

**Online Activity in the Wake of the
Melbourne Storm Controversy
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On April 22, 2010, the news of salary cap violations on the part of the Melbourne Storm broke online in such publications as the Fox Sports, on television including ABC news and on multiple social networks including Facebook and Twitter. By April 23, the news was available in various print publications including The Australian and the Sydney Morning Herald. During the news coverage, NRL fans learned that the team had been fined \$1.8 million, stripped of two premierships and were not eligible to earn points towards 2010's premiership. ("Melbourne storm stripped," 2010) The team was being punished for salary cap violations over the past five years, where the total cap violation in that period was \$1.7 million with \$400,000 of that total cap violation occurring in 2009. ("Melbourne storm stripped," 2010)

Early in the coverage of the Melbourne Storm, several issues were discussed including the impact this would have on the fan base for the team, the subsequent economic fallout for Storm and other clubs in the league, and if the players would try to leave the club or lower their performance level. The consequences that people feared have yet to bear out: The fan base for the Melbourne Storm has grown, attendance has not fallen, membership is up and players have not left the team and the team continues to win.

This article will examine the online response to the Melbourne Storm controversy. Specifically, it will look at the interest patterns on several networks, follow patterns on Twitter and Facebook, and activity levels on 43things, wikis and Yahoo!Groups. It will prove that, on the whole, the controversy has not eroded the online fanbase for the team and has resulted in an increased profile for the team in ways can have a net positive for the team and their sponsors.

Profile Interest

One way to quickly gage online interest for a team is to check the number of people who list them as an interest on social networks that include that option. The level of interest on a network will, in general, increase over time. Including an interest is a rather passive activity that most people do at the time that they signup on a service. They may update their interests once a year when they do an overhaul on their profile. Other factors may result in an update of interests, most notably a desire to associate or disassociate with certain people and organizations. The latter can generally require a certain amount of rage and disillusionment and does not happen that often. For adding interests, it can require a certain degree of wanting to stand in solidarity with some one or thing in the face of perceived oppression.¹ Adding or removing an interest will generally require a large emotional response in people to motivate them to change their interests on social networks where an individual has not been active in the past six months. These conditions mean that numbers for interests are relatively stable or increase. A big shift downward is possible but unlikely.

Did the Melbourne Storm controversy result in people being motivated to update their interests to include or exclude the team? Yes and no, many people added them as an interest on Facebook but the numbers remained level across several other networks.

As of January 9, 2010, 17,020 had listed the Melbourne Storm as an interest on Facebook.² By May 9, 2010, this number had increased to 41,240, or 24,220 new people. From January 9 to May 9, 2010, there was also an increase of roughly 120 fans within fifty miles of Hobart adding the team as an interest, going from less than 20 to 140. Canberra saw a similar increase in fans, going from 140 on January 9 to 1,020 by May 9, 2010, an increase of 880 new people listing the team as an interest.³ For fans within fifty miles of

Cranbourne, there was an increase of 5,540 fans going from 7,140 fans on January 9 to 12,580 fans on May 9, 2010. Some of this increase on Facebook can be possibly attributed to a change in Facebook in mid-April, where people were encouraged to add their interests as likes of fanpages and vice versa. (Albanesius, 2010) It cannot entirely explain the shift as the official Melbourne Storm page is a user page, not a fan page so the interest to liking will not be automatically converted. At the same time, the number of people listing the team as an interest is roughly ten times as many who follow the Storm's official Facebook profile and suggests that interest listing is independent of following the official team presence.

In addition to the Melbourne Storm interest on Facebook, there have been two new interests related to the storm created in the wake of the controversy: "Shame On You Melbourne Storm" with fewer than twenty people listing it as an interest, and "Sucked In Melbourne Storm Haha" with 3,240 people listing it as an interest. The latter definitely connects to a Facebook fanpage with the same name⁴, which has 8,432 people who like it.

While Facebook saw an explosion in growth of people listing the team as an interest, other sites allowing interest listing on profiles remained stagnant or saw limited growth. This includes bebo,⁵ where there has been no change as of April 28 and May 9 from 402 people that was originally recorded on March 18, 2010. Blogger saw some growth for the number of people listing the team as an interest.⁶ As of January 18, 2010, four people had listed the team. By May 9, 2010, six people had listed them as an interest. As the time frame is wider than that of bebo, it might be possible to account for the increase as a pre-season boost, rather than in response to the controversy. Either way, this was an increase of fifty percent for new people listing the team as an interest.

LiveJournal saw no growth in people listing the team as an interest⁷ between January 10 and May 9, 2010. Of the 25 LiveJournal accounts listing the Melbourne Storm as an interest, only five have updated since the controversy broke. LiveJournal's clones including Dreamwidth, Blurty and DeadJournal⁸ also saw no growth as of May 9. This contrasts to the Brisbane Broncos on LiveJournal, where one person removed the team as an interest during a similar period.⁹ Dreamwidth had two users listing the team as an interest as of January 9, Blurty had one user as of January 9, and DeadJournal had one user as of December 23, 2009. None of the people on LiveJournal's clones who list the Storm as an interest have updated their journals since the controversy happened. The most recent updates occurred on Dreamwidth, taking place in early March 2010. The other account last updated in April 2009. The Blurty account last updated in November 2005 and the DeadJournal account last updated in January 2006.

One or two smaller niche networks have limited interest for specific teams or where people only list the NRL as an interest. This includes BlackPlanet, generally targeted at African Americans inside the United States. There was one person who listed the NRL as an interest on the network as of February 15, 2010.¹⁰ This has not changed as of May 9. Care2 is a social networked targeted at people who wish to make the world a better place. As of March 20, 2010, no one had listed the Melbourne Storm as an interest.¹¹ This changed by May 9, when three people listed the team as an interest. Given the names, limited profiles and join dates, it is possible that these accounts are all tied to one individual. Gaia Online is a small, niche network for role players. As of March 11, 2010, no one had listed the Melbourne Storm as an interest.¹² There is interest in the NRL on the network as people listed the Brisbane Lions, Canberra Raiders, Parramatta Eels and Sydney Roosters as interests. There has not been any change for any of these teams as of May 9. The limited growth and lack of pull back could suggest that larger interest in the NRL has not been diminished on smaller networks as a result of the controversy.

Wiki Activity

Wikis are, at their most basic, web sites where visitors can easily edit the content of the site. Sometimes, there are limits to who can edit put in place by the creator of a wiki. These include requiring users to register or confirm an e-mail before they edit, or to get their account approved by the admin before they can edit. Some wikis have policies when breaking news happen or an article gets trolled to lock down the article so only registered users can edit or wiki admins can edit. The culture of editing on specific wikis thus develops around the who can edit process as locking down wikis to prevent edits can effect the frequency that an article is updated.

For comprehensive wiki articles, the ideal is to have to have editors who approach the topic from different perspectives, where there is inherent conflict in the content and perspective being presented. If this situation does not exist, an article can be highjacked by one or two editors who seek to push their own perspective. The more edits and people involved in contributing to the article, the less likely the article will be biased. This also makes vandalism less problematic as people are incentivized to quickly remove that material.

Wikis can be a good tool for gauging interest in a particular topic over time as most wiki software keeps a record of all edits to a page. For some of the big wikis, like Wikipedia, data also exists for how many views an article has over a certain time period. This can help track more passive community interest in a topic.

Wikipedia's English language article about the Melbourne Storm is probably the most visited wiki article about the team and appears third in Google's search results for the team.¹³ The article, found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melbourne_Storm, was created on May 23, 2004. As of May 9, 2010, the article had 1,732 total edits made to it. The controversy involving the Melbourne Storm broke on April 22, 2010. 1,471 of the edits were made prior to that. In the period between the article's creation and the day before the controversy broke, an average of .681 edits per day were made to the article. In the eighteen-day period since the controversy broke, an average of 14.5 edits per day were made to the article. The vast majority of these edits were made in the first three days, with 90 edits made on April 22, 56 edits made on April 23 and 69 edits made on April 24. On April 24, in response to repeated vandalism, the article was semi-protected;¹⁴ this meant that only registered users who had confirmed their e-mail could edit the article. The protection had the effect of reducing the total number of daily edits to the article. After that, peak editing days included April 26 and May 3 with seven edits, and April 25 and May 5 with six edits. There were zero edits on April 28, May 6, May 7 and May 9. The controversy certainly caused an increase in the number of edits. If the day that the controversy broke and the next two days are excluded, the average number of daily edits is 3.06 edits per day. This is still higher than the period prior to the controversy and the trend will probably continue at least until the end of the season.

The article views per day mirrors the total edits by day. Based on data provided by Henrick (2010, May 1 and May 9), there is a correlation of .904 between the total daily edits and the total daily page views. According to Henrick (2010, May 1) during April 2010, the article was viewed a total of 49,540 times. Of these views, 40,355 views were between April 22, when the story broke, and April 30. The peak day for visits was on April 22, when the article was viewed 14,800 times. The average page views between April 22 and April 30 was 4,482 views per day. If this period is extended out to include data provided by Henrick (2010, May 9) for May 1 to May 8, the average views per day is 2,700. If the three days around when the controversy first broke are excluded, the average edits per day drops to 1,143. This stands in contrast to the period between April 1 and April 21 where the average page views per day was 438. The above average page views trend appears to be continuing. There has not been a decrease in overall interest in the Melbourne Storm on English Wikipedia.

In addition to the English language article about the Melbourne Storm on Wikipedia, there are articles in two other languages: French and Italian. The French language article, http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melbourne_Storm, was created on March 1, 2006. Since the controversy started on April 22 and May 8, there have been 35 total edits to the article. Unlike the English language article, total edits per day peaked on April 24, 2010 with 19 with the second highest editing day occurring on April 23 with 7. The average total edits per day during this period was 2.1. In April, prior to the controversy, the average edits per day was zero. Also unlike the English language article, it was not locked because of vandalism. According to Henrickhe (2010, May 1) peak views per day happened on April 23 and April 24 with 59. The next day with the greatest number of views in the period between April 22 and May 8 is May 8 with 34. The average viewed per day in the April 22 to May 8 period was 17.4 and the average viewed per day in April prior to the controversy was 3.4. The correlation between the total edits per day and views per day in the period between April 1 and May 8 is .7740. The French Wikipedia article saw an increase that was proportionally bigger than the English article but the total views and edits were much smaller on the French article.

The Italian language Wikipedia article, http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melbourne_Storm, was created on December 21, 2007. The article had two edits in 2008 and one in 2009. Since the controversy broke on April 22 and May 8, there have two edits to the article. These two edits are the only edits made during 2010. According to Henrickhe (2010, May 1), the total number of article views from April 1 to April 21 was 30. According to Henrickhe (2010, May 8), the total number of page views per day was 58. The day with the most views was April 23, with 14 views. The next day with the most views was May 3, with 8 views. The Italian Wikipedia article saw an increase in the total number of edits and page views as a result of the controversy. It might have been larger but the Italian interest in the team is much smaller to start with than the French or English language communities.

Outside of Wikipedia, there are a few small wikis that focus on the NRL and Rugby League. These wikis generally lack detailed information on the daily total page views but still provide information on the editing history. One such wiki is the NRL Central Wiki that is hosted on Wikia. It has an article about the Melbourne Storm located at http://nrl.wikia.com/wiki/Melbourne_Storm. The article was created on August 13, 2009 and was last updated on October 10, 2009. It has not been updated since the controversy. The wiki the article is hosted has only had three non-bot edits in the past 30 days so the lack of updates is not surprising. A few other wikis have articles that mention the Melbourne Storm. Most of these are institutional wikis where article histories are not available or where content is posted by its creator and never intended to be edited by a wider audience. There does not appear to be a movement by wikis to create additional content in response to or to try to capitalize on interest in response to the controversy.

Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging service. Users can post 140 character messages, called tweets, that are shared with anyone who chooses to follow them. Twitter is one of the most well known and popular social networks in Australia.

There are two main ways to measure Twitter activity. The first is to keep track of the total followers an account has. The second way is to monitor the total number of daily tweets posted about a topic posted across the whole network and by specific accounts. The Melbourne Storm have an official Twitter account at @MelbStormRLC. There is an unofficial Melbourne Storm Twitter account run by a fansite at @MelbourneStorm_. As of March 9, 2010, the official account had 458 followers. This contrasts with

@MelbourneStorm_ which had 605 followers as of March 8, 2010. By May 10, about nineteen days after the controversy broke, the official account had 1,037 followers and @MelbourneStorm_ had 720 followers. That was an increase of 579 and 115 followers respectively. The situation has not hurt growth for either account and people are still interested in keeping up with the team and what they are doing.

When compared to the official Twitter accounts for the NRL, Gold Coast Titans, Manly Sea Eagles, North Queensland Cowboys, Parramatta Eels, Canberra Raiders, South Sydney Rabbitohs and New Zealand Warriors, the follower growth for the Melbourne Storm suggests a potential connection to the controversy creating additional interest or a fanbase that has become much more interested in Twitter in a short period of time. (Table 1) The only account with a greater increase in total number of followers is the NRL, which picked up 942 followers. The Melbourne Storm saw a fifty-five percent increase in the new followers. The next closest team of the aforementioned in the same period was the Canberra Raiders who saw a forty-two percent increase. In this context, it reaffirms that additional interest in the team was likely generated by the controversy.

Table 1

<i>Twitter Follower Counts by Official Club Accounts and Date</i>					
Team	Account	9-Mar-10	10-May-10	Difference	% increase
Gold Coast Titans	GCTitans	1,616	1,950	334	17.13%
Manly Sea Eagles	manlyseaeagles	888	1,073	185	17.24%
Melbourne Storm	MelbStormRLC	458	1,037	579	55.83%
North Queensland Cowboys	northqldcowboys	1,403	1,588	185	11.65%
NRL	NRL	4,231	5,173	942	18.21%
Parramatta Eels	parramatta_eels	618	780	162	20.77%
Canberra Raiders	RaidersCanberra	202	349	147	42.12%
South Sydney Rabbitohs	SSFCRABBITOHS	761	1,139	378	33.19%
New Zealand Warriors	thenzwarriors	434	507	73	14.40%

Detailed statistics regarding the total number of references for the Melbourne Storm by day on Twitter are not available. It makes it harder to determine the total daily volume of conversation involving the team in the days surrounding the news leaking about the salary cap violations. People were interested in the Melbourne Storm as the team was briefly trending on Twitter when the story broke. Manual counting can be done but Twitter search only goes back around one week. What can be more easily tracked is the posting volume per day of specific accounts related to the Melbourne Storm to compare their activities before and after the controversy broke. In the case of the @MelbourneStorm_, the account does not update regularly with about twenty tweets made during the past year. Their last tweet was on March 24, 2010; they have not posted since the news broke. @MelbStormRLC has posted several tweets¹⁵ since the controversy and has mentioned it. From April 22 to May 9, eighteen days after the story broke, the Storm have made eleven total tweets. Prior to that, the team had made thirteen tweets. The difference in tweet totals is inconsequential. Neither account made changes to their Twitter posting in response in to the controversy.

Searching through Twitter, it is very clear that people are still tweeting about the team and, as of May 10, are tweeting about them at a comparatively higher rate than other teams in the league. One popular way of indicating a tweet is about a certain topic is to include a

hashtag in front of a word. This makes the whole phrase easily searchable on Twitter. For example, a person who is tweeting about the Melbourne Storm may include #melbournestorm to indicate the tweet is about the team. There generally fewer of these tweets as a great many accounts on Twitter come directly from RSS feeds.¹⁶ These feeds were not originally created for Twitter and are absent some of the cultural practices and do not use coding tools to help make finding posts easier. Thus, tweets tagged with a # are fewer and more readily countable in search. This allows for comparisons to be made between teams over a short period. For the period between May 3 and May 8, 2010, #melbournestorm beat out all the other teams that were sampled for most the most discussed NRL team. (Table 2) There were twenty-one references for the team on May 5. This is sixteen more than #manlyseaeagles on the same date and the only other team with five or more tweets with a hashtag on a single day. The controversy can likely be seen as the cause for the increase in the number of tweets when compared to other teams in the league.

Table 2

Hashtagged Marked NRL Team Tweets

Team	Keyword	3-May-10	4-May-10	5-May-10	6-May-10	7-May-10	8-May-10
Brisbane Broncos	#brisbanebroncos	0	0	0	0	0	1
Canberra Raiders	#canberrairaiders	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gold Coast Titans	#Gctitans	0	0	0	1	0	0
Gold Coast Titans	#goldcoasttitans	0	0	0	1	0	0
Manly Sea Eagles	#manlyseaeagles	0	0	5	0	0	0
Melbourne Storm	#melbournestorm	0	2	21	2	3	1
Newcastle Knights	#NewcastleKnights	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Queensland Cowboys	#NQCowboys	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Queensland Cowboys	#NQLdCowboys	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Queensland Cowboys	#NorthQldCowboys	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Queensland Cowboys	#NorthQueenslandCowboys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parramatta Eels	#ParramattaEels	0	0	0	0	0	0
Penrith Panthers	#PenrithPanthers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sydney Roosters	#SydneyRoosters	1	0	0	0	0	0
Wests Tigers	#WestsTigers	0	0	0	0	1	0

Facebook

Facebook is one of the largest social networks in Australia and it arguably has the largest population of Melbourne Storm fans online. Outside of interest monitoring, the easiest way to monitor the activities of fans is to examine the fan community's growth on official pages and groups, and activity levels on these groups.

The Melbourne Storm has an official user profile on Facebook. The profile is for their mascot, Storm Man. It has a limited profile view so only people who have friended the account can view posts and interact with content posted by Storm Man. When the profile was checked on April 6, 2010, the account had 3,203 friends. Checked again on April 28, the account had 4,154. On May 9, the account had 4,401 friends and on May 10, it had 4,494 friends. While the total new friends for their account was fewer than other clubs such as the Brisbane Lions over the same period (Table 3), the team had the largest percentage increase in: 28.7% versus 13.5% for the next closest team, the North Queensland Cowboys.¹⁷The controversy did not cost the team any friends and resulted in a higher percentage gain when

compared to other teams. It has resulted in a net momentum gain that continues almost three weeks after the controversy first broke out.

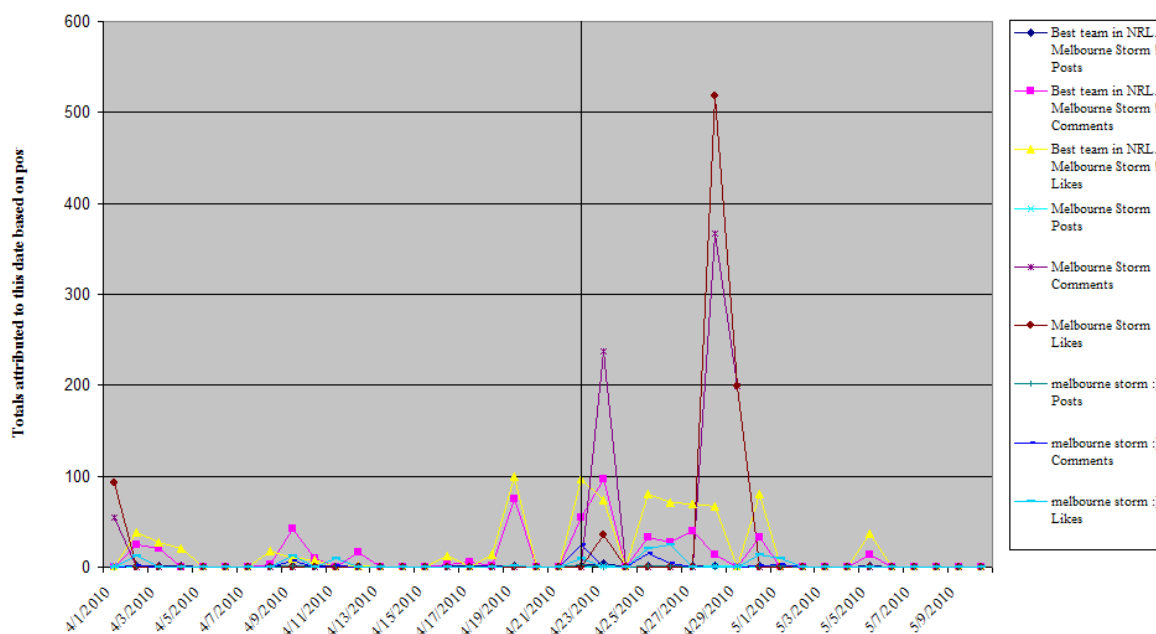
Table 3

Facebook Fan Counts by Club and Date				
	6-Apr-10	10-May-10	Difference	% increase
Official Facebook account				
Melbourne Storm	3,203	4,494	1,291	28.7%
North Queensland Cowboys	2,428	2,806	378	13.5%
Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles	14,895	17,044	2,149	12.6%
Wests Tigers	14,078	15,911	1,833	11.5%
Gold Coast Titans	18,032	20,204	2,172	10.8%
Sydney Roosters	12,204	13,570	1,366	10.1%
Newcastle Knights	12,766	13,774	1,008	7.3%
Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks	9,502	10,229	727	7.1%
Canberra Raiders	2,583	2,775	192	6.9%
Brisbane Lions	45,327	48,228	2,901	6.0%

Facebook Fan Pages are created by teams and by fans. The person who created the Fan Page can post to the wall, control else who can post to the wall, control the type of content posted to the Fan Page and create a unique landing page. Members of a Fan Page can comment on wall posts and indicate they like the post. There are many Melbourne Storm fans that have created Fan Pages and many more have joined, commented and liked posts made to these Fan Pages. A quick search on Facebook for Fan Pages dedicated to the team using the keywords “Melbourne Storm” results in over 500 pages about the team. By looking at a sample of the individual Fan Pages to check the daily posting volume of wall posts and the number of likes and comments to those posts, an idea of how the controversy effected fan interests can be determined.

For this, three Fan Pages were chosen. These were the top three Fan Pages in search that were not created in response to the controversy. They are Melbourne Storm, Best team in NRL.. Melbourne Storm ! and melbourne storm :).¹⁸ The total posts per day by the person who runs the Fan Page, and comments and likes per post associated with the post for the day were recorded for the period between April 1 and May 10, 2010. (Table 4) When comparing the total posts in the period between April 1 and April 22, 2010 to the period between April 23 to May 10, two of the three Fan Pages had more posts made by the maintainers before the controversy. (Graph 1) Two of the three groups saw an increase in the total comments made after the controversy. For Melbourne Storm, a Fan Page with over 40,000 members, the increase was massive going from 54 comments to 803 comments. The increase for Best team in NRL.. Melbourne Storm !, a group with 281 members as of May 10, was much smaller. It went from 252 to 257 comments. For all three groups, there was an increase in the number of likes after the controversy took place. While posting levels by Fan Page maintainers may not have increased, the level of engagement and interest in the team for the fan population did. The controversy has created a climate where fans are more engaged with posts.

Graph 1: Facebook comments, likes, posts from April 1 to May 10, 2010



Mailing lists

During much of the 1990s, mailing lists were one of the most popular tools for fans to use in order to communicate with each other. The creation of mailing lists became much easier when sites like egroups, coollists, topica, Yahoo!Groups and Google groups were created. They largely automated the process of creating mailing lists, provided web based archives and removed barriers of having to understand majordomo syntax in order to join a list.

Australian sports fans actively used these services to participate in their team's fandom. Some leagues and teams were more popular than other leagues and teams. Amongst the fan communities utilizing mailing lists were Melbourne Storm fans. Most of the lists dedicated to team were on Yahoo!Groups, where there are currently eight lists. These eight lists include melbournestorm2, melbournestormrugbyleague, melbournestormsupportersclub, Storm_Squad, StormSupporters, MSSC-Storm-Mailouts and melbourne_storm_supporters.¹⁹ Many of these lists are no longer active. There are a variety of reasons for this including absent list owners, large volumes of spam content posted on list, people switching to different services in order to express their fondness for the team or fans losing interest in a team. If spam content is not counted in total posting volume by month,²⁰ the peak posting month was February 2001 with 59 total posts across all eight lists. January 2001 had the next highest posting volume by month with 50 posts. Given the always small and inactive community, it is not surprising that there have been zero posts on these lists since the controversy broke out. These lists have also seen zero growth in membership since their totals were last checked on February 20, 2010. The controversy had no effect on the Storm's mailing list community.

43things

According to Robot Co-op (2010), 43things “is the world's largest goal-setting community.” Members of the site set goals for themselves that are published on their profiles and on lists of others who share the same goal. Members are also encouraged to blog about their efforts in trying to complete their goals. Other members are encouraged to cheer people on as they work to complete a goal. When a goal has been completed, people change the goal status to “I did this” and it appears as completed on their profile. This site is relatively popular; according to Alexa Internet, Inc. (2010), the site is ranked the 2,549th most popular website in Australia.

There are a number of people who have set Australia related sports goals on 43thing. This includes playing for certain clubs to attending the finals to seeing the team they barrack for play. On April 1, 2010, the site was searched for any goals that connected to the Melbourne Storm. Only one goal related to the Melbourne Storm was found. It is “Go to a Melbourne Storm Game.”²¹ Two people, erylne and mmcpnarlane, had listed this as a goal they were working towards completing. When checked again on May 10, no one had added any additional goals related to the Melbourne Storm. No movement had been made towards completing the existing goal: Both individuals still listed themselves as working towards it and neither had updated their blog to indicate they were any closer to accomplishing this goal. The controversy has not had any measurable impact on people’s goal setting and efforts towards accomplishing their goals as they pertain to the Melbourne Storm.

Conclusion

The controversy involving the Melbourne Storm’s salary cap violations and the subsequent punishment of rewarding them zero points for the season has not resulted in a loss of people interested in the team or resulted in a drop in activity level on the part of fans. Across smaller and less popular services and web sites, there has been no behavior change; the controversy has had a null effect in that no one removed content or interests, nor created content and added interests. For larger sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia, there has been a gain in followers, viewers and interactions. Eighteen days out from the initial incident, a long tail increase in views and interactions exists when compared to the period prior to the controversy. While some of the initial burst of activity and interest could be a consequence of negativity publicity, the long tail interest two to three weeks out is much harder to attribute to solely to wanting to watch a controversy for the sake of entertainment. If interest continue to stay elevated, the club should be able to leverage to increase club membership and sponsorship deals, especially as they apply to their online presence, because they have successfully used the controversy to grow their fanbase. The behaviors of fans demonstrate that have been incentivized to express their loyalty and solidarity with the team.

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¹Footnotes

An example of a group being mobilized to add an interest occurred on LiveJournal in May 2007. Members of the service were upset over the deletion of fandom based communities from the service and the subsequent actions by LiveJournal. There was a mass effort to get people to list “fandom counts” as an interest on user profiles in order to demonstrate to LiveJournal the size of the offended user community. Many people were motivated to update their accounts, some of which they had not used in years, to express their outrage.

² This number is based on data provided by <http://www.facebook.com/ads/create/> where the country was limited to Australia, age was any, sex was all, interested in was all, relationship was all, and education was all.

³ Facebook says there are 267,080 users within 50 miles of Canberra. The number of people listing the Melbourne Storm as an interest comprises only 0.4% of the total potential population whom could list the team as an interest. While this shift is significant in terms of total people, percentage of the total population is an insignificant increase. The percentage near Cranbourne of people listing the team as an interest as of May 9, 2010 is similar: 0.7% with 1,682,600 people from within 50 miles of the city.

⁴ The page can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sucked-in-Melbourne-Storm-HAHA/119988934680797>.

⁵ Bebo numbers for the Melbourne Storm were determined by going to <http://www.bebo.com/c/search/>, selecting the “People” tab and searching for “Melbourne Storm”.

⁶ Blogger numbers are derived from the following profile search: <http://www.blogger.com/profile-find.g?t=i&q=Melbourne%20Storm>.

⁷ Melbourne Storm numbers for LiveJournal were derived from <http://www.livejournal.com/interests.bml?int=melbourne+storm>.

⁸ Melbourne Storm numbers for LiveJournal clones were derived from <http://www.dreamwidth.org/interests.bml?int=Melbourne%20Storm>, <http://www.blurty.com/interests.bml?int=Melbourne+Storm> and <http://www.deadjournal.com/interests.bml?int=Melbourne+Storm>. InsaneJournal, CrazyLife, inksome were also checked. No one on these clones listed the Storm as an interest.

⁹ Other teams on LiveJournal experienced zero change in terms of the number of people listing the team as an interest in this period. This includes the Melbourne Victory who had 24 people listing them as an interest on February 27 and May 10, 2010. It also includes the Melbourne Demons who had 26 people listing them as an interest on February 25 and May 10, 2010.

¹⁰ BlackPlanet numbers are derived from the following profile search:

http://www.blackplanet.com/user_search/index.html?interest_search_form_submit=1&gender_filter=&keywords=Melbourne+Storm.

¹¹ care2 numbers were derived from [http://www.care2.com/find/site#q="Melbourne Storm"](http://www.care2.com/find/site#q=) and tabulating the total people who had functional profiles after clicking on members in the right sidebar.

¹² On Gaia Online, the numbers for the Melbourne Storm were derived by searching <http://www.gaiaonline.com/search/?type=users.interest&val=Melbourne+Storm>. For other teams, the search was changed to include their name.

¹³ The search ranking is based on a check done on google.com.au on May 9, 2010 searching for Melbourne Storm, with and without quotes.

¹⁴ A copy of the protection log can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Log&type=protect&page=Melbourne_Storm.

¹⁵ It should be noted that the Melbourne Storm’s official account is not “live tweeting.” That is, a human being is not posting to the Twitter account. Instead, the Twitter account pulls the RSS feed from the Melbourne Storm’s official website.

¹⁶ The NRL's Twitter account contains many links provided through an RSS feed. Several newspapers also have RSS feeds that export to Twitter. This can really expand the sheer volume of non-hash tagged comments. The practice of adding RSS feeds to Twitter became much more possible as social media experts talked up the power of Twitter as a search engine for content exploration and as a marketing tool. The overabundance of this type of content can make finding pure sports fandom content from people who barrack for a team very difficult.

¹⁷ For comparison with a team in another league, the Hawthorn Hawk's official Fan Page found at <http://www.facebook.com/Richmond.FC> had 4,798 fans on March 25. By May 13, the Fan Page had 6,636. This was a growth of 27% over that period.

¹⁸ The urls for the Fan Pages are <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Melbourne-Australia/Melbourne-Storm/21222300614> , <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Best-team-in-NRL-Melbourne-Storm-/43558529287> and <http://www.facebook.com/pages/melbourne-storm-/234035998634> respectively.

¹⁹ A directory of five of these lists can be found at http://au.dir.groups.yahoo.com/dir/Recreation___Sport/Sport/Rugby/Rugby_League/Leagues/National_Rugby_League_%28NRL%29/Teams/Melbourne_Storm . Two teams can be found in http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/dir/Recreation___Sports/Sports/Rugby/Rugby_League . One team can be found in http://au.groups.yahoo.com/dir/Recreation___Sport/Sport .

²⁰ In order to determine when legitimate content ended and spam content began, each list's archive was looked at. In some cases, because archives were only available to members, the researcher had to join the group before gaining access to the archives.

²¹ The page for the goal can be found at <http://www.43things.com/things/view/2535563/go-to-a-melbourne-storm-game> .