

ACC Football **TEAM Stream™**



Want more real-time ACC Football news?

Visit Team Stream on BleacherReport.com! ×

The ACC's Digital Network Leading the Way for Online Content in College Athletic

Like 26

By
Jeffrey Fann
(Analyst) on April 2, 2013

719 reads

2

Use your ← → (arrow) keys to browse more storiesNext



Streeter Lecka/Getty Images

Remember when the SEC started the SEC Championship game in the early 90s? There were attendance problems and critics of the game. Now it's arguably the biggest college football event played outside of the BCS group of games. Some might say it's bigger than some of the BCS games as it plays to huge ratings and a sold-out Georgia Dome each year. Remember when the Big 10 started the Big 10 Network? There were critics questioning the start-up costs, and the distribution potential of such a network. Now it's college athletics biggest cash cow.

There's always risk to think outside the box, but if you are right, the pay off is tremendous, even if the results aren't apparent for a few years. The ACC may be on to such an idea of its own. It's the ACC Digital Network. I've written before how the ACC's Digital Network may eventually play a pivotal role in the ACC's ability to start a new television network, but that's not what I want to talk about today. We are strictly talking about online content.

About 6 weeks ago a report released with little fanfare detailed how the ACC's Digital Network would expand to reach 300 Million Devices. Not long ago I got a Blu-ray player for my birthday, and on it I have the ACC's Digital Network, right there for viewing on my television. So what does this all mean? Is anybody watching? Fortunately for us gathering online statistics on site visits and views is much easier to obtain than television ratings.

For a basis of comparison, let's use the student population of each of the major conferences—the ACC, SEC, Pac-12, Big 10, and Big 12—as they exist in their current form. This isn't a perfect analysis of these conferences' fanbases as we understand that several SEC schools, for example, have tremendous walk fan support, but that is what we'll go with for now. We'll also only go with current members, so schools like Pitt and Syracuse aren't yet included for the ACC.



Ed Zurga/Getty Images

Big 10 ~434,000

SEC ~425,000

Pac-12 ~414,000

ACC ~289,000

Big 12 ~230,000

Here the ACC ranks fourth in school populations just ahead of the 10 teams in Big 12. The reason we haven't included Pitt, Syracuse and Notre Dame yet is because we want to look at online viewership up to this point.

By simply going to YouTube, you can check each conference's online viewership by page views on its respective Online Digital Network.

ACC Digital Network – 4,238,061 views 5,024 subscribers

Big 10 Network – 3,645,477 views 2,763 subscribers

SEC Digital Network – 3,320,081 views 4,549 subscribers

Big 12 Digital Network – 714,060 views 836 subscribers

Pac 12 Network – 496,870 views 1,673 subscribers

Interesting, now the ACC does have the most videos to view, but isn't that kind of the point? Content to view? Let's use another metric for the ACC's online viewership.

Alexa.com is regarded as one of the top traffic ranking websites out there. How do they rank the conferences' official sites by traffic on March 30, 2013?

theACC.com – 82,111

BigTen.org – 92,132

Pac-12.com – 96,277

SECDigitalnetwork.com – 121,115

Big12Sports.com – 169,896

So the conference with the second smallest student population has—by at least two significant metrics—the highest online viewership? When it comes down to it, most people are wondering OK, great numbers, but how much money does it generate? The ACC's digital network has only been around since the fall of 2011, but take a look at this article from 2011 from *Sports Business Daily* with the ACC Digital Network announcement.

From that article...

"Initial distribution of the network will be focused on TheACC.com, but the long-term plan calls for its content to go to Internet TV outlets, such as Roku or Netflix, and syndication into other websites, such as newspaper sites that could embed an ACC Digital Network player in its ACC stories"

It seems the ACC is right on schedule as we saw with the recent 300 million device announcement.

I have not seen any hard revenue projections, but there are already corporate sponsorships in place from the likes of Ruby Tuesday for example. I won't speculate on revenue projections, because, well, I hate baseless guesses. There has been far too much of that in the last year, but unless you've lived under a rock in the Internet age you know primarily online content sites like Google, Twitter, and Facebook are worth billions. I'm not predicting that in anyway. Obviously sites like those reach an audience far greater than just college sports fans, but you get the picture.

There is some potential there, plus the ACC appears to be leading the way with online and mobile device

content.

This article was originally published at All Sports Discussion.

Ranking CFB's Longest Running Rivalries Hint: you can use arrow keys to navigate through this channel.