

**Joel Monaghan's Mad Monday  
and the Online Canberra Raiders Fan Base**

**Laura Hale  
University of Canberra  
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**Abstract**

The Joel Monaghan dog sex picture story broke on November 3, 2010. By November 5, people were demanding that Monaghan be sacked. Sponsors were threatening to pull their support if the team failed to fire him. This was another major Australian sport controversy in the making. Given the sponsor demands and media attention to the story, the questions are: How much do fans of the Canberra Raiders and the NRL really care about it, and what is the impact of Monaghan's action on the online fan base? This paper answers that question by looking at Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, Wikia and a few other selected sites. It concludes that the story was largely a non-event in terms of causing people to stop barracking for the Raiders. It also finds that there may be indicators that this type of story gets more attention in geographic areas where the NRL would hope to grow their fanbase. This latter part could be the biggest problem for the NRL.

*Keywords:* NRL, Canberra Raiders, Joel Monaghan, Mad Monday, RSPCA, social media

## Joel Monaghan's Mad Monday and the Online Canberra Raiders Fan Base



Figure 1. 5 Nov 2010 front page of The Canberra Times.

Figure 2. 6 Nov 2010 front page of The Canberra Times.

Figure 3. 7 Nov 2010 front page of The Canberra Times.

In Canberra, the story of Joel Monaghan's Mad Monday actions has been above the fold in the city's leading newspaper for two days and was the whole cover on the third. The story was sensational and received coverage in other newspapers across the country such as *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Herald-Sun*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Adelaide Advertiser* and *The Australian*. According to *The Canberra Times*, Monaghan was involved in a prank where he was photographed "sitting on a tiled floor with a dog's head near his exposed groin." (Dutton & Moloney, 2010, November 5) The pictures had gone viral on Twitter (Dutton, 2010, November 6) and sponsors threatened to pull their support if the Raiders failed to sack Monaghan for his actions. (Dutton, 2010, November 6)

This news was bad news for the Raiders as sponsorship is an important revenue stream for the club. Beyond that, Monaghan's actions are potentially bad for rugby league and the NRL who have an image problem in Australia, where players are viewed by some people as uneducated thugs. This characterization of NRL players can be witnessed by doing a quick Google search for NRL scandal as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. A screencap of a search for NRL scandal on Google. Screenshot is dated Nov 6, 2010.

Scandals like Monaghan's have the possibility of hurting the NRL in terms of growing the size of their potential audience and widening their demographic base so that they can better compete with other leagues in the country like the AFL, who draw upon larger segments of the population, including women. Measuring exactly how people respond to these controversies is difficult as there are an array of dependent and independent variables that factor into why people support their clubs, and how much money they will spend to do that. These variables include a club's performance, loyalty to a club, available disposable income, amount of free time, availability for attending matches, television coverage, and merchandise to name a few.

It is an interesting exercise to critically examine how scandals can impact a club's supporter base. In the case of the Jason Akermanis scandal in the AFL in June 2010, there was little negative impact in terms of supporters shifting their loyalties away from the club in the immediate aftermath of the scandal. (Hale, 2010, June 14) In the NRL, the Melbourne Storm salary cap controversy in May 2010 saw a huge immediate spike in interest and demonstrations of online loyalty to the club. (Hale, 2010, May 20)

The question for this scandal is thus: What was the immediate impact on the online Canberra Raiders community in response to the media coverage of the Joel Monaghan dog sex prank? This paper will attempt to answer that question by looking at Facebook, Wikipedia, Twitter, bebo, Alexa and a few selected sites.

## Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging platform that is popular in Australia. According to Alexa, it is the tenth most popular site in the country. (Alexa Internet, Inc., 2010) There is an active community of Australian sport fans on it who frequently discuss what is going on with their favorite teams and athletes. Sport organizations, leagues, clubs and athletes also use Twitter to engage with fans. The Canberra Raiders are on Twitter at @RaidersCanberra.

There are several methods that can be employed to begin to understand how the Canberra Raiders fanbase responded to the Monaghan controversy that broke on November 4, 2010. This includes looking at any shift in the geographic location of Canberra Raiders fans on Twitter, comparing the total number of new followers for the Raiders to other teams over the same period, looking at the geographic location of Tweets that mention Monaghan versus the team, and looking to see how many Tweets mention Monaghan and the Raiders together. Each of these different methods gives a different perspective on how fans responded and when looked at together, give a more informed big picture perspective.

One way of measuring the impact of the Monaghan scandal on Twitter is to compare the geographic location of the Canberra Raiders followers and to see if there were any noticeable shifts before and after the scandal broke. The way this was done in this paper was to get a list of all the followers for @RaidersCanberra, get the location that the user included on their profile, and get the timezone that the person listed themselves as from. Using those two pieces of information, translate that into a real location. For example, "canberra :)" would be the location Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia. Once as many locations have been identified as possible, they are totaled by date.

The October 15 @RaidersCanberra list had 996 followers on it. Of these, 772 had a country location attached to them. The November 6 @RaidersCanberra list had 1,071 followers on it. Of these, a country location could be identified for 790. When locations are removed because they are not Australian or New Zealand locations that include a city, there remains 454 locations for October 15 and 483 for November 6. Table 1 shows difference for followers by city and date. Only the cities where the difference did not equal zero were included.

Table 1

*@RaidersCanberra followers by City*

<b>Location</b>	<b>15-Oct</b>	<b>6-Nov</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Auckland,Auckland,New Zealand	9	10	1
Belconnen,Australian Capital Territory,Australia	1	2	1
Bowen,Queensland,Australia	1	0	-1
Brisbane,Queensland,Australia	49	50	1
Canberra,Australian Capital Territory,Australia	145	154	9
Casino,New South Wales,Australia	1	0	-1
Cremorne,New South Wales,Australia	1	0	-1
Gold Coast,Queensland,Australia	7	16	9
Gosford,New South Wales,Australia	2	1	-1
Greystanes,New South Wales,Australia	1	0	-1
Hamilton,Waikato,New Zealand	1	0	-1
Jerrabomberra,New South Wales,Australia	1	0	-1
Mandurah,Western Australia,Australia	1	0	-1
Newcastle,New South Wales,Australia	10	16	6
Orange,New South Wales,Australia	0	2	2
Parramatta,New South Wales,Australia	1	2	1
Penrith,New South Wales,Australia	2	3	1
Queanbeyan,New South Wales,Australia	3	5	2
Rockhampton,Queensland,Australia	2	3	1
South Auckland,Auckland,New Zealand	1	0	-1
Sydney,New South Wales,Australia	97	106	9
Taigum,Queensland,Australia	1	0	-1
Turrumurra,New South Wales,Australia	2	1	-1
Tweed Heads,New South Wales,Australia	2	1	-1
Wallacia,New South Wales,Australia	1	0	-1
Wellington,New South Wales,Australia	1	0	-1
Wellington,Wellington,New Zealand	2	1	-1

There were 93 total Australian and New Zealand cities on this list. Of them, only 27 saw any difference in the total volume of followers from that location. Some of these differences could be explained as an issue with processing or user profile changes. A person may have used geographic coordinates for their location and updated them as they traveled around, resulting in a change in city location for the user. Some may have removed location information from their profiles. The populations are so small that these small shifts in normal user activity may have nothing to do with being a Raiders fan.

The independent user profile variables aside, the data appears to support a conclusion geography did not play a role in choosing to follow or not follow the team in response to the

controversy. There might be small micropatterns at play. Of the four New Zealand cities where there was a difference, three saw a loss in followers for the team. This might be a bit misleading as four New Zealand cities saw no change in the total number of followers from them. Of the four cities that saw gains of five or more, all are large cities that are traditional league strong holds. Their increase is probably reflective of that reality, rather than as an increase in interest in the team because of the controversy. Geography does not appear to have played a role in Twitter users decision to follow or not follow the team in response to the Monaghan situation.

On Twitter, people follow accounts that are of interest to them. This can be seen as a positive expression of interest in the club as people are unlikely to follow groups or organizations they despise. By measuring comparative growth patterns, we can begin to see if the scandal had an impact on the Raider's Twitter follower fanbase. As the official team account has not mentioned the controversy and the Raiders have not changed their Twitter practices in response to this controversy, the official account content can be excluded as a variable for growth; the Raiders have not used the situation to try to leverage their fanbase. Given that, Table 2 shows the total follower counts by date for the Raiders compared to the official accounts for the Manly Sea Eagles, Gold Coast Titans, New Zealand Warriors and Melbourne Storm.

Table 2

*Total Twitter Followers: Raiders, Eagles, Titans, Warriors, Storm*

<b>Date collected</b>	<b>Raiders Canberra</b>	<b>Manly seaeagles</b>	<b>GCTitans</b>	<b>Thenz warriors</b>	<b>Melb StormRLC</b>
9-Mar-10	202	888	1,616	434	458
30-May-10	375	1,129	2,052	521	1,124
5-Jun-10	389				
19-Jun-10	417				1,215
21-Jun-10	424	1,203	2,176	565	1,226
29-Jul-10	608	1,338	2,447	614	1,473
13-Sep-10	841	1,705	3,011	884	1,942
14-Sep-10	870				
15-Sep-10	873	1,726	3,036	756	1,983
4-Oct-10	949	1,842	3,274	763	2,222
6-Nov-10	1,071	1,963	3,513	884	2,504
Difference: October 4 - November 6	122	121	239	121	282

The controversy did not appear to create a spike in new followers for the Canberra Raiders. The total number of new followers for the most recent period available with the data suggests that the total number of new followers for the Raiders is in line with other teams with similar follow totals.

Beyond user follow patterns, it is sometimes useful to look at content. The geographic location of Tweets is one method of looking at tweets. There is a tool called Tribalytics that allows this to be done. Tribalytics maintains a list of over 200,000 Australian based Twitter users, sorted by state. Tribalytics allows users to search for a word or phrase on Twitter and adds up the total number of people who tweeted using it by state. This data can then be visualized over time. Table 3 uses data provided by Tribalytics to show the total number of tweets that mention Monaghan.

Table 3

*Tribalytics: Tweets that mention Monaghan by state*

<b>State</b>	<b>Monaghan</b>	<b>3-Nov</b>	<b>4-Nov</b>	<b>5-Nov</b>
Australian Capital Territory	Tweets	1	41	44
	Users	1	31	29
New South Wales	Tweets	7	286	191
	Users	7	203	152
Northern Territory	Tweets	0	2	3
	Users	0	2	3
Queensland	Tweets	3	154	69
	Users	2	80	57
South Australia	Tweets	0	25	9
	Users	0	18	7
Tasmania	Tweets	0	5	1
	Users	0	3	1
Victoria	Tweets	0	164	87
	Users	0	122	79
Western Australia	Tweets	0	16	21
	Users	0	10	19
Total	Tweets	11	694	428
	Users	10	470	350

The geographic location of the Tweets that mention Monaghan suggests that the controversy had the biggest audience in New South Wales, one of rugby league's traditional strongholds. The situation in regards to Queensland and Victoria is interesting. Victoria has a much larger population than Queensland. Thus, it is not surprising that the total number of

Twitterers and Tweets from Victoria is larger than Queensland. On the other hand, Victoria is not a rugby league stronghold; Queensland is. Logically, it would seem that this story should be bigger in Queensland but it isn't. Interpreting what this means in a practical sense is difficult. The best conclusion is that this story will not help the NRL's attempt to expand into Victoria, as fans are more aware of negative news regarding players and the league. On the other hand, for the traditional stronghold of Queensland, the controversy is not as interesting to the local population so there should be less risk in terms of attempting to grow the fan community for the NRL in the state.

The last major method for analyzing Twitter given a controversy like this is to examine the other words used in Tweets that include the word Monaghan. This can be done using Tribalytics, which provides a table that includes a list of the most popular words used in tweets mentioning a term and the percentage of time that the word is included in a Tweet involving a specific keyword. Table 4 was generated using Tribalytics and the keyword Monaghan.

Table 4

*Popular words used in Tweets mentioning Monaghan*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>
monaghan	87.31%	sex	2.79%	#doggate	2.03%
joel	73.10%	worse	2.54%	wrong	1.78%
dog	21.32%	monday	2.54%	today	1.78%
#nrl	9.64%	trending	2.28%	clear	1.78%
photo	8.88%	talking	2.28%	bad	1.78%
raiders	6.85%	sticking	2.28%	takes	1.52%
#bonegate	6.60%	dangers	2.28%	sexual	1.52%
canberra	6.09%	club	2.28%	room	1.52%
dogs	5.33%	ve	2.03%	qantas	1.52%
statement	5.08%	social	2.03%	mad	1.52%
nrl	5.08%	sack	2.03%	jokes	1.52%
news	4.57%	releases	2.03%	guess	1.52%
twitter	3.30%	player	2.03%	bulldogs	1.52%
sacked	3.30%	mr	2.03%	blew	1.52%
wow	3.05%	danger	2.03%	barking	1.52%
sick	3.05%	agent	2.03%	admits	1.52%
breaking	3.05%	#rugbyleague	2.03%	#thatpicture	1.52%

This table suggests good things for the NRL and the Canberra Raiders. While people are discussing Monaghan and a lot of them are mentioning the dog, only 9.64% mention the NRL and even fewer Tweets reference that Monaghan plays for the Canberra Raiders. Based on Tweets, people are not necessarily associating the controversy with the NRL and the Raiders.

Things may not be as bad as they could be for both organizations in terms of what Australians are choosing to focus on.

Overall on Twitter, the controversy involving Joel Monaghan has been rather neutral for the Raiders and the NRL. The Canberra Raiders did not see a mass defecting of followers. Those that did leave were geographically distributed so there was not a geographic area that responded particularly badly. Outside of New South Wales, most of the tweets came from an area where the NRL is not strong: The NRL should not lose strength in their traditional strongholds. The controversy may hurt their ability to push into Victoria as it may reaffirm negative opinions about rugby league. When people are tweeting about Monaghan, they are rarely connecting it to the Raiders and the NRL. While Twitter suggests not all-good news, things could be much, much worse in terms of the respective fanbases.

### **Facebook**

Facebook is the most popular social networks in Australia. According to Alexa, the site ranks as the second most popular web site in the country. (Alexa Internet, Inc., 2010) According to Facebook's "What do you want to advertise?" page on November 6, 2010, the site has 9,530,800 users from Australia. The site probably has more Australian sport fans on it than any other site in Australia. This is because a lot of the users are fans of the fan pages run by Australian sport leagues, clubs and athletes. Several of these official fan pages have well over 100,000 fans.

Given the large number of Australians using the network, the official presence of so many clubs and the amount of media attention paid to the service, a response to the Monaghan controversy was inevitable. Given the timing of the writing of this paper, there are two methods that can be used to measure the impact of the Joel Monaghan controversy on the Canberra Raiders' fanbase on Facebook. The first way is to see if there has been a demographic shift in fans of the Canberra Raiders using Facebook's advertising page data. The second is to measure the relative growth in the number of followers for the Raiders compared to other NRL teams. The third is to look at total and nature of the groups and fan pages created about Monaghan. As group and fan page size had not been recorded earlier, it is impossible to compare their growth like was done in the Akermanis paper.

Facebook's advertising buy page provides demographic information about Facebook users in order to help advertisers target specific audiences. This information can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/ads/create/> and is the easiest method of accessing publicly available demographic data on Facebook. On November 5 and November 6, 2010, the number of Canberra Raiders fans were recorded that lived in Australia, in New South Wales and in the ACT. During this 24-hour period, there was no change in the size of these groups. Data regarding various demographic groups for the Canberra Raiders was also collected on June 16 and November 6, 2010. It can be found in Table 5. The gap between data collection periods is large and covers a period where a player was suspended for drink driving and the Canberra Raiders finals run.

Table 5

*Facebook data regarding Canberra Raiders fan demographics*

Age	Sex	Education	Relation	Interested in	16-Jun-10	6-Nov-10	Difference: Jun 16 to Nov 6
All	All	All	All	All	7,980	8,940	960
All	Men	All	All	All	5,400	6,000	600
All	Women	All	All	All	2,460	2,800	340
All	Women	All	All	Women	140	160	20
All	Women	All	All	Men	1,000	1,000	0
All	Women	All	Married	Men	200	160	-40
All	Women	All	Single	Men	260	420	160
All	Women	All	In a relationship	Men	320	220	-100
All	Women	All	Engaged	Men	400	< 20	#VALUE!
All	Men	All	All	Men	60	< 20	#VALUE!
All	Men	All	All	Women	3,060	3,420	360
All	Men	All	Married	Women	440	560	120
All	Men	All	Single	Women	1,340	1,520	180
All	Men	All	In a relationship	Women	700	620	-80
All	Men	All	Engaged	Women	180	140	-40
All	All	College grads	All	All	1,060	1,120	60
All	All	University of Canberra	All	All	180	160	-20
All	All	ANU	All	All	120	40	-80
All	All	University of Melbourne	All	All	< 20	< 20	0
All	All	In College	All	All	160	160	0
All	All	In High School	All	All	220	220	0

During this period, the number of engaged female fans engaged to men dropped to almost zero. The number of women interested in men who were married or in a relationship also

dropped. The number of engaged male fans engaged to males also dropped. While it is unlikely that the controversy caused these population shifts, it is possible contributor as the Canberra Raiders may have had a net gain of zero but lost old followers and gained new followers.

The response to a controversy can also be looked at by examining the comparative growth of a team to other teams in a league. If fans connect the problem to the team, they may punish a team by removing their like or not liking the fan page at the same rate that fans of other teams like their fan page. Table 6 shows the comparative growth of the Canberra Raiders official Facebook page to other teams for the period between July 30 and November 6, 2010.

Table 6

*NRL official team fan page growth*

Team	Name	Type	30-Jul-10	6-Nov-10	Difference	% Difference
Melbourne Storm	Storm Man	User	4,986	4,799	-187	-3.90%
Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles	Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles	Page	20,241	25,401	5,160	20.31%
Newcastle Knights	Newcastle Knights	Page	16,470	20,775	4,305	20.72%
Canberra Raiders	Canberra Raiders	User	3,413	4,495	1,082	24.07%
Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks	Cronulla Sharks	Page	11,230	14,792	3,562	24.08%
Canberra Raiders	Canberra Raiders	Sports Team	6,269	8,292	2,023	24.40%
North Queensland Cowboys	North Queensland Toyota Cowboys	Page	3,208	4,279	1,071	25.03%
Brisbane Broncos	Brisbane Broncos	Page	83,157	117,246	34,089	29.07%
Gold Coast Titans	Gold Coast Titans	Page	25,714	39,237	13,523	34.46%
Canberra Raiders	Canberra Raiders	Sports Team	1,255	1,945	690	35.48%
Wests Tigers	Wests Tigers - Official National Rugby League Club	Page	19,355	31,691	12,336	38.93%
Sydney Roosters	The Official Sydney Roosters Page	Page	15,362	27,890	12,528	44.92%

The Canberra Raiders are listed three times because they have three official accounts: A user page and two fan pages. Thus, it is a little hard to make good comparisons as each experienced different growth levels. The time period is also a long one, which includes a drink-driving incident involving a player and the club's finals run. That said, if the controversy did have an impact on short term growth, it is not readily apparent or a big one as the three Canberra accounts are not on either extreme for percentage growth. It is unlikely that the controversy had an impact on the club's Facebook fan growth. It may still yet but that will require waiting to see if the controversy continues for another few weeks.

Facebook makes it easy to create groups and fan pages and many people do in response to controversies. One example of this is the Jason Akermanis controversy, where fifteen anti-groups were created within three days of the story breaking. Many of these groups had names that questioned his intelligence and had names that implied criticism of his views on homosexuality. By day four of the controversy, the largest group had over 540 fans. The Joel Monaghan Facebook group and fan page creation situation is similar to that of Akermanis in that fifteen groups and pages had been included. The difference is that the membership was much smaller. The top likes for an anti-Joel page is 127. The titles of the Monaghan groups also contrast to that of Akermanis in that there is not implied condemnation of zoophilia and animal abuse. The group names also do not appear to criticize his intelligence. Rather, the names involve jokes about dogs. Table 7 gives an idea as to the nature of these groups and their size as of November 6, 2010.

Table 7

*Size of Joel Monaghan related Facebook group and fan pages*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Total members</b>	<b>Type</b>
Joel Monaghan	119	Page
i deserve to play for NSW.. LOL jk im Joel Monaghan	6	Page
Joel monaghan = SICK FUCK	30	Group
Joel Monaghan Appreciation Group	135	Group
give joel monaghan a brake	8	Group
Joel Monaghan... one sick puppy!	2	Group
JOEL MONAGHAN IS A FILTHY BASTARD	2	Group
Joel Monaghan, "Go the dogs!!" 2010.	127	Group
I dont screw dogs jks im joel monaghan :L	22	Group
I hate playing the Bulldogs LOL JKS I'm Joel Monaghan	7	Group
That awkward moment when Joel Monaghan offers to walk your dog	33	Group
Joel Monaghan... Stay the F**K away from my dog!!!	37	Group
I think joel monaghan misstated his wife with his dog	1	Group
The Awkward moment when Joel Monaghan plays the Bulldogs	7	Group
joel monaghan... hate to get sucked off by a dog :/	7	Group
The Awkwardness when Joel Monaghan is Caught in a room with a dog...	5	Group
awkward moment when you walk in on joel monaghan copping head off a dog..	101	Group
lets take the dog for a walk, LOL JK im Joel Monaghan lets fuck it instead	8	Group
Joel Monaghan Loves Dogs..... No I Mean He Really Loves Them.....	2	Group

Against the backdrop of the Jason Akermanis situation, this appears pretty favorable for the Raiders and the NRL. It could be concluded that the nature of these groups is a positive for

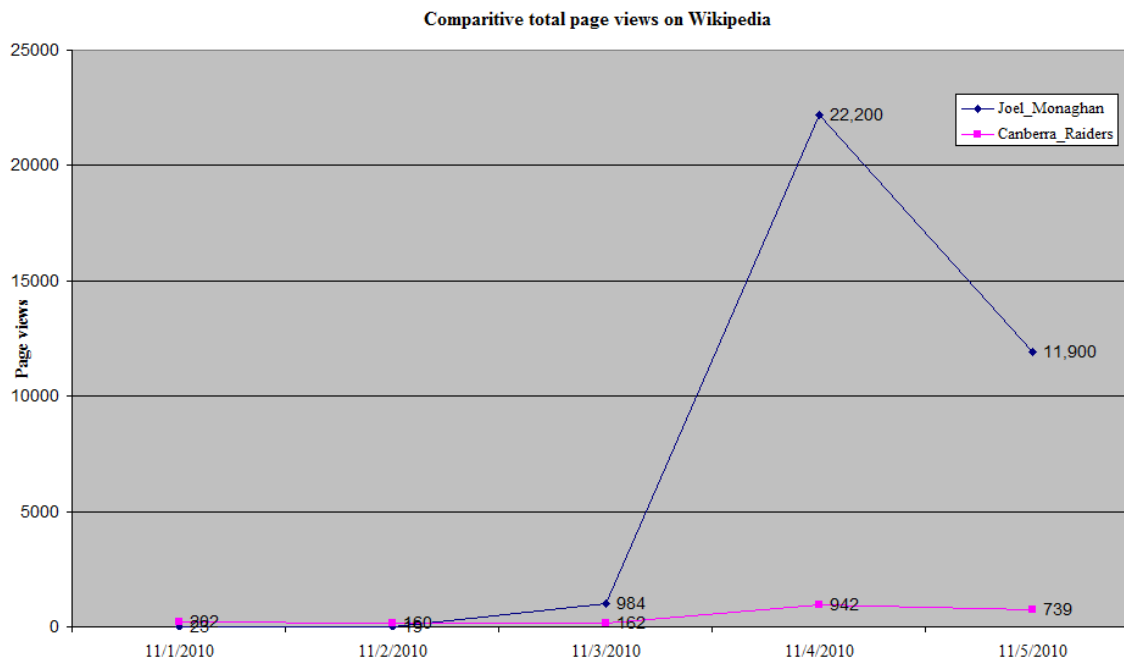
the Canberra Raiders and the NRL in that the groups do not mention the Canberra Raiders. They do not imply an activation of a moralistic fan base that could be highly motivated to cause trouble for the team. These groups also have very little reach and show that many people are uninterested in joining even for a laugh.

While the available Facebook data for this section was sparse, what is available suggests that the Canberra Raiders did not lose a fan base because of Monaghan's actions. The community that appeared left the Raiders was one that they weren't specifically targeting such as gay men and women in relationships. Those who were expressing anger over the situation were not doing so from a troublesome moralistic position; rather, they were doing so from a less serious perspective involving cracking jokes about having sex with dogs. Like Twitter, the Facebook situation does not look particularly good but it could be much worse.

### **Wikipedia**

Wikipedia is one of the first sources that many Australians turn to when a news story breaks. The articles on the site often provide useful background, contain brief useful summations of ongoing events and include links to find additional information. At the same time, Wikipedia is important because of its high search engine placement. While people may not be looking for Wikipedia articles, they may just stumble upon it because the result is the first or second one for the term they are searching for.

In terms of the Joel Monaghan controversy and Wikipedia, the easiest way to measure the controversy as it impacts the Canberra Raiders would be to compare the total page views and edits between the article about Monaghan and the one about the Raiders. If the controversy reflected more upon Monaghan than his team, the expectation is the page view spike would be higher for the player. This information was found at [http://stats.grok.se/en/201011/Joel\\_Monaghan](http://stats.grok.se/en/201011/Joel_Monaghan) and [http://stats.grok.se/en/201011/Canberra\\_Raiders](http://stats.grok.se/en/201011/Canberra_Raiders) and is visualized in Figure 5.



*Figure 5.* A visualize of the total number of article views using data from <http://stats.grok.se/> .

In the two days prior to the story breaking, the Canberra Raider article had more views: 202 to 23 on November 1, 160 to 19 on November 2. The day that the story broke, the total article views were 984 for Monaghan's and 162 for the Canberra Raiders' article. At the onset, while people may have been aware that Monaghan's actions took place during the Raiders' Mad Monday event, they did not seek out additional information on the Raiders, like seeing if the Raiders article had a section on Mad Monday.

The Wikipedia article views data strongly suggest that people were less interested in the Canberra Raiders and more interested in Joel Monaghan. While the content on the Monaghan page includes many references to his playing for the Canberra Raiders, the page view data supports a conclusion that people were less interested in the team and their response to the controversy than they were interested in knowing what exactly Monaghan had done.

Another way of measuring interest in a topic on Wikipedia is to look at the article's edit history. The history possibly provides two methods for analysis: Total edits per article that can be viewed as an active edit participation counter to the passive reading consumption. The other possible method would involve trying to determine the location of the edits made to both articles. The latter is possible if anonymous edits were geotagged using IP address information to establish the location. This would be useful because the Raiders are probably striving for a fan

base in and around Canberra. If most negative edits are coming from inside Canberra, that would be more problematic in terms of maintaining a local fan base than if the edits were coming from outside of Australia or in Australian locations that are not traditional NRL bases. This type of analysis, while possible, is extremely unreliable; many programs that produce this information have conflicts with others in attempting to accurately identify the city that the IP address originated from. Because of these issues, that methodology will not be done in this article. The first is another matter and can easily be done.

The article about Joel Monaghan was created on March 17, 2006. As of the November 5, there have been 213 total edits to the English language article about Joel Monaghan. Of these, 47 edits or 22% of all edits to the article were made on and between November 3 and November 5, dates when the story broke. There likely would have been more edits to the article except the article was locked from editing by anyone except sysops at 4:49 UTC/15:49 Canberra time on November 4. In contrast, the Canberra Raiders article saw an increase in edits but was never locked to prevent anyone from editing. Still, given the difficulties in editing, there are noticeable differences between editing volume that can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8

*Total edits to Joel Monaghan and Canberra Raiders Wikipedia articles*

	<b>Joel Monaghan</b>	<b>Canberra Raiders</b>
1-Nov	0	0
2-Nov	0	0
3-Nov	6	4
4-Nov	36	9
5-Nov	5	5

The volume of edits suggests that people were not as interested in putting information about Joel Monaghan in the Canberra Raiders article as they were in editing the article about Monaghan. The edit volume suggestions are supported by a critical reading of both articles, where the controversy is only mentioned on the article about Monaghan and not the article about the Canberra Raiders. This is good news for the Canberra Raiders because the Wikipedia article about the team appears high in Google rankings. The controversy is about Monaghan and not as much about the Raiders and their Mad Monday.

When all three things are looked at together, comparative article views, edits and content, the picture looks better for the Canberra Raiders. People visiting and contributing to Wikipedia

who are interested in the situation are not as interested in the Canberra Raiders. The association between the two does not appear to be high.

### Wikia

Wikia is a wiki company that hosts over a million wikis. These wikis can be created for free and about any topic that a person wants. There are several wikis on Wikia that have been created about Australian sport, including a wiki about the NRL that can be found at <http://nrl.wikia.com/>. This wiki is very small and only has 23 articles. Since the controversy involving Monaghan started, there have been no edits to the wiki. The situation did not inspire any members of the large Wikia family to visit the wiki and create an article about the Canberra Raiders or Joel Monaghan. This could be read as another positive for the Canberra Raiders and the NRL as the situation did not activate a dormant fan base to document the situation.

### YouTube

YouTube is the largest video site online. It is also the second biggest search engine online. (Hill, 2008) It is a popular site for sport fans; several teams around the world for different sports capitalize on this by having their own official accounts including the Chicago Red Stars, Real Madrid, and Perth Glory. Beyond the presence of official team accounts, fans upload many videos. Fan videos can be music videos, news clips, and video blogs. The frequency of uploads is one way to determine interest in a club compared to other teams while a controversy is taking place. A comparison between the Canberra Raiders and other NRL teams and clubs can be found in Table 9.

Table 9

*Total search results on YouTube for NRL related keywords*

Team	Keyword	21-Jun-10	24-Oct-10	7-Nov-10	Difference 21-Jun to 7-Nov	Difference 24-Oct to 7-Nov
Brisbane Broncos	"Brisbane Broncos"	520	525	534	14	9
Brisbane Broncos	"Darren Lockyer"	198	187	194	-4	7
Canberra Raiders	"Canberra Raiders"	274	403	422	148	19
Canberra Raiders	"Joel Monaghan"			24		
Gold Coast Titans	"Gold Coast Titans"	260	302	303	43	1
Melbourne Storm	"Melbourne Storm"	925	889	891	-34	2
Parramatta Eels	"Parramatta Eels"	485	527	538	53	11
Parramatta Eels	"Timana Tahu"	36	31	31	-5	0
Wests Tigers	"Wests Tigers"	404	464	468	64	4

The total number of new videos uploaded between June 21 and November 7 that mentioned the Canberra Raiders is 148, about 80 more than any other team. There does not appear to be a clear reason for this as when the results are looked into to see what has been uploaded during this period, there is no major topic of interest, nor are all the videos being uploaded by one or two individuals. For the period between October 24 and November 7, the Canberra Raiders topped the table with 19 new videos. The next closest club is Parramatta with 11. It is highly likely that the increase in videos relates to the controversy, though not certain as the team had elevated video totals in the prior period when compared to other clubs.

Given the mixed conclusion from video totals over time, other YouTube variables need to be looked at. On November 5, a search result total of 20 was found for "Joel Monaghan". By November 7, this had increased to 24. This suggests that as the controversy took off, there was a significant increase in interest about Joel Monaghan. A search on November 7 for "Canberra Raiders" "Joel Monaghan" had 10 results. This means that 41.7% of all videos that mentioned Monaghan also mentioned the team he was playing for on Mad Monday. It also means that only 2.3% of all videos that mention the Raiders also include a reference to Monaghan. If the 10 results are sorted by date, six were uploaded since the controversy broke. If only the Monaghan/Raiders videos that were uploaded between November 4 and November 7 are included, then 1.4% of all videos relate to it the controversy. Of the six videos that mention the Raiders and Monaghan, the least viewed video as of November 7 had 1,589 views. The most viewed video had 17,683 views. The average total views for these six videos was 6,352. This can be compared to the 4 videos uploaded prior to the controversy, where the least viewed had 788 views, the most viewed had 4,431 views and the average views was 2,406. The audience for the controversy-related videos was 2.6 times larger than the non-controversy videos.

The additional data does not really clarify the situation. The best conclusion that can be reached is that the Canberra Raiders had an already elevated audience of people uploading videos prior to the controversy. In the period around the controversy, if the six videos that mentioned the Raiders and Monaghan were removed, the Raiders would still be the top team for video uploads. The fan base continued to upload videos and these videos continued to be viewed but at a smaller rate than the videos referencing the controversy. On the whole though, YouTube data suggests that based on pure volume and established audience, the controversy will not have an adverse effect on the team's fanbase because the controversy uploads represent a tiny segment

of the content about them. There is not the quantity of videos about it that should be a long-term concern for the club in term of its image with their fanbase.

### **Yahoo!Groups**

Mailing lists once were one of the most popular tools for Australian sport fans to use in order to communicate with each other. They were easy to create with hosts like egroups, coollists, topica, Yahoo!Groups and Google groups. Two such lists still exist for Canberra Raiders fans: raiders and raiders82, both found on Yahoo!Groups. In the case of raiders, the list has 9 members, open membership and open posting. There has not been a new post since 2003. The controversy did not activate Raiders fans in terms of encouraging them to post. raiders82 has closed membership, requiring that the moderator approve new members. It currently has 128 members. The list had no posts on it between March 2008 and October 2010. There was one new post in November 2010. As the archives are not publicly available, what the contents are is not entirely clear but it could be assumed that the controversy inspired a fan to be less dormant in their support of the club. All things said, the controversy did not inspire much activity on this particular service. It suggests that things are not so heinous as to encourage people to condemn the team they support.

### **Conclusion**

The Joel Monaghan controversy is different than a number of the other sporting controversies that took place during the 2010 NRL and AFL seasons. There were not the moralistic and human rights related issues underpinning it like there were for the Akermanis controversy and the racism controversy during the State of Origin. There was not the harm or potential to cause harm and death that there were for the alleged sexual assault by a St Kilda player or the drink-driving situation by another Canberra rugby player. There were not the illegal actions like the St Kilda player and the Canberra Raiders player allegedly did. There was not the break of unstated football rules regarding the poaching of players from rugby to Aussie rules like there was for the Israel Folau code change controversy. There was not the issue of cheating and bringing unfairness to the game that the Melbourne Storm salary cap violations had. The lack of these issues probably underscores the reasons why fans behaved online such as they did. This was a drunken act in a culture that can understand and relate to someone engaging in drunken stupidity. If other structural issues to the controversy had been at play with a similar amount of media coverage, if the Raiders had been in a bigger market and if the player had been more

famous, this might have played differently, as the author's Akermanis and Melbourne Storm controversy articles demonstrate.

Beyond the underlying variables regarding the nature of the controversy, the results suggest that the Monaghan controversy did not adversely effect the Canberra Raiders fan base in that there were few numbers that suggest the player and the Raiders were inextricably linked. On the other hand, the club did not receive a benefit from the controversy in that it did not inspire Raider fans and Canberrans to show support of the club by following them on Twitter, fanning them on Facebook, or editing articles about the team on Wikipedia and Wikia. The amount of interest about the controversy expressed in YouTube views, Tweets and views to the Monaghan page on Wikipedia suggests that there might be underlying structural image issues in places like Victoria where the NRL wants to grow its fanbase. In the end, the controversy did not hurt the team, but it did not help them.

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