

---

## Editorial

---

### Andrea N. Geurin-Eagleman\*

Department of Tourism, Sport and Hotel Management,  
Griffith Business School,  
Griffith University,  
Glyn Davis Building (N72), Room 0.40, Nathan Campus,  
170 Kessels Road, Nathan QLD 4111, Australia  
Email: a.eagleman@griffith.edu.au  
\*Corresponding author

### Lauren M. Burch

Indiana University-Purdue University Columbus,  
Division of Business,  
4601 Central Ave., Columbus, IN 47203, USA  
Email: lmburch@indiana.edu

**Biographical notes:** Andrea N. Geurin-Eagleman is a Senior Lecturer of Sport Management at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. She has published extensively on the topics of sport communication and marketing, specifically focusing on athletes and sport organisations' use of social media as well as media portrayals of athletes of differing race, gender, and nationality. Her work has appeared in over 30 peer-reviewed articles in journals such as *Journal of Sport Management*, *Sport Management Review*, *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, *International Journal of Sport Communication*, and *International Journal of Sport Management*. She currently serves on the editorial boards of seven academic journals, and in 2015 she was named a North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) Research Fellow, recognising her outstanding research contributions in the field of sport management.

Lauren M. Burch is the Interim MBA Program Director and a Visiting Assistant Professor of Management at Indiana University-Purdue University Columbus in Columbus, Indiana, USA. Her research interests focus on the intersection of new media, self-presentation and framing, sport communication, and marketing. Her specific areas include the examination of bottom-up framing and self-presentation on social media, and implications from a marketing perspective. Her work has been published in peer-reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Journal of Sport Management*, *Sport Management Review*, *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, *International Journal of Sport Management*, *International Journal of Sport Communication*, and *Communication and Sport*.

As new media continues to grow, evolve, and impact sport organisations and consumers, its presence has been noticeably felt by the Olympic Games. Miah (2013, p.107) stated that “the expansion of media channels afforded by new media technology and a burgeoning culture of user-generated content have changed how people consume the Games”.

Illustrating this point, the London 2012 Games became known as the ‘social Olympics’ due to the extensive range of platforms utilised for the marketing and communication of the event, which included social media, internet-based applications and smartphone/tablet applications. The 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics expanded on the new media trends from London, with more than 2 million new fans of the official Olympic Facebook page, and over 150,000 new followers on both Twitter and Instagram. Additionally, Olympic athletes and teams produced over 90,000 updates on social media during the Games (Olympic.org, 2014).

New media technology is ever expanding and increasingly accessible for global audiences. Thus, a greater understanding of the utilisation of new media platforms to market Olympic sport holds implications for a variety of Olympic sport organisations and stakeholders such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Olympic Games organising committees, National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and sponsors, broadcast partners, athletes and coaches. This special issue of *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing* sought to expand our limited understanding of the utilisation of new media platforms to market Olympic sport.

The first paper by authors Lee, Ryu, Clavio, Lovell, Lim, and Pedersen focused on the impact Twitter had on sport fans’ information processing of a controversial incident that occurred at the 2012 London Olympics involving a men’s soccer referee during the Brazil versus South Korea match. The results indicated that both journalists and non-professional writers’ tweets were viewed as equally likable and reliable, and both had an impact on the sport fans’ information processing, highlighting the framing and priming effects of social media.

In the second paper, authors Hambrick and Pegoraro also focused on Twitter as a marketing communication platform, but their study involved a social network analysis in which three social media communities and electronic word of mouth were examined during the 2014 Sochi Olympics. Their examination of three hashtags that were classified as marketing, hijacked, and organic revealed opportunities for sport marketers to strategically use hashtags, slogans, and marketing messages in order to best capitalise on social media use.

Pate, Hardin, and Rauhley analysed US athletes’ self-presentation strategies on Twitter during the 2012 London Paralympic Games in the third paper. This study examined the tweets of 76 US Paralympians. While the Paralympics received quite minimal media coverage in the USA, this study highlighted the ways in which social media can be used to market such an event and its athletes despite the lack of traditional coverage. Athletes were found to serve in two roles through their tweets – first, as news sources promoting the Paralympic Games and individual performances, and second as Paralympic athletes sharing the realities of their everyday lives as athletes with disabilities.

The fourth paper by Pegoraro, Burch, Frederick, and Vincent examined the hijacking of the hashtag #CheersToSochi on Twitter. This hashtag was originally designed for use by Olympic sponsor McDonald’s, but during the 2014 Olympic Games it became hijacked by everyday consumers as a way to criticise sponsors for their affiliation with

Russia amidst its discriminatory practices relating to the LGBT community. The study highlights theoretical implications relating to brand equity and brand image, as well as practical implications for sport sponsors' brand image and activation activities.

Finally, the fifth paper in this special issue by Abeza, Pegoraro, Naraine, Séguin, and O'Reilly analysed the social media sponsorship activation of The Olympic Program (TOP) sponsors on Twitter during the 2014 Winter Olympics. Ten sponsors were examined, and results revealed that no regular activation pattern was used, and all sponsors appeared to adopt different strategic activation approaches. Sponsors were found to have three objectives in their Twitter usage: promotion, customer appreciation, and athletes' encouragement. The authors noted that sponsors should consider additional objectives and also highlighted the use of hashtags to maximise marketing messages reaching target audiences.

Overall, the papers within this special issue contribute to the growing body of literature on new media and its marketing capabilities, specifically relating to Olympic sport organisations and stakeholders. The findings of these five studies particularly shed new light on Twitter as a platform by which to communicate and market an organisation's key messages. Furthermore, these studies provide a solid foundation from which future research on this topic can be conducted, and all articles offer suggestions for future research in this area.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all of the contributors to this special issue, including the authors of these articles, the anonymous reviewers who spent a great deal of time reading and reviewing these articles in order to provide valuable feedback to the authors, and the editorial team at Inderscience, who were quite helpful throughout the process of guest editing this issue of the journal.

## References

- Miah, A. (2014) 'Tweeting the Olympic Games', in Girginov, V. (Ed.): *The Routledge Handbook of the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games*, Vol. 2, pp.96–109, Routledge, London.
- Olympic.org (2014) *Sochi 2014 Social Media Metrics: Hot Numbers. Cool Conversations. All Yours* [online] <http://www.olympic.org/content/news/media-resources/manual-news/2014/02/28/sochi-2014-social-media-metrics-hot-numbers-cool-conversations-all-yours/> (accessed 21 May 2015).