



video case

chapter 10 Online Content and Media

case 10.3 **ESPN: Sports Broadcasting Evolves**

watch the video at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zv7q1Wx_QHw

summary

ESPN is the world's largest cable television sports programming network. In addition, it is the Web's most popular online source for sports results, content, and commentary.
L=7:18

case

ESPN is a global cable television network and media company with headquarters in Bristol, Connecticut. Founded in 1979, ESPN grew along with the cable television industry to become a mainstay of American popular culture. After a series of investments by Hearst Publications and ABC (the American Broadcasting Network), 80% of ESPN finally ended up in the hands of entertainment giant The Walt Disney Company, and 20% with the Hearst Corporation, a 100-year-old media company based largely on newspaper and magazine businesses. ESPN focuses on sports programming including live and pre-taped event telecasts, sports talk shows, and other original programming. While originally a cable television network, ESPN has since expanded aggressively to the Internet as well as radio and print magazines.

continued

ESPN is actually a family of sports networks and individual shows. There are eight 24-hour domestic television sports networks: ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNNEWS, ESPN Classic, ESPN Deportes (a Spanish language network), ESPNU (a network devoted to college sports), and the regionally focused Longhorn Network (a network dedicated to The University of Texas athletics) and SEC Network (focused on Southeastern Athletic Conference sports). ESPN also operates five high-definition television simulcast services: ESPN HD, ESPN2 HD, ESPNNEWS HD, ESPNU HD, and ESPN Deportes HD. ESPN programs the sports schedule on the ABC Television Network, which is branded ESPN on ABC. ESPN International has ownership interests in 24 television networks that reach households in 61 countries and territories across seven continents. In addition to its media outlets, ESPN is well-known for its ownership of the rights to various professional and college sports programming.

On the Internet, ESPN owns ESPN.com, which delivers comprehensive sports programming news, information, and video. ESPN3 is a broadband service that delivers thousands of live events. Other sites include WatchESPN, ESPNRadio, ESPNDeportes, ESPNFC, ESPNCRinfo, ESPNScrum, ESPNFL, and a variety of market-specific sites. ESPN also owns the statistically focused political and sports site FiveThirtyEight.

In 2016, ESPN Digital Media averaged approximately 112 million unique global users per month who spent 7.9 billion minutes using ESPN's digital properties each month. In terms of reach, ESPN reached 48% of all monthly U.S. sports category users, and 34% of all monthly U.S. Internet users overall. ESPN is also the industry leader in terms of unique visitors to, and minutes watched on, its mobile Web site and mobile apps, boasting the top two sports apps in its flagship ESPN app and WatchESPN digital streaming app.

ESPN has also had to change core programming elements such as SportsCenter to fit the new digitally-dominated landscape. ESPN's new SportsCenter set has 114 monitors compared to the older one's 15, nearly 10,000 square feet of space, 1,100 miles of fiber optic cable, and the ability to accommodate emerging technologies that may arise. The trouble for ESPN is that even the most cutting-edge TV studio may not be enough to draw viewers, and the most comprehensive network of national and regional sports networks may no longer be ESPN's greatest strength. More users are accessing ESPN content via mobile devices at the expense of TV, and services that allow users to avoid traditional cable packages that contain ESPN are proliferating. Typical sports fans are now interested in fantasy football and getting their sports news the instant it happens, not hours later. Still, ESPN has committed itself to embracing change, and maintains a dominant presence on mobile. Its media personalities are all extremely active on Twitter. If users should become

continued

interested in 3D technology, virtual reality, or something totally unforeseen, ESPN hopes that it's taken the necessary steps to be at the cutting edge for years to come.

video case questions

1. How has ESPN handled the rise of Twitter? How has it incorporated Twitter into SportsCenter?
2. What has ESPN, originally a cable-only service, done to adjust to the rise in users canceling their cable subscriptions in favor of unbundling services?
3. What is the most important show on ESPN? What has ESPN done to upgrade it?