



The Ohio State University Uses Sysomos to Monitor Agricultural Issues



**THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

The Objective

The Ohio State University utilizes Sysomos in their Department of Agricultural Communication, Education and Leadership to further their goal of educating the public about agricultural issues. Assistant Professor Dr. Annie Specht understands the unique intersection between media, technology, and agriculture and sees value in monitoring social conversations around important food and agriculture issues.

OSU's use of Sysomos began in 2015 during a major water quality crisis in Ohio along Lake Erie. Toxic algae blooms contaminated the water affecting thousands of people, especially in a large agricultural area in northwest Ohio. Dr. Specht and her team of graduate students wanted to understand the perception around this issue and create a social engagement plan for the university.

The Approach

Dr. Specht's team turned to Sysomos to research conversations around the water crisis. She explained that they often self-reflect on issues incorrectly, so it was important to confirm or refute suspicions with concrete social data.

With Sysomos, OSU was able to research the water crisis in multiple ways:



Monitor Conversations

With Sysomos' ad-hoc search abilities, the team could surface all conversations pertaining to the water crisis and drill down into specific peaks in chatter.



Identify Engagement Opportunities

By understanding the key conversations taking place, the team identified specific topics and communities they wanted to engage with to build understanding and share their department's expertise.



Surface Related Issues

While researching the water crisis, the team was also able to surface collateral issues that they were previously unaware of. This allowed them to understand the role of the crisis within a larger conversation and better educate themselves on the broader landscape.



Identify Key Influencers

The team was able to identify key influencers in the water-quality discussions and learn about their main beliefs. Understanding these influential figures was important for Dr. Specht's team, as they could start dialogues directly with the individuals and utilize their influence to shape larger conversations.

The Results

With Sysomos, the Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership was able to understand how a large agricultural issue was impacting individuals and communities throughout Ohio. They utilized the social insights to inform the stance they planned to take on specific issues and surfaced opportunities for education and engagement.

Dr. Specht explains that moving forward, they will continue to monitor another year of conversation around toxic algae blooms and water contamination. They plan to follow up the social research with traditional surveys and focus groups.



"We saw great value in this social data and introduced the concept of social issue monitoring to other groups within OSU. The organization has now expanded social research to other departments and topics such as animal health and food waste. The great thing about the social web is that we're not restrained to a set list of topics, so we can conduct research freely as new events arise."

Annie Specht



SITUATION

Contamination in Lake Erie caused water to be undrinkable for thousands in Ohio.



SOLUTION

OSU's Dept. of Agricultural Communication, Education and Leadership utilized Sysomos to research conversations around the water crisis.



IMPACT

The team identified thought leadership opportunities and built a community engagement plan to help educate and shape the conversation.