

Espn is the leader in sports news media essay



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ESPN is the leader in sports news and entertainment across the globe, providing the most comprehensive coverage of sports and the events occurring around them. ESPN dominates the sports and sports news genre of the cable network with a total of six different channels to choose from, and their flagship program Sportscenter, which “ averages up to 115 million viewers a month” (ESPN Corporate). ESPN also dominates the sports world online, with ESPN. com capturing 30 percent of all minutes spent on sports websites in 2010 and introducing five local ESPN web pages to major cities across the United States.

Although ESPN has dominated the sports world in terms of news, analysis, and coverage of current events, they still have not claimed dominance concerning historical data. In 2009, ESPN unveiled their solution to this lack of leadership by introducing ESPNDB. ESPNDB is an acronym for Entertain and Sports Programming Network Database. ESPN took it upon themselves to combine archived and current data, articles, and media and create a specialized database for this collection. This specialized database was then made accessible to the largest network available, the World Wide Web. This is not only a collaboration of a database with a network, but the database itself is a collaboration of text, video, and audio.

The database sets itself apart from other databases in similar fields not only through its collaboration of text, video, and audio, but its accurate and certifiable information. Web based databases such as Wikipedia, let users add information to their database. This interaction can be useful but also harmful. It was noted in a “ study by Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery determined that 11 percent of Wikipedia articles have

been “vandalized” at some point in their life” (Potash). ESPNDB uses information that is certified by its experts to ensure that all information presented in their database is accurate and verifiable. This accuracy attracts the average sports fan that is searching for information to utilize ESPNDB rather than taking their chance with information from a database with a history of questionable information posted as valid facts.

Although ESPNDB was not created to allow any common individual add information to the database, which ensures its accuracy, it still was designed to be an interactive tool. The database was built to allow users an opportunity to post their thoughts, opinions, and their counter arguments to any statistics, videos, audio files, or columns posted in the database. This interactive section of ESPNDB allows the experts to review any disputed information, and search for the most accurate response possible.

The creation of ESPNDB was a milestone for the ESPN company. ESPN brought their resources together to create a comprehensive, certifiable, and interactive database. This database, with proper time and focus put into updating and inserting new information topics, has the possibility to become the one and only sports database any sports fan or individual may ever need to use. “The rise of a two-click solution for finding sports information online — via a search on Google and then a click-through to Wikipedia — cannot be understated as an impetus for ESPNDB” (Goetzl). ESPNDB is potentially a web based database that could have the power to overtake other websites, such as SI Vault, and become the most valuable tool for journalists, bloggers, and other types of sports reporters across the nation, perhaps someday the world.

The only thing that could stop ESPNDB from becoming the dominant force of all sports based databases across the internet is itself. As stated, ESPNDB is undoubtedly the most comprehensive sports database available. Not only does ESPNDB cover a topic by providing current statistics, statistics from the recent past, and historical statistics, but ESPNDB digs deeper into topics than any database has before. With ESPN's vast collection of archived video analysis and interviews, archived audio files of both analysis and interviews as well as actual game casts, and their vast collection of images ranging from the most historic events in sporting history to images of players warming up in the bull pen, the database compiles every possible resource ESPN offers that relates to the topic and includes that resource in the database. This complexity of the ESPN database is a timely and exhausting process that has limited the production of the database, thus creating ESPNDB's major boundary of their own thoroughness.

The same item that is a boundary to ESPNDB is the same item that makes this database such an important and useful asset to its users. This database allows any user of the internet the access to the immense collection of information that ESPN has to offer on particular topics. The average sports fan can benefit from this database by relying on its accurate information while researching a topic, but also see what commentators, columnists, and experts in that particular field had to say about the topic beyond just the statistical numbers. Journalists, bloggers and other sports writers now have an information database to retrieve data from when researching for articles and columns that they do not have to question and can rely upon. Also, they will have the capabilities of seeing what their colleagues have said about

that particular topic in the past with the collaboration of media types in the ESPN database. Also, the common sports fan will be able to use the database to understand the basis and history behind particular sports or sporting events in a more useful manner. It was written that understanding new topics has become problematic “ with the increasing bits of information accumulating in every field of knowledge making comprehensive understanding difficult if not impossible to achieve...we must depend more and more on specialists” (Finn). ESPNDB will offer that average fan an in-depth look at the history of sporting events with explanations and analysis from specialist and experts across the sporting world. This new, easy to access, understandable and comprehensible information database is a valuable asset to ESPN because it will peak the interest of the common fan, which will in turn promote the ESPN family as a whole.

ESPNDB being introduced to the sports database world through the network of the internet has allowed the possibility of ESPN becoming the most valuable asset to any individual, professional or amateur, researching a sports topic. Its interactive nature and collaboration of media with text, and certifiable information make it different from all databases surrounding it, and put ESPNDB at the forefront of the sports database world.

History

Ever since ESPN's humble beginnings in 1979, they have continually had great success and prosperity within the sports world. As of 2010, ESPN had over one hundred million subscribers in the U. S. alone along with more than six thousand employees. Also, they own over fifty television channels, featuring almost every sport imaginable, and they have a global presence, <https://assignbuster.com/espn-is-the-leader-in-sports-news-media-essay/>

as they have viewers in all seven continents. If that was not enough, ESPN airs hundreds of radio shows, has multiple website links, and even has its own magazine (ESPN Perspective). Even though ESPN already has its name staked to many things, they decided to expand their horizons to a whole new level when in 2009 they created ESPNDB. This database was created by ESPN editors to try and accompany and enhance ESPN's presence within the global sporting world. In order to stay up to date with Wikipedia and other sports websites, ESPNDB knew that they had to create a database that they could place onto the internet. They needed somewhere, where they could place all of their historical data and information without it interfering with their current website; ESPNDB can be found through ESPN's search tab, but it also comes up as a separate website when using a search engine. They began testing the waters by placing information regarding only the NFL draft and NBA finals on the website. Many everyday users commented on the effectiveness of the website, most notably regarding their struggle in navigating and finding information time efficiently in the website. These comments hurt the credibility of the nationally recognized organization and led ESPN to begin by doing revisions and changes that are still being done to this date. At the current time, ESPNDB is still a work in progress website and only contains the two parts mentioned above. Editors and programmers are working hard to build a system that can one day hold its own with regards to sports data. With the aid of advertising and social networking websites, along with the needed attention from the ESPN staff, ESPNDB has the potential to take over the sports database world and become a strong supporting website.

As ESPNDB began their website, they had multiple contributions from their own affiliate, ESPN. To begin with, probably the biggest advantage that ESPNDB has is that it has its name associated directly with the biggest name in sports media. While it would be easy to take this fact for granted and forget about it, this may actually be what makes or breaks ESPNDB. As long as ESPN continues to provide reliable information and has such a large presence globally, ESPNDB has an improved chance of having a respected and well received website. Instead of taking months or even years to get started and have a strong viewing community, ESPNDB should be able to start off with many viewers who will check out its website, because they have heard its name through the ESPN grapevine of fans. Having its name staked with ESPN, should also help bring advertisers that will help ensure the profitability and success of ESPNDB. Knowing that ESPN has helped companies advertise with success, many companies will be willing to sacrifice their advertising dollars on a relatively new website. ESPN brings well trained and qualified professionals to help build and upkeep the ESPNDB website. Since many of these professionals have helped with the design of ESPN, ESPNDB will be lucky because “ their content will be thoroughly fact-checked and will come from professionals” (Beutler 1). The development of this website is unlike many others, because ESPNDB will have the ability to use the past experiences and hardships of ESPN to better shape their website. ESPN’s website designers will know what works well together and what does not, without having to go through all of the trial and error to figure it out. The ESPNDB can pick and choose what they like from ESPN, including features like the visual appearance, the social networking interaction, and the account signup, to give them an edge over many websites that are

forced to start from nothing. ESPN's contributions to ESPNDB cannot be expressed with words, as their nationally known name will have a strong positive effect on the future of ESPNDB.

While ESPN had a strong role in contributing to ESPNDB, it would also be beneficial to look at some of the limitations that ESPN has and the ways that ESPNDB will seek to fix them. One clear negative to ESPN's website is their lack of historical data. When searching throughout their website, it is evident that information is only recorded back to 2002. While for the average sports fan this amount of information is acceptable, it would be more beneficial to all sports fans and bloggers if there was a way that they could access data dating back to the start of each professional sport. Therefore, ESPNDB plans to use "their industry-best Stats and Information Group" to provide fans with information dating back to the beginnings of every major sport (Beutler). While this idea has not been put into play yet, it is the hope and plan of ESPNDB to be the leader in providing quality data dating back many years. Also, ESPN lacks the in depth coverage of certain players, teams, coaches, and games that is necessary to dominant the competing companies. ESPN does have statistics on these but does not go into enough detail with them. ESPNDB will provide ways to compare players, teams, and coaches so that an individual can see how their favorite player compares to another player from the present or past. ESPNDB will also give more space to remember the greatest games and moments in the past; they will provide articles, discussions, and videos. ESPN realizes that it contains limitations and therefore has created ESPNDB to give more detail and precision to the areas

of historical data and more in depth player, team, coaches, and game statistics.

Along with ESPN there are numerous other sports databases that have their limitations. Sports Illustrated is another big name sports website that tries to compete within the areas of professional sports. Unlike ESPN, Sports Illustrated does have a historical section that dates back to 1908.

Unfortunately, this section is only limited to Major League Baseball and does not apply to every other major sport. Also, Sports Illustrated is limited in its videos, articles, and journals about certain players. Whereas ESPN has a whole page with multiple links dedicated to each player, Sports Illustrated only has one single page that contains statistics of each season and game played, as it pertains to that individual player. Similar to ESPN, Sports Illustrated does not give any space on its website to talk about individual coaches and specific games or playoffs. This is a huge hole that can be filled by ESPNDB. Finally, Sports Illustrated has a limitation in that it gives information on a large number of professional sports, which hurts them in their ability to relate a lot of information about each sport. Sports Illustrated prides itself on offering a wide variety of information but not necessary a large quantity of it. Therefore, ESPNDB will have the benefit of focusing on just a few major sports and having an enormous and detailed amount of information for each one. Like ESPN, Sports Illustrated has a few weaknesses pertaining to their historical and detailed information of players, coaches, and games, along with their small amount of information relating to each sport.

SportsDatabase. com is the second website that an individual comes upon, when searching for “ sports databases” through the Google search engine. Sportsdatabase. com is unlike ESPN and Sports Illustrated in that it does not have a widely known name. This is a huge disadvantage, because many times people use what they know of, instead of considering switching to a different website for their information. This website is widely used for individuals who gamble and contains trends and data that will mostly help someone as they choose who will win a game or how a player will do during a game. Consequently, the website does not contain much information that would be relevant or helpful for the average fan or writer. Sportsdatabase. com is also extremely unappealing and does not contain graphics or color that would help grab the viewer’s attention. This website does a poor job in the area of appearance and usability, both of which should be strong characteristics in ESPNDB.

One of the largest database websites to come about in the last decade has been Wikipedia. While is not normally known for its sports information, it does contain it and should therefore be examined. The biggest limitation with Wikipedia is that it is not credible in the information that it contains, since anyone can place or edit information on the website. This is a disadvantage that EPSNDB has considered, when they decided to have professionals only input data. ESPNDB has allowed fans to comment and blog on their information and articles, but it will not allow users to alter the data. Wikipedia also does not give the option to search or compare multiple players at one time, which is a huge downside for many fans. Another limitation to Wikipedia is that it does not contain much information on its

site, but rather gives links and references to go to other sites for more information. This can be time consuming and will lead to many people not taking the time to further pursue their search interest.

State of the Art

ESPNDDB has created a very complex, but comprehensive database to allow any user of the internet easy access to credible information. “ ESPNDDB will combine the far-reaching resources of ESPN with the unique output of the company’s industry-best Stats & Information Group to give fans an immersive experience and make use of technologies that harness the collective knowledge of the world’s sports fans” (ESPNDDB). Because of this vast amount of data and information combined into this database, the production has occurred relatively slowly. Currently, there are only two sections of ESPNDDB. There is a NFL Draft section and a NBA Finals section.

The NFL Draft section of ESPNDDB provides an in-depth historical analysis of draft classes dating back to 1964, which exceeds other sports databases by a great extent. Because ESPN was not developed until 1979, there are only draft logs and statistical breakdowns of the players and teams that were involved in drafts between 1964 and 1979. Every draft since that period, however, is composed of statistics, draft logs, and analyses. The analyses provided are a combination of articles and columns, as well as audio and visual pieces.

There are also feature sections of the NFL Draft section. These subsections provide direct comparisons of players as well as experts opinions and analysis of the draft choices, draft classes, and team’s overall draft grade.

The section also provides a draft tracker. This draft tracker provides real time coverage of each year's draft. As players are selected in the draft, they are removed from the pool of prospects and placed in the selecting team's draft log, and their statistics from their college football career are posted beside their profile. The draft tracker allows ESPNDB to not only be a comprehensive historical database, but also a real time tracking device for the NFL draft.

The NFL Draft section also allows the common individual without any prior knowledge of the NFL draft to become familiarized through numerous other subsections. One of these sections is a history section, which provides a brief history of the draft's inception and the reason for its creation. There are also subsections describing the format of the draft, eligibility requirements of the draft, and the supplemental draft.

Besides the countless sections, each filled with data and media beyond the means of any other sports database, there is a discussion board connected to the NFL Draft section. This discussion board allows experts and fans to interact, making ESPNDB not only the most broad and informative database in the sports genre, but also an interactive database. The discussion board allows fans to post questions and comments, giving experts the chance to respond with educated and edifying answers. This interactive tool is just another reason for fans and internet users to utilize ESPNDB as their source for sports related information.

The second section of ESPNDB is the NBA Finals section. This section is formatted very much like the NFL Draft section. Each NBA championship,

since 1947, is broken down by year, teams involved in the championship series, coaches involved in the championship series, and players involved in the championship series. Each coach and player who was involved in that year's NBA Finals is provided a profile page with their biography, historical statistics, and their statistics from their performance in the championship series. Each championship series from 1979 to present is also accompanied by media relating to the series. There are interviews with experts and players, analyses by experts, and video clips of game casts for each Finals year.

There are also subsections connected to the NBA Finals section. These subsections allow users to explore the debate between experts, retired players, current players, and celebrities connected to the NBA over comparing players side by side, comparing past players with present players, comparing past teams with present teams, and comparing decades of basketball against each other. These subsections are filled with video, audio, statistics, and columns relating to these topics, and are accompanied by a discussion board giving the user the opportunity to interact and voice their thoughts and opinions about the topics.

The NBA Finals section has revolutionized the way journalists, historians, and fans will retrieve information regarding the topic. This section of ESPNDB only adds to the marvel of ESPN's collaboration of resources into a deep and complex database, a database connected to the largest network in existence, thus an asset of great importance to any user.

Though ESPNDB has master the art of creating databases for the sports genre concerning both the NBA Finals and NFL Draft, the database is still trumped by other sports databases in regards to other sports topics. The task of researching Michael Jordan's statistics in his first NBA Finals appearance, along with what reporters who were covering the series had to say about the performance, is a simple task that could be performed in a matter of minutes with the use of ESPNDB. A task to find statistics regarding the NHL season, or MLB season, while using ESPNDB is impossible. ESPNDB is a database that concentrates on a specific topic, and digs deeper into that topic than any other sports database has before. At the same time, their horizons are very narrow while other sports databases horizons are wide but the topics lack depth. The combination of resources used in ESPNDB provides a complex and time consuming task for the developers, and as stated before, this thoroughness and complexity has proven to be the largest boundary and limitation in ESPNDB's development and expansion.

Though ESPNDB is currently experiencing a stalemate in development and expansion, the possibilities for providing fans the most comprehensive interactive database available through the internet is not a distant fantasy. ESPN is a company who, since its inception, has strived to be the one network needed to for any person to gain sports knowledge or view sporting events. " The company's sports broadcasts reach 93 million homes from ESPN's headquarters...ESPN. com...gets about 18 million unique visitors a month" (Boulton). The company's constant broadcasts are filled with content covering every major sport in the states, and now reaching sports across the world. This overflow of content produced through broadcasting and updating

the ESPN primary website has the potential to be redirected and become the foundations of ESPNDB expanding its horizons to cover broad topics, such as the major sports leagues as a whole, but still with the same depth, accuracy, and usefulness as their current sections.

Until this stalemate has dissipated, ESPNDB focuses on the concentrated topics at hand, the NFL draft and NBA Finals. The two specified sections in ESPNDB's database are being updated as new data and new media is created and released. The 2011 NFL draft is being updated with media, statistics and columns daily, and the draft tracker for this year's draft is fully functional and ready for users to take advantage of. ESPNDB offers updated content of its two extraordinarily impressive sections constantly, which subdues the wait and anticipation for the expansion of the database.

Current Applications

There are a few professions that will be strongly interested in using ESPNDB to further their knowledge and understanding of sports. Sports historians are one group of individuals that may find ESPNDB to be very helpful in their research. According to Education-Portal. com, sports historians must have excellent research skills, as they search for historical professional sports data. ESPNDB will be a strong aid for these employees, as it will provide faster researching for them and give them more accurate data on past professional sports' athletes and coaches. Another profession that it would highly benefit to use ESPNDB would be sports journalists or columnists. By using ESPNDB, their prewriting times will decrease dramatically, as they are able to search and contrast players easier and will be assured with more confidence of their results. Above all us, EPSNDB will be of extreme

importance to the average fan and blogger, as they want to locate data and discuss it with other fans. They can be assured that all of the information that they want is on the one site, rather than searching all over the internet for different sites. This is a key idea for many individuals, as time is usually in their strongest interest. ESPNDB will help in many areas no doubt, but these are individuals that it should be of the greatest importance to.

People

The advent of online databases has revolutionized the way our society obtains and stores information. ESPNDB has had an enormous impact on the people who avidly follow sports and seek out more information about their favorite players, teams, and coaches. Jim Noel has equated the website to a competitor with Wikipedia by stating “Wikipedia has experienced tremendous growth over the last five years ... and we believe that we can offer a better, more definitive, more credible resource for finding facts and figures and information than anybody else” (http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=104294). This statement is a bold challenge to the juggernaut that is Wikipedia. ESPNDB still lacks key features which give Wikipedia a significant edge when it comes to user interaction. Unlike Wikipedia, which allows any user to alter information contained within the site, ESPNDB only allows ESPNDB paid employees to alter the websites content. This means that while the information may be one hundred percent creditable, it will lack almost instantaneous updating of information that users enjoy on Wikipedia. This is a potentially serious problem for ESPNDB because they could fall seriously behind in content, and could become financially unsound because the

employees are paid, unlike Wikipedia who enjoys an almost unending amount of users willing to update information for free. This factor could significantly affect the people who use online databases because the freedom of use does not exist within the ESPN database. ESPNDB also have a long way to go in developing the type of people driven database that Wikipedia enjoys. ESPNDB is striving to get all sports fans to go to their database to get the most information about all things sports. This will be a problem however because the site only contains only around 500 pages of information. Compared to their biggest competitor which is Wikipedia this could be severely debilitating, when it comes to getting people interested in using ESPNDB exclusively. The chart below shows the vast scope of ESPNDB's largest competitor. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/AR_web_all-spreads_24mar11_72_FINAL.pdf

When the chart above is considered it becomes very clear that for ESPNDB to have profound effects on people they must exceed the effects of sites such as Wikipedia. They must allow people from all different countries to come together to discuss the information provided and without allowing the users the power to edit the site, and without enough information uploaded to view this it will become impossible for ESPNDB.

Process

While the effects of ESPNDB will be very important to many different people, the effects on the current business processes of database competitors are even more important. One profound difference between ESPNDB and its competitors is the nature of the staffing involved with the database. ESPNDB only allows paid employees to alter the information and content of the online

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database. This means that they will have significantly higher costs associated with running the database as opposed to user ran databases on the web. Below is a chart which shows the salaries of these employees.

(<http://www.simplyhired.com/a/salary/search/q-edito+espndb/lbristol,+ct>)

This chart clearly shows that if ESPNDB continues to only allow employees to edit the database then the company is going to incur significant amounts of payroll expense. This means that the database will have to find a way to either offset this cost or change the way their current business process to a cheaper way of operation, such as the user input system in conjunction with volunteer fact checkers that Wikipedia subscribes to. ESPNDB does exhibit a profound difference compared to a database site such as Wikipedia. ESPNDB has chosen specialization over generalization. On a database system such as Wikipedia a user can search any topic from Barry Bonds home town to the history of the royal family. ESPNDB has chosen a different way to build their site. They have chosen to specialize in their specific area of expertise, which is the data of sports. By choosing this particular way of building, they have ensured they can concentrate on providing the best and most accurate information based on their area of focus. This will allow the database to spend significantly more time on the articles they generate and maintain, than a site such as Wikipedia. This also allows the user to more effectively find the information they are seeking, because there are less unrelated articles vying for their attention within the database. Below are pictures of each databases homepage. It is obvious that a user is more likely to go to the sports article they are interested in without being distracted by random

articles on the ESPNDB site. While users of Wikipedia are faced with many more unrelated articles when trying to get to the article they seek.

Technology

ESPNDB will have a profound effect on how different people across the world use technology to access and use sports databases. ESPNDB allows users to access and view the web databases content through cell phones, Ipads, Ipods, computers, netbooks, and interactive televisions. This ease of access using the latest technology will have profound effects upon where and how the database is used and viewed. A popular way to access the database is through social media websites. Twitter allows patrons to post links from ESPNDB to your account and link any articles on the database to your tweets. This allows any Twitter user to have instant access to information that will allow them to prove their friends wrong, or display some kernel of knowledge about their favorite team or players. Below is a perfect example of a Twitter page with linked information.

As you can see from the picture above Twitter allows easy access to the ESPN database. The actual link to the database will be located in the tweet that the user posts from the database. By linking the database to their tweet the user allows any of their followers the opportunity to click on the link in the tweet, which takes them directly to the articles location within the ESPN database. This allows the use of twitter, which uses technology that almost every person has access to on the internet, to showcase users favorite sports information and opinions.

Even more important to ESPNDB is the use of Facebook. Facebook is available using almost every type of web accessible technology on the market today. This means that using Facebook as an access point to ESPNDB will allow any user to view the database content using all the different technologies that Facebook currently supports. This is very important because this will allow ESPNDB to reach many more people than they would reach just using Twitter. While both social networking sites are viewed through many of the same devices the use and access of Facebook is much more prevalent. The graph below shows that not only is Facebook more popular, but also shows that different people use Facebook than people who use Twitter. ESPNDB is marketing their database toward the teenage to young adult demographic much more than the older p