

TweetDeck Newsroom Rollout Continues at Sky News

By [l3ahb3tan](#) • March 19, 2010

Sky News is taking significant steps to require that its newsroom is literate in social media. In January, the media company began installing the Twitter desktop application TweetDeck on newsroom computers.

I spoke by Skype and e-mail about the change with Julian March, who leads a team of 30 digital media employees and 15 freelancers as executive producer of SkyNews.com.

There are about 100 Sky News employees currently on Twitter, including news editors, field producers and online staff. Some of them already have TweetDeck or are using other Twitter apps on their mobile devices. "Tweetdeck is now installed on the news desks -- so the Home (UK) and Foreign (rest of world) desk editors have it," March said, "And we're embarking on a education drive to get them up to speed."

The plan after that is to roll it out to all the other producers, the idea being that using social media should not be restricted to online journalists.

"It's sent a clear message to our newsroom," March said. While TweetDeck is certainly not a silver bullet nor an overnight transformation, "it does make a difference," he said.

March is so serious about its value that he is making social media literacy an objective on his digital media staff's performance reviews. "I want to see social media become a part of the fabric of the day-to-day work," he said.

Sky News is finding innovative ways to promote the news staff's Twitter accounts. For example,

March said, online story bylines will be linked to the writer's Twitter account so readers can click through to follow that author.

It's important for Sky News to be active on Twitter in part to connect with customers, said March, who replies to tweets from people who have questions or comments about Sky News.

Sky News also uses TweetDeck to monitor news. "It certainly has helped with detecting stories that are making a buzz," March said.

Twitter is especially useful for Sky News because it gives followers a real-time sense of the news organization, March noted. For example, Sky News' foreign affairs editor provided real-time breaking news analysis on Twitter during the Iraq war hearings with former Prime Minister Tony Blair.

They launched [@SkyNews](#) in 2007. The headline feed monitors their home page and tweets new content instantly, according to March. Sky News launched [@SkyNewsBreak](#), a breaking news Twitter account, on Dec. 4, 2009. March said news is posted within seconds, before it's posted on the Sky News Web site.

This practice is in stark contrast to [Reuters social media policy](#), which was announced earlier this month. Reuters' policy states [hard news content must be broken first via the wire](#).

New BBC Global News Director Peter Horrocks says [social media use must accelerate](#). Horrocks told the Guardian last month that "Twitter and RSS readers are to become essential tools ... Aggregating and curating content with attribution should become part of a BBC journalist's assignment; and BBC's journalists have to integrate and listen to feedback for a better understanding of how the audience is relating to the BBC brand."

March agrees: "He's clearly absolutely right. You can't argue with that."