

Between the bombshell announcement of further deep staff cuts at Fairfax publications, subsequent strike action by its journalists, the handing down of the 2017 federal budget, and the much-publicised return of drug smuggler Schapelle Corby to Australia, the news in May was surprisingly strongly focused on domestic Australian issues.

But not all of these matters were reflected equally strongly in the Australian Twitter News Index (ATNIX) for the month. ATNIX tracks the sharing of articles from Australian news and opinion sites on Twitter.

The major story in the Australian news industry itself during May was [the staff strike at Fairfax](#) , triggered by significant job cuts across the editorial offices of the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, and other publications. The walkout – which also affected Fairfax’s coverage of the federal budget – clearly received considerable sympathy from Australia’s Twitter users; several well-connected Twitter users in Australia posted calls to boycott Fairfax sites and refrain from sharing their articles during this time.

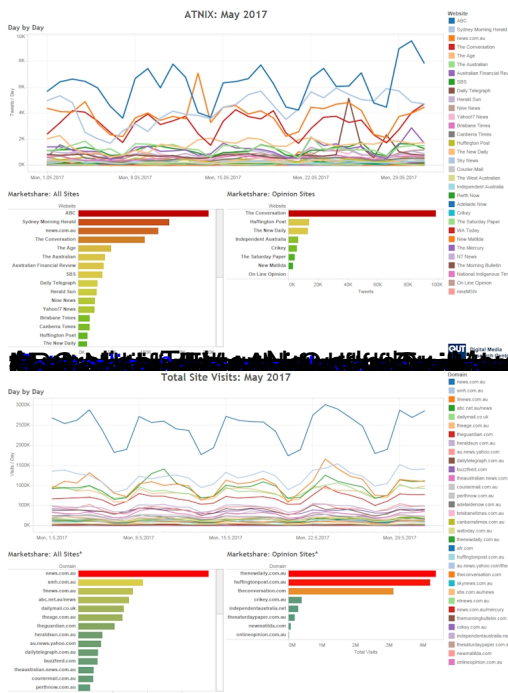
As a result, during the period of the strike on 3 to 10 May, sharing rates for articles in the leading Fairfax publications declined precipitously. Both SMH and The Age only return to standard day-to-day sharing levels on Twitter by the middle of the month.

Indeed, the Sydney Morning Herald’s weakness over the course of the strike is so pronounced that it very nearly enables perennially third-placed site news.com.au to catch up. news.com.au’s strong performance is driven in part also by its attention-grabbing coverage of [a “mystery monster” washing up on the shore of an Indonesian island](#) , which went viral well beyond the site’s ordinary Australian audience. The article was shared in some 4,600 tweets on 13 May alone, and in almost 5,800 tweets over the course of the entire month.

Another Sydney paper, the Daily Telegraph, doesn’t usually show up on ATNIX, as few Twitter users appear prepared to publicly share the stories they read on its site. However, in May it too records a brief but major spike in sharing, for its coverage of [Korean boy band BTS’s arrival in Sydney](#) (4,400 shares on 25 May). This is another example of an Australian news story spreading well beyond the national audience.

Schapelle Corby fails to draw a Twitter audience

Written by The Conversation



Disclosure

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