ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Exploring Social Media Use in NCAA Division II Athletic Departments
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ABSTRACT: Lack of research exists in exploring social media use at the NCAA Division II level. The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II athletic departments utilize social media and how athletic departments measure the effectiveness of a social media campaign. Participants in the study (n=108) were NCAA Division II Sport Information Directors (SID), Sport Communication Directors, and Athletic Directors. They completed an online survey relative to social media utilization and social media metrics. Based on the literature, social media utilization was categorized into five groups: marketing, overseeing, fundraising, recruiting, and communication (Grainger, 2010; Jensen, Ervin, & Dittmore, 2014), consisting of Likert scale questions. Cronbach's alpha was applied to determine the internal consistency of the items within each of the five categories in the survey (Gay & Airasian, 2011). The marketing subscale consisted of four items (= .70), the overseeing subscale consisted of four items (= .82), the fundraising subscale consisted of four items (= .75), the recruiting subscale consisted of four items (= .81), and the communication subscale consisted of four items (= .36). In addition, when asked to identify the ways in which the athletic department utilized social media, 106 athletic departments utilized social media for communication purposes and 100 athletic departments utilized social media for marketing. In terms of how athletic departments measure effectiveness, 80% employed site views and 64% employed social network friends as quantitative social media metrics. Additionally, 60% employed audience participation and 41% employed audience relationship as qualitative metrics. Future research is recommended to explore social media utilization throughout the various NCAA divisions and to examine the effectiveness of social media metrics exercised by athletic departments.