sweeping technological advancements and applications. These innovations were adopted by news organizations at varying rates but the overall push towards online methods resulted in a dramatic re-modeling of the journalistic field. The convergence of media has played a major part in the changed media model, with titles which were previously medium-specific – such as newspapers and their printed product – now producing material across multiple platforms. In newspapers and their associated websites, this switch in outlook provided a publishing

focus over 24 hours, which was significantly different from the traditional once-a-day printing cycle. It has also led to criticisms of content and quality of journalism in the digital age (Beczowski 2004, 2009; Davies 2008; Frankline 2008; Kelodgy 2006; Li 2006; Quinn 2002). While an online platform has produced many opportunities for journalism to flourish, including almost instant publishing and attracting larger audiences (Chyi & Yang 2009; Singer et al 2011), it has also created a crisis in journalism, and accelerated the downfall of newspapers (Barker 2009; Mc Chesney 2011; Pew Research Centre 2010, 2011; Saltzis 2012; Siapera & Veglis 2012). These major alterations have affected the entire journalism industry, including the sports journalism field.

## Objectives

The main objective of this research study is to highlight the impact of online journalism on sports journalism.

## Hypothesis

Online media does not influence sports journalism practices.

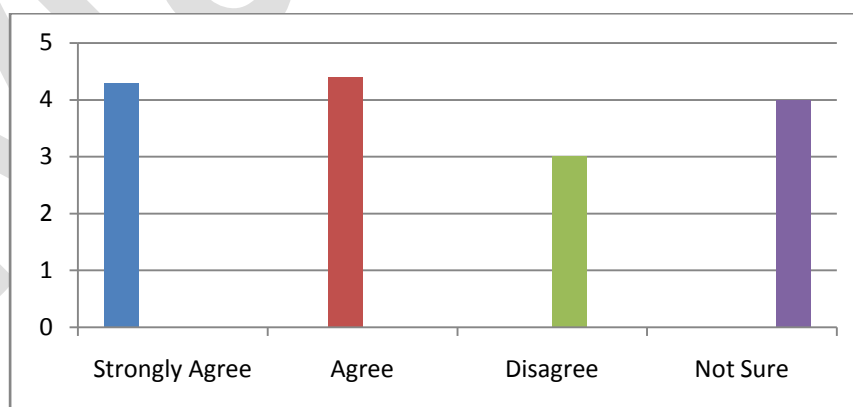
## Research Methodology

A mixed-methods approach is used in the methodology. To find out how online journalism has changed the practices of sports journalism around the world, a questionnaire survey method was used. Between February 1st and February 13th, 2022, articles from the daily newspaper sports section and the sports homepage were coded for a total of 13 days. In total, 20 entries from Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth's journalism and mass communication department professors were collected for the study. The methodology involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a range of comprehensive data for analysis. The content analysis involved a two-week constructed sample of the sports sections of the broadsheet/quality organizations. This mix of methods allows for quantitative and qualitative data to ensure a comprehensive overview of sports coverage in print and online, as well as gaining an understanding of how the online environment has changed sports journalism.

## Data Analysis

### Research Question 1:

Online media is transforming the practices of sports journalism.

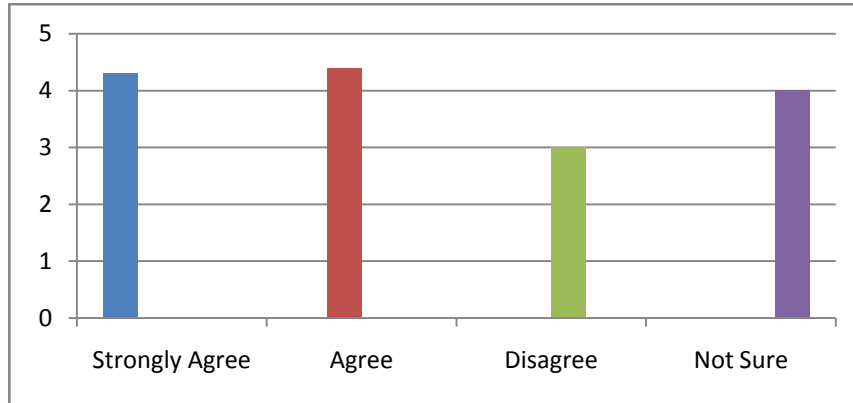


**Figure 1: Impact of online media on sports journalism's practices.**

**Interpretation:** The interpretation of the above question is that the maximum strength is either agree or strongly agree with the question that online media is transforming the practices of sports journalism.

**Research Question 2:**

Twitter just a news service, that enable journalists to engage in more commentary and opinion, similar to blogging?

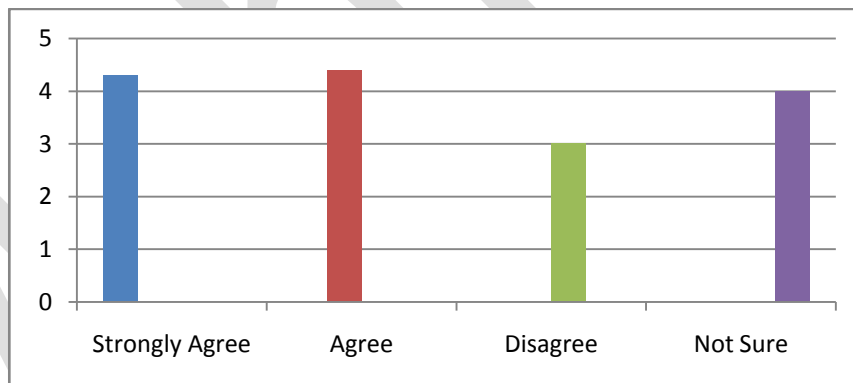


**Figure 2: Impact of Twitter on sports journalism's practices.**

**Interpretation:** Maximum people either agree or strongly agree that Twitter just as a news service that enables journalists to engage in more commentary and opinion similar to blogging.

**Research Question 3:**

Online media developments leading to more decisions in the newsrooms over a broader range of publishing strategies and greater demands being placed on sports journalists.

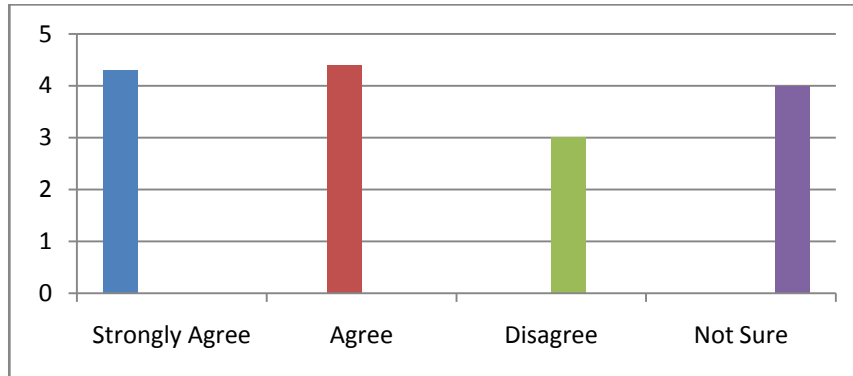


**Figure 3: Impact of online media on newsroom.**

**Interpretation:** It is interpreted that maximum people either agree or strongly agree that online media developments leading to more decisions in the newsrooms over a broader range of publishing strategies and greater demands being placed on sports journalists.

**Research Question 4:**

Online media has also altered the roles of journalists dramatically, with more work, more stress and, in some cases, fears for their futures.

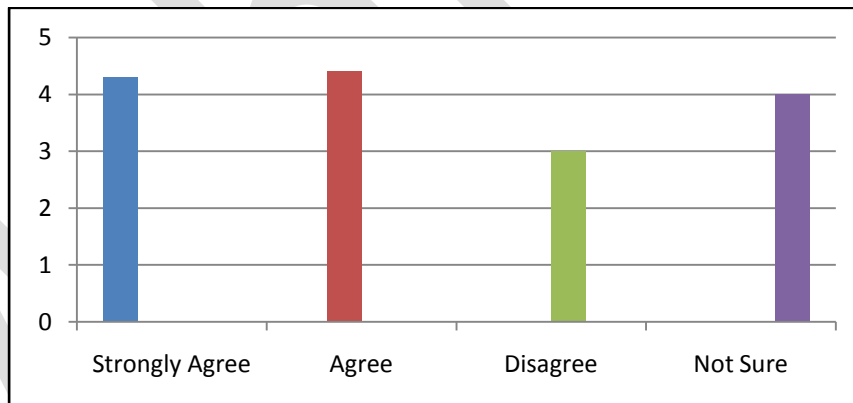


**Figure 4: Impact of online media on journalists**

**Interpretation:** Maximum journalists are agree or strongly agree that online media has altered the role of journalists drastically with more work, more stress and in some cases fear for their future.

**Research Question 5:**

Impact of online media evolvement on sports journalism leading ensures to maintain high quality content.



**Figure 5: Impact of digital media on content**

**Interpretation:** Maximum numbers of journalists either agree or strongly agree about the impact of online media evolvement on sports journalism leading ensures to maintain high quality content.

**Conclusion**

This study has examined sports coverage in print and online, with an emphasis on how online journalism has changed sports journalism. It has achieved this by employing mixed approach. Data was collected through the methods of in-depth online interviews and content analysis. As a result, the study’s design has provided a unique, significant and comprehensive investigation into sports journalism in news organizations. A range of important findings has been generated and will be discussed in this section. Subsequently, this research makes a contribution to journalism research and provides new knowledge of the sports journalism field. The main focus of this study has been sports

coverage in print and web newspapers. In addition to this, the major research questions have targeted how online journalism has changed sports journalism. In order to provide a comprehensive answer, five key questions were asked. All the questions have indicated that online media has changed the sports journalism drastically.

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