Investigating the Influence of Sport Identification on “Second Screen” Use

Mark Lyberger, Kent State University
Jonathan Jensen, The Ohio State University
Larry McCarthy, Seton Hall University
Edward Bolden, Kent State University

Abstract 2015-024

Thursday, June 4, 2015
11:00 AM
20-minute oral presentation (including questions) (Chaudière)

Multiscreen viewing habits are beginning to affect how brands build campaigns and communicate to enhance customer experiences (Clancy, 2014). Advances in technology have influenced the way in which consumers experience sport, both in person and via television. One of the most prevalent of recent trends has been the marked increase in the use of “second screens,” or the simultaneous event consumption and use of an electronic device such as a smartphone or tablet (Galily, 2014). A recent study of 2,000 U.S. consumers found that 86% reported multitasking during television consumption, up from 72% in 2011 (Deloitte, 2014).

Research has suggested that this trend is particularly pervasive among sport fans (Gantz & Lewis, 2014). Given the live and unexpected nature of sport events, the event cannot simply be “paused,” leading to multitasking during event consumption. In addition, devices provide sport fans with the ability to view alternate camera angles, access statistical information, and interact with other fans on social media (Boyle, 2014).

During the 2014 FIFA World Cup, 91% of fans that consumed World Cup broadcasts in real time reported that they used second screens while watching the event on television (Mander, 2014). NBC reported that more than 50% of viewers of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games utilized a computer, tablet, or smartphone to search for information about the Games while watching on TV (Bauder, 2014). This trend is, at least, partly attributable to a marked increase in ownership of wifi-connected mobile devices. Data from the Sochi Games highlighted how quickly and enthusiastically viewers were beginning to embrace mobile viewing alternative (Foster, 2014). NBC found that only 9% of viewers of the 2008 Beijing Olympics owned smartphones, while 60% said they owned at least one such device during the 2014 Sochi Games (Bauder, 2014). By 2020, the average person will watch TV and video content (at least once a month) on 2.13 devices, up from 1.14 in 2010 and 1.53 in 2014 (Wolfe, 2014). Such expansive growth validates that marketers are seeking to reach consumers across multiple devices (Clancy, 2014).

Sport fans are increasingly likely to use these devices to converse and interact on social media. This will continue the upsurge in activity which saw a record 618,725 Tweets per minute generated at the end of the 2014 World Cup Final between Argentina and Germany (Rogers, 2014). Nearly 25 million Tweets were produced about Super Bowl XLVIII in February of 2014, while a record 35.6 million Tweets were produced during the World Cup semifinal match between Brazil and Germany in July of 2014 (Rahn, 2014; Rogers, 2014). Bottom line - viewers are watching more television on more devices – a trend that bodes well for broadcasters and sport providers (Foster, 2014).

A study by Morton (2014) categorized second screen users into four distinct consumer segments, including those most likely to be involved in real time engagement (simultaneously using a device to access content to enhance game viewing experience), situational socializing (utilizing a device to connect with like-minded communities), ongoing grazing (utilize a device to access separate, unrelated content), and great escaping (utilizing the device due to boredom or absence of interest). Research by Microsoft Advertising suggest similar consumer segments; Content grazing, Investigative Spider webbing, Social Spider webbing and Quantum (Hritzuk, Jones & Esquero, 2013).

However, despite the pervasiveness of these trends, empirical research has not kept pace. For example, research has yet to establish a link between a fan’s level of sport identification and second screen use. Are highly identified sport fans, such as the aforementioned supporters of their respective World Cup teams, more or less likely to engage in second screen use during event consumption, either on television or while attending a live event? Therefore, the purpose of this exploratory research study is to determine whether sport identification, or a consumer’s level of
psychological connection with a team, athlete or sport (Funk & James, 2001), is predictive of second screen use. Quantitative data were collected via an online questionnaire. The questionnaire included: 38 items to assess consumer perceptions, usage, and motivations. Other items assessed by the instrument include device preference, media consumption, social media usage, application use, types of activities performed on the devices, motivations for engaging in multi-screen behaviors, and whether consumption differs based on the aforementioned consumer segments.

A total of 785 consumers participated in the study, 48.1% female and 51.9% male, with an average age of 29.85 (SD = 15.96). Among the sample, 13.3% identified themselves as not being a sport fan (no or low interest in sport), with 86.7% identified themselves as a sport fan (at least a moderate level of sport interest). A total of 60.3% identified themselves as an avid sport fan (either high or very high sport interest).

A preliminary analysis of data indicates that only 48.5% of non-fans utilized second screens while watching sports events on television, compared to 81.0% of fans and 85.3% of avid fans. As for usage of devices during live event attendance, 47.5% of non-fans reported utilizing second screens during attendance, while 70.1% of fans and 74.5% of avid fans reported using devices while attending sport events.

While watching sports on television, avid fans were more likely than fans to use their devices to interact with friends who follow the same team (44.1%), when compared to fans (41.3%) and non-fans (30.7%). Non-fans were also less likely to interact with journalists who cover the team (3.4%) than fans (5.8%) and avid fans (6.3%). In terms of activities, while watching events on television non-fans were most likely to use their devices to text (33.0%) or not at all (29.5%), followed by interacting on Facebook (15.9%).

While watching sports on television, avid fans are more likely than fans to text (34.1% vs. 32.1%) or Tweet (28.2% vs. 23.7%) during the game, while fans are more likely than avid fans to visit Facebook (13.5% vs. 11.7%). While attending a game, avid fans are more likely to Tweet (18.8%) than fans (15.9%) and non-fans (9.0%), as well as being more likely to text (33.6%) than fans (31.4%) or non-fans (31.5%). Appropriate ANOVA measures, correlational analysis, and regressions will be presented.

Results indicate that fans and avid fans engage in real time engagement (simultaneously using a device to access content to enhance game viewing experience) most often when viewing sport events. This suggests that sport organizations need to amplify their content across a number of platforms in order to extend the fan experience by providing meaningful, platform appropriate, content. Implications of the study, such as which type of content is best suited to which device, as well as device appropriate advertising will be presented.