



SUN DEVIL

A T H L E T I C S

Arizona State Athletics

Spring 2021 Client Audit



Arizona State University

Public Relations Lab

Created by:

Noah Flack

Peyton Clark

Ariana Diaz Victoria

Stephen McCarthy

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Background Information

ASU Athletics is the center for all sport and student-athlete updates and news at Arizona State University, representing a total of 24 teams year-round. ASU Athletics communicates with its audience primarily through the official Sun Devils website and through the official Sun Devils Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts. The team examined the owned and earned media of the department by using tools such as SocialBlade and Muck Rack. The key topics seen through traditional, social and owned media surrounds the performance of teams after each game, as well as highlights of student athletes, coaches, and those involved in the department.

Fact Sheet:

Organization: ASU Athletics

Location: Tempe, AZ 85281

Phone: 480-965-3482

Website: <https://thesundevils.com>

Description:

The ASU Athletics department represents 10 men's sports and 14 women's sports that compete year round. The department represents over 600 Sun Devil student-athletes and provides them with the opportunity to thrive and grow on and off the court.

The ASU Athletics vision is to "serve as the model amongst FBS-level athletics programs for comprehensive excellence in athletic achievement, academic success and affinity development." The department's mission is to empower Sun Devils to achieve championship performance, while graduating and preparing student-athletes for life after intercollegiate athletics with the highest priority on integrity.

Key Staff:

Ray Anderson, Vice President of University Athletics

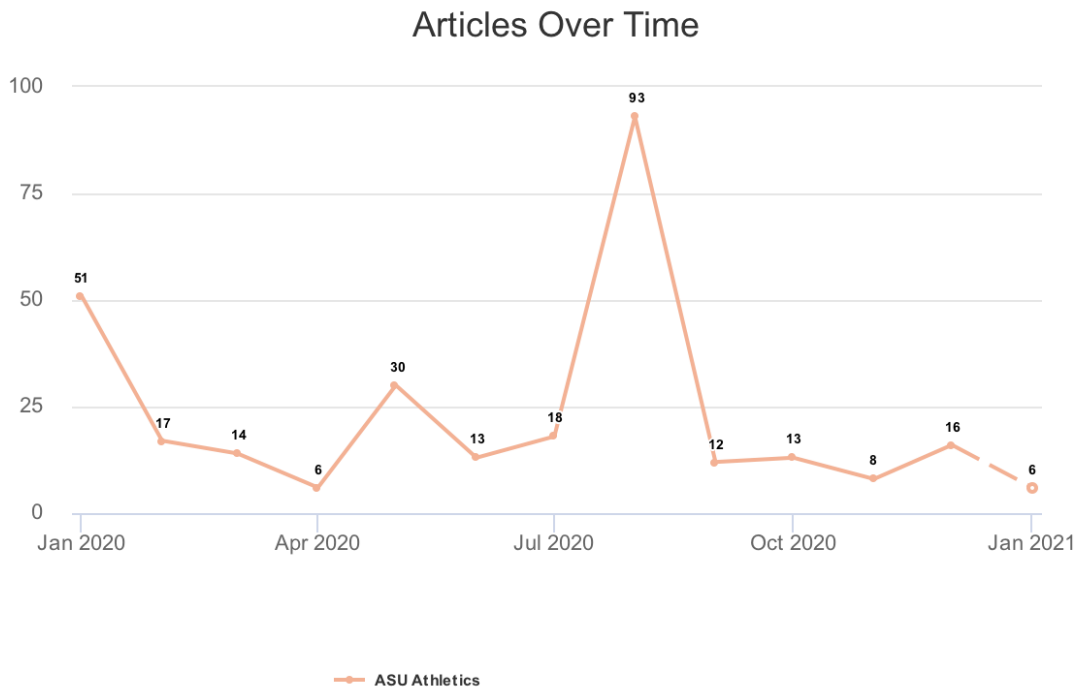
Don Bocchi, Sr. Associate AD

Jean Boyd, Deputy Athletics Director

Mark Brand, Senior Associate AD, Media Relations

Media Audit:

According to Muck Rack, ASU Athletics received 297 mentions in traditional media from January 2020 to January 2021. Coverage included both local and national media outlets and the majority of them had a neutral sentiment. Local outlets included AZCentral, Cronkite News, KTAR-FM, The State Press, Arizona's Family, AZ Big Media, Arizona Sports and more. National outlets covering ASU Athletics included Sports Illustrated, USA Today, NBC Sports Northwest, The Athletic, and others. August 2020 was a peak month in coverage, where ASU Athletics received a total of 93 mentions in articles.



MUCK RACK

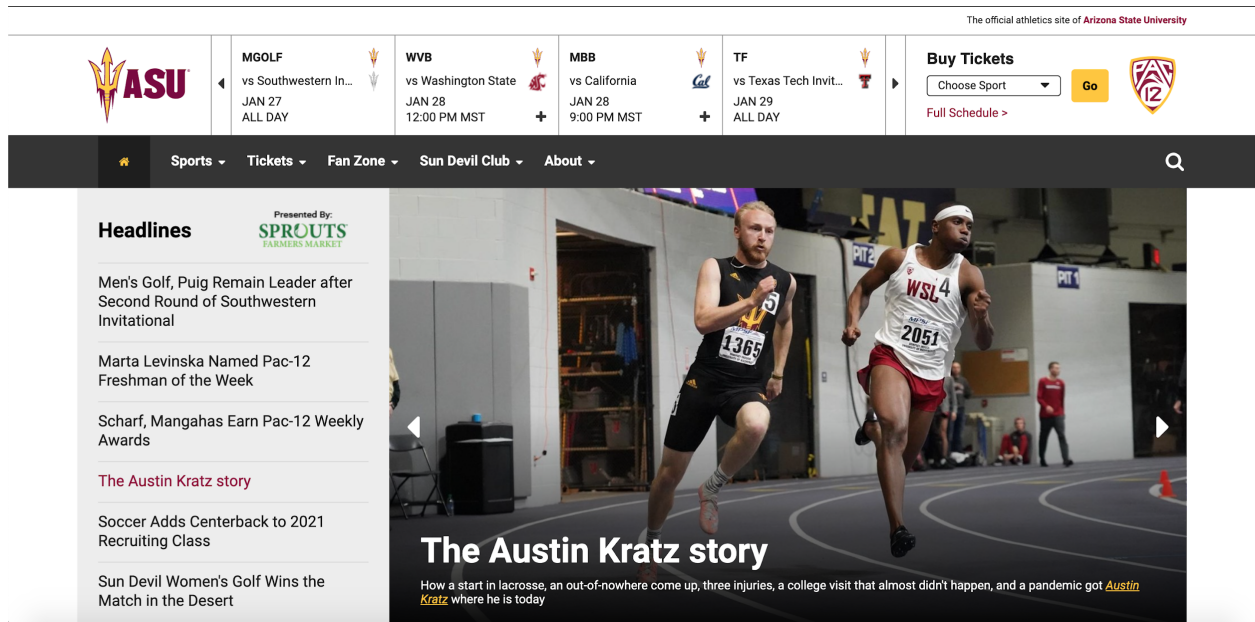
ASU Athletics also received 37 broadcast hits over the same time period. The local media outlets included 12 News, Fox 10, ABC 15, KJZZ, 92.3 KTAR, Good Evening Arizona, CBS 5, 3TV News, Cronkite Sports, and KFYI-AM. Non-local outlets that mentioned ASU Athletics in their coverage included News at Midday (Texas), 12 News on Fox 11 (Tucson), and WCOV News at Nine (Alabama).

Of the 297 mentions in articles, only 18 mentioned ASU Athletics in the headline, with the remainder of the articles mentioning it in the body of the articles.

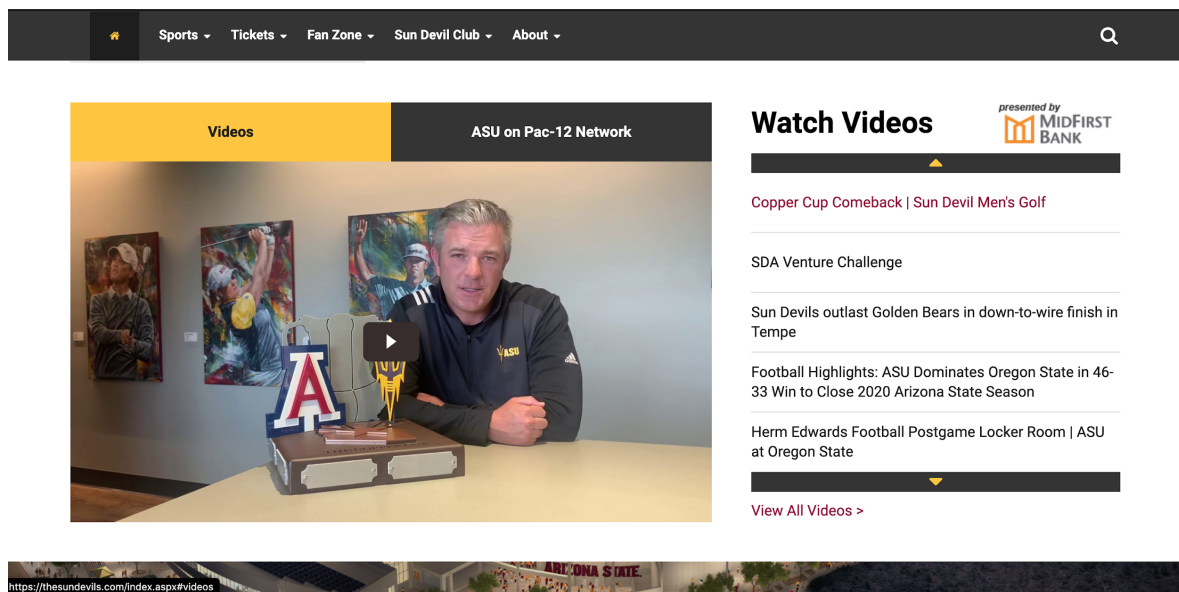
Communications Audit:

Arizona State Athletics' main web page is housed at

<https://thesundevils.com/index.aspx>



The website is easy to navigate, splitting off into the different sports sections, and allowing fans to quickly find what they are looking for and stay in touch. There is a variety of media housed on thesundevils.com including video, articles and photos.



Fans also have the ability to jump in and buy tickets, join the Fan Zone and view @TheSunDevils twitter feed through the website itself. The website allows fans to stay connected, while also providing an easy and simple website to use and navigate.

When it comes to media relations, the specific sub-web page is lacking in of itself and seems cluttered and bulky.

Media Relations

To request interviews or credentials for Sun Devil Athletics, please contact the sport's Media Relations representative listed below. All interviews must be pre-arranged with the Media Relations office. Our office defines "media agency" as a daily or weekly publication, cable system, radio station, television station or television network, or online entity requiring immediate news coverage.

Photographers can also apply for credentials if the individual is certified by a participating institution, who will represent specific campus-related entities.

Mailing Address:	Carson Student-Athlete Center Media Relations, Room 131 500 E. Veteran's Way Tempe, AZ 85287-2505	Fax: (480) 965-5408 Phone: (480) 965-6592
Baseball	Men's Basketball/Football Credentials	
Jeremy Hawkes	Doug Tammaro	
Email: jdhawkes@asu.edu	Email: tammaro@asu.edu	
Phone: 480-965-9544	Phone: 480-734-7795 (cell)	
@JeremyHawkes	@DougTammaro	
Women's Basketball/Football Player Interviews	Cross Country	
Steve Rodriguez	Will Edmonds	
Email: steve.rodriguez@asu.edu	Email: wkedmond@asu.edu	
Phone: 480-254-2489 (cell)	Phone: 614-716-8847 (cell)	
@SRod776		

Unlike other media relations sections of websites, there is no access to press releases or previous press conferences. From what we have heard and seen so far through the beginning of this semester, these are sent out via email to members of the press and those who request them from the people listed in the spreadsheet on the website.

The media relations portion of the webpage also doesn't allow access to collateral, but you can reach out to the various media relations contacts for each sport for more information. The website itself is an adequate sporting website and allows visitors to find the specific sport and stats they are looking for. It is easy to navigate and has plenty of information for gameday information and other details a fan would need to know. Although the website is good for fans, it lacks media relations assistance and doesn't have previous media releases readily available. It also lacks in collateral that other sporting teams provide.

Social & Web Audit:

Official website: <https://thesundevils.com/>

Twitter:

Official ASU Athletics account:

<https://twitter.com/thesundevils>

(Arizona State Sun Devils - @TheSunDevils)

910 following

211.6K followers

Facebook:

Official facebook for ASU Athletics:

<https://www.facebook.com/ArizonaStateSunDevils/>

318,911 people like this

305,349 people follow this

Instagram:

Official Instagram for ASU Athletics:

<https://www.instagram.com/sundevilathletics/>

3,512 posts

95k followers

354 following

Social Media:

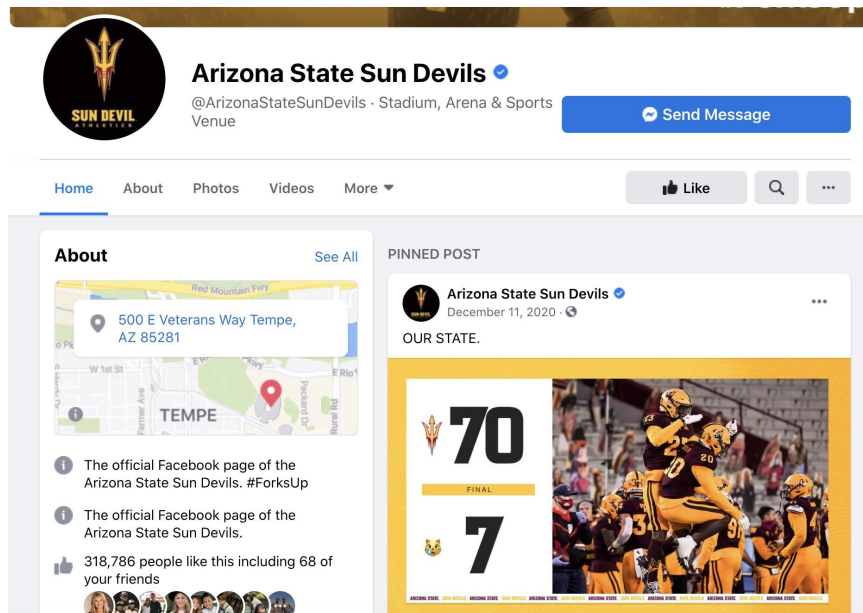
ASU Athletics is currently posting on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to reach its audience. ASU Athletics is very active on all of its social media platforms with most of the posts being about the game schedules, live updates, scores, accomplishments, wins and losses, achievements, reposts from other athletes or ASU athletic accounts and specific players. Many of the posts overlap with each other on the various platforms, but they keep up with the currency of ASU athletic updates.

Traditional Media:

ASU Athletics is uploading press releases to multiple websites, primarily to its official ASU Athletics website, where the information is reuploaded and picked up by Arizona local news sources, and potentially reaches national news. As well as the ASU PAC-12 Network, where you can watch the games or listen to them on Sirius XM Radio.

Social Media Assessment:

Facebook (@ArizonaStateSunDevils)



ASU Athletics' Facebook account currently has 318,707 'people like this', 305,349 'people follow this' on its page.

The profile picture is the signature of the traditional Sun Devil Fork logo, sporting the athletics side with Sparky the Sun Devil as the header picture, which is used consistently throughout the other social media platforms. This account is used to give updates on the athletics department at ASU. Providing followers posts of games, scheduling and score updates, as well as news covering sports events, players/athletes and achievements. It also provides links to other social media platforms that the ASU Athletics department owns and frequently uses, where viewers can receive information

from other platforms. Many of the posts are photos, links, articles, stories, news coverage of students, the different campuses, games and scheduling, and any other related updates for the community.

This account posts mostly once a day, however the account will skip posting on some days. On average, the account gets 12 posts per week with most of them being photos and only a couple videos, as well as links to other related news. User engagement varies widely with some posts getting barely over 100 likes to others receiving close to 1,000 likes. ASU Athletics' Facebook account gets an average of 20 shares and 45 comments per post.

There is a wide variety of engagement on each post, but ASU Athletics continuously distributes high quality photo and video content that is a good representation of the brand.

Twitter (@TheSunDevils)



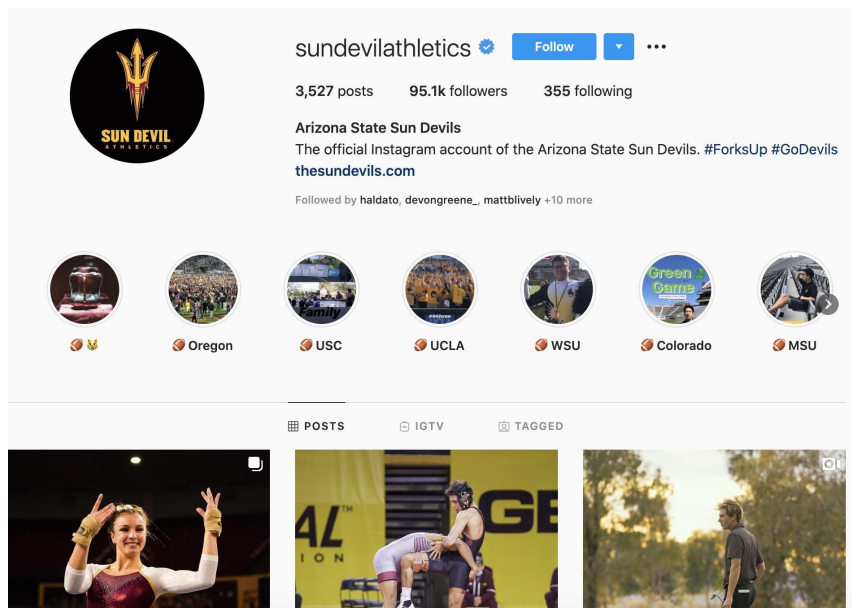
ASU Athletics' Twitter account has gained 211.6K followers since its inception back in March 2009. The profile picture is consistent with other social media platforms, showing the signature Sun Devil Fork logo and sporting the athletics side with Sparky the Sun Devil as the header picture, along with giant lettering, "SUN DEVIL."

The Twitter account has a steady engagement rate compared to ASU Athletics' Facebook accounts, mostly coming in at about an equal engagement rate. During the

week of January 18, there was high engagement with the account’s most popular tweet, where the ASU Men’s golf team had won the Copper Cup against the University of Arizona. The tweet received 295 likes, 28 retweets and six comments.

The account tweets once or twice per day and each tweet corresponds to many of the posts made on the Facebook and Instagram accounts. The account only tweets its original content and some quotes, articles, news related content and updates on ASU academics and athletics.

Instagram (@sundevilathletics)



ASU Athletics’ Instagram account has 3,530 posts, 95k followers and is following 354 accounts. The profile picture is consistent with the other Twitter and Facebook accounts as it is the signature Sun Devil Pitchfork logo, with “athletics” at the bottom of the photo. The account biography has a link to the official ASU Athletics website.

The engagement on ASU Athletics’ Instagram account is higher than its Twitter and Facebook account when it comes to views, likes and comments from other users and followers. Many of the posts on the account are the same posts from its Twitter and Facebook accounts.

The department’s most recent post on Jan. 25, 2021 was of the Sun Devil Gymnastics team earning two Pac-12 weekly awards, with a picture of Hannah Scharf posing, who won gymnast of the week. This post has received 574 likes and two comments.

Competitive Analysis:

Background

The collegiate sports industry is one that is built on competition, especially between universities in the same state that compete over market share and recruitment. Arizona State University, located in Tempe, and University of Arizona, located in Tucson, are the two Division 1 universities in Arizona and they directly compete for said market share and recruitment. Both universities were formed on March 12, 1885, and have been rivals ever since.

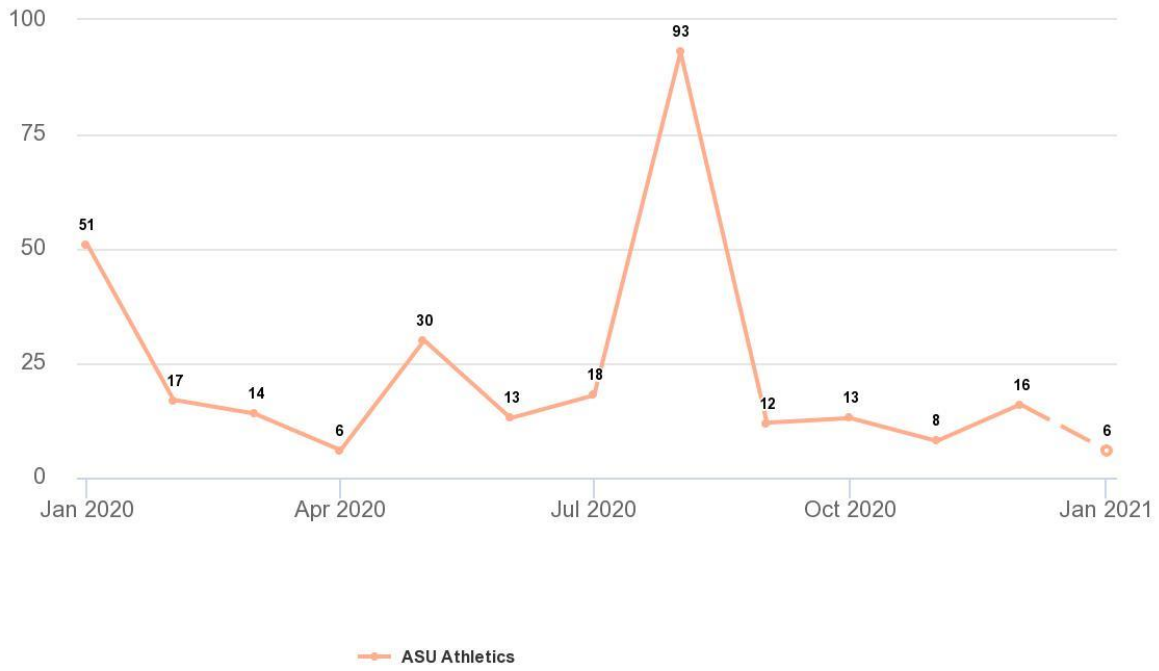
Traditional Media

ASU Athletics received 297 mentions in traditional media from January 2020 to January 2021, with peak coverage coming in August 2020, when ASU Athletics received 93 mentions. During the same timeframe, the term “ASU Athletics” has been used in 18 headlines and has been mentioned in 37 broadcasts as well.

In comparison, Arizona Athletics received 2,905 mentions in traditional media with peak coverage coming in January 2021, where Arizona Athletics has received 422 mentions so far. The term “Arizona Athletics” has been used in 80 headlines and has been mentioned in 184 broadcasts as well.

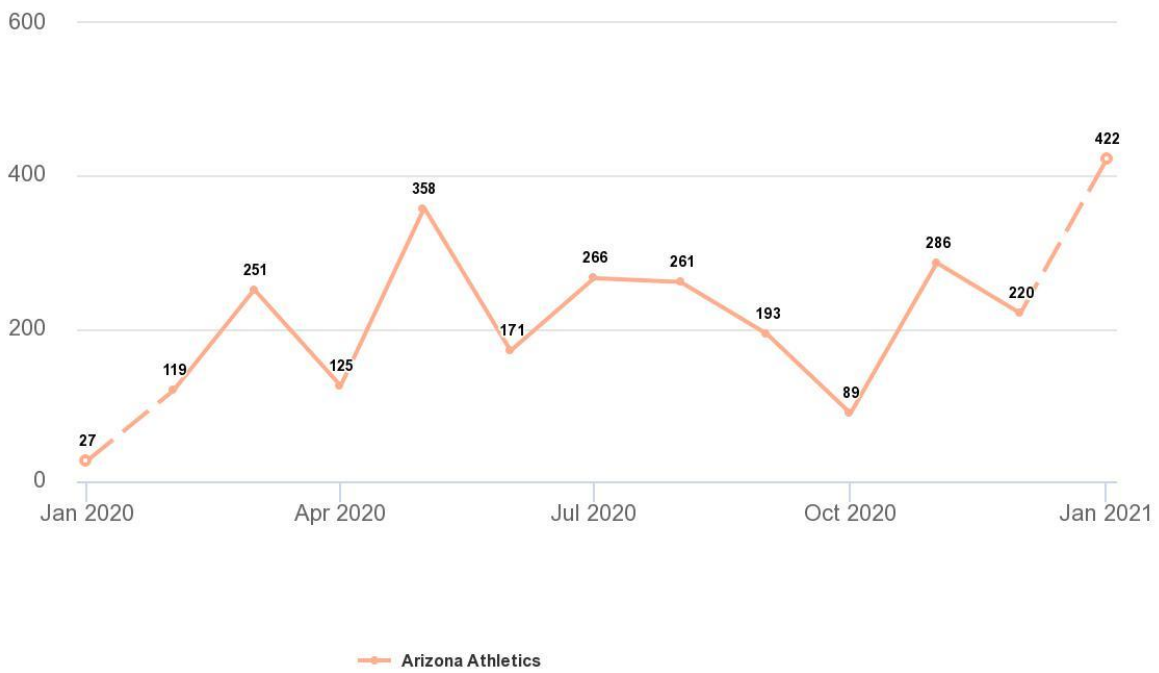
During the research period, Arizona Athletics had 878.11% more mentions in traditional media than ASU Athletics, which is very significant. Arizona Athletics has also been mentioned in 344.44% more headlines and 397.3% more broadcasts compared to ASU Athletics. While traditional media coverage is not the only way to influence market share and recruitment, it is safe to say that the drastic difference in traditional media coverage is a detriment to ASU Athletics.

Articles Over Time



MUCK RACK

Articles Over Time



MUCK RACK

Twitter

The ASU Athletics Twitter account, @TheSunDevils, currently has 211,597 followers, 44,003 posts and is following 910 other accounts. The Arizona Athletics Twitter account, @AZAthletics, currently has 113,877 followers, 36,942 posts and is following 377 other accounts, according to Social Bakers.

Since the beginning of 2021, the ASU Athletics Twitter account has lost 1,000 followers compared to Arizona Athletics, which has lost 440. While that may seem like a drastic difference, it is only a difference of .08% due to ASU Athletics having such a larger Twitter following.

That being said, the Arizona Athletics Twitter account seems to be outperforming ASU Athletics overall in 2021. Through the month of January, ASU Athletics posted 22 tweets compared to Arizona Athletics' 45. In addition to posting more frequently, Arizona Athletics is also generating more engagement and interactions.

Category	ASU Athletics	Arizona Athletics	% Change
Max interactions per tweet	790	1,100	+39.24%
Min. interactions per tweet	8	21	+162.5%
Avg. interactions per tweet	96	210	+118.75%
Avg. interactions per day	66.93	294	+339.26%
Sum of mentions	123	405	+229.27%
Max mentions in a day	15	77	+413.33%
Avg. mentions per day	4.10	13.50	+229.27%
Max interactions per 1000 followers	3.71	24.81	+568.73%

While 67 tweets are a small sample size to compare, keeping a consistent and engaging social media following is paramount right now with the uncertainty of collegiate sports due to the pandemic. Arizona Athletics' 118.75% increase in average interactions per tweet over ASU Athletics is especially concerning considering ASU has 86% more followers. This shows that despite having a sizable advantage in followers, ASU Athletics is not being as efficient or engaging with the Twitter account to generate enough interactions to keep pace with Arizona Athletics.

Instagram

The ASU Athletics Instagram account, @SunDevilAthletics, currently has 95,234 followers, 3,530 posts and is following 354 other accounts. The Arizona Athletics Instagram account, @AZAthletics, currently has 66,000 followers, 2,661 posts and is following 137 accounts, according to Social Bakers.

Since the beginning of 2021, the ASU Athletics Instagram account has gained 366 new followers compared to Arizona Athletics' 149. While Arizona Athletics seems to be dominating on Twitter, the two universities are performing more competitively on Instagram. Throughout January, ASU Athletics made 32 Instagram posts compared to Arizona Athletics' 10.

Category	ASU Athletics	Arizona Athletics	% Change
Max interactions per post	3,400	5,700	+67.65%
Min. interactions per post	632	686	+8.54%
Avg. interactions per post	1,400	2,300	+64.29%
Avg. interactions per day	1,500	782	-47.87%
Sum of likes	46,200	23,200	-49.78%
Sum of comments	202	229	+13.37%
Max interactions per 1000 followers	45.02	86.11	+91.27%

Again, 42 posts are a small sample size, but the trends shown from January's statistics are important. While ASU Athletics does have the edge over Arizona Athletics in both average interactions per day and the sum of likes, it is important to consider the amount of posts by each university. ASU Athletics has created 220% more Instagram posts, so only a 47.87% advantage in interactions per day is actually concerning. In addition, while ASU Athletics has 49.78% more total likes, when you consider the difference in the amount of posts, it shows that ASU Athletics is generating 1,443.75 likes per post compared to Arizona Athletics' 2,320 likes per post. While Instagram has proved to be a more competitive platform for the two universities, Arizona Athletics is still outperforming ASU.

Facebook

The ASU Athletics Facebook account, @ArizonaStateSunDevils, currently has 318,707 followers, while the Arizona Athletics Facebook account, @ArizonaAthletics, currently has 178,448 followers.

Since the beginning of 2021, the ASU Athletics Facebook account has lost 483 followers compared to Arizona Athletics, which lost 151 followers. In a similar way to Twitter, ASU Athletics seems to have lost a significantly higher amount of followers, however, due to ASU having a much larger following, it is actually only a .07% increase in lost followers. During the month of January, ASU Athletics created 45 Facebook posts compared to Arizona Athletics' 40, which is the highest total of the three main social media platforms.

Category	ASU Athletics	Arizona Athletics	% Change
Max interactions per post	620	1,600	+158.06%
Min. interactions per post	5	46	+820%
Avg. interactions per post	132	348.5	+164.02%
Avg. interactions per day	189.2	453.1	+139.48%
Sum of reactions	5,400	11,000	+103.7%
Sum of comments	120	1,600	+1233.33%
Sum of shares	203	974	+379.8%
Max interactions per 1000 followers	5.83	13.21	+126.59%

The 85 posts are once again a small sample size, however, these 85 Facebook posts combined with the other social media posts and metrics paints a picture of the current social media competition. In addition to Twitter and Instagram, ASU Athletics is being drastically outperformed on Facebook. Thankfully, Social Bakers provides deeper analytics for Facebook which explains part of the large gap in performance between the two universities.

There are four different types of Facebook posts: photos, videos, links and statuses. So far in 2021, ASU Athletics posted 39.53% videos, 37.21% photos, 20.93% statuses and 2.33% links. However, the statistics show that photos generate by far the most engagement for ASU Athletics with 264 interactions per post. The next highest engagement rate is video with 78 interactions per post. Despite those statistics, ASU Athletics' most common post type is video with photos being second.

Arizona Athletics also generates the most engagement on photo posts with 477 interactions per post, but they take advantage of it. Arizona Athletics posted 61.54% photos, 35.9% videos and 2.56% links so far in 2021. This may be one of the reasons for the disparity of performance on Facebook. Arizona Athletics is taking advantage of knowing what post types perform the best for them while ASU Athletics is not.

Conclusion:

ASU Athletics received consistent media coverage with almost 300 mentions from January 2020 to January 2021. Not surprisingly, most of the media outlets that cover the department are local. Compared to its biggest competitor, however, ASU is lacking in media coverage. Over the same time period, University of Arizona Athletics received 2,905 media mentions.

ASU Athletics appears to use social media as its main channel of communication to its audience. Its Facebook page has over 300,000 likes and followers, Twitter has over 200,000 followers, and Instagram is the lowest with 95,000 followers. All accounts are verified and use similar branding across all three. The ASU Athletics department posts game coverage, athlete highlights, scheduling, and features, including links, photos, and videos on the majority of their posts. Compared to Arizona Athletics, ASU Athletics does have a larger following on all three platforms. However, Arizona Athletics outperforms them when it comes to consistent posting and engagement on posts. Overall, ASU Athletics would benefit from taking advantage of its large following across all three platforms by posting more engaging content, which includes video and photo posts.

The official ASU Athletics website is a great asset for the department, where they house sport schedules, scores and highlights. There is the “Fan Zone” where fans can purchase tickets, buy team merchandise and get details on upcoming games. The homepage also displays all social media feeds, allowing fans to stay up to date. The biggest problem with the site, however, is its lack of media relations information, which is something that could be easily fixed by adding press releases and department collateral.