

Case Study

Setting Sail With Jessica Watson

Jessica Watson is your typical 16-year-old. She loves the beach, reading, cooking, and sailing. Lots of sailing. In fact, Jessica is currently on schedule to break the record for the world's youngest person to sail by herself, unassisted, around the world, in her 34-foot yacht named "Ella's Pink Lady".

Her story is an astounding one, not only because of what it's made of, but also because of how she's chosen to tell it. In typical 21st-century-teenager fashion, Jessica – and her family and brand managers – are using multiple social media channels, including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#), [YouTube](#), and [her blog](#), to keep the world updated on her progress and color in the details of her incredible undertaking.



Unsurprisingly, the response to Jessica's journey has been massive and polarized; people either commend her for working toward such a huge achievement or tell her she's too young to be hitting the seas alone. No sooner had she started her trip than her supporters and detractors came out in droves, leaving hundreds of comments, both positive and negative, on her blog and in other various spots around the Web. While the majority of the comments left for Jessica cheered her on, her parents understood that not all of the feedback would be so supportive, and they, along with Jessica's management, wanted a [360-degree view](#) of what was being said about her.

To manage the flood of commentary and keep on top of conversation, Team Jessica – which includes digital agency [d.tail Noisemakers](#) (in partnership with [Tonto Digital](#) and [Elixir Digital](#)) – recruited Radian6's Australian outlet, [Social2CRM](#), to create a monitoring strategy they could live by for the duration of Jessica's trip. By thoroughly monitoring the conversations about Jessica, her management and family are able to make informed decisions about when, where, and how to respond, and where Jessica should respond, as well.



“Google Alerts are great, but we needed a better media monitoring tool to thoroughly keep track of posts and understand more about the post than simply where it came from and the content,” said Jessica Murphy of d.tail Noisemakers. “Every week we export reports reflecting the number of posts, sentiment, media type, trending topics, etcetera, from Radian6, and we add our own social media analytics and insights to deliver the report’s to JW’s management and her family.”

In addition, if any posts stand out during a given week, the folks at d.tail Noisemakers forward them on to Jessica’s management to make them aware of potential issues.

While this tack sounds fairly typical of your modern brand management use case, the added depth to Jessica’s story is that her managers and family use these media platforms and the monitoring strategy to encourage her as she completes this, by definition, lonely voyage. Her team is also monitoring the stories coming from mass media outlets, and continually making sure that she receives only information most relevant to her since her bandwidth is so limited.

The value of monitoring and managing brand reputation is largely magnified when the processes are applied to a “brand” inadvertently created by a young girl taking on the epic task of sailing around the world by herself. Via their listening and [monitoring](#) strategies, Jessica’s family and management have been able to gain perspective on how people perceive Jessica and the goal she’s aiming to achieve, jump in to correct misperceptions and uninformed commentary, and make sure that the odd inappropriate comment is taken care of before it turns into something bigger. Because of the reports she receives, Jessica is able to respond directly to comments and feedback, and build relationships with those interested in her story by answering their questions and recognizing their support.

As of Tuesday, March 16th, Jessica had been sailing for 150 days and had just passed the 17,000-nautical-mile mark of her 23,000-nautical mile journey. With approximately 6,000 nautical miles left, Jessica is poised to wrap up her trip at her starting port of Sydney, Australia soon and will be writing a book about her journey upon her return.

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