DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN SPORT

Right story, right time, right place, right sponsor
Quality content is vital for sports teams, leagues, broadcasters and brands, with text, photographs, animations, videos, audio and statistics, created on a near-constant basis to inform, entertain and engage fans.

But quality content is nothing if the planning and distribution is not right – it limits the audience, the engagement and ultimately the opportunity to monetize. The art of storytelling is not only in the story, but in where and how the story is told – and how data can inform posting strategies.

What are Fan Stories™?
It is against this backdrop that Repucom devised Fan Stories™, a way of categorising different types of digital content – everything from live game commentary to event highlights, player question and answer sessions to fan competitions.

How we do it and what are the benefits?
Repucom analysed over 15,000 posts and tweets across three major social platforms – Twitter, Facebook and Instagram – created by 25 of the leading European football clubs during the 2014/15 season. Every post and tweet was categorised, assigned a Fan Story and then analysed by engagement. New software, built by Repucom, allows this to happen faster and more efficiently than ever before. Rights-holders are now driving revenue through assigning particular Fan Stories™ to particular sponsors – effectively standardising digital inventory.

INTRODUCING FAN STORIES™

A Fan Story™ is a type of online content – here’s a selection of Fan Stories™ most frequently posted by sports teams and leagues.
EXPERT VIEW

“For major rights-holders, either teams or leagues, investment in digitally-enabled storytelling (Fan Stories™) and digitally-enabled services can lead to larger, more engaged global fanbases and the monetisation of digital channels.

“A clear digital action plan should comprise quality content, an understanding of what content works best on each social platform and, for each platform, a strategy for monetisation – be it driving followers back to an official club site, encouraging sign-ups to membership areas, direct ticket or merchandise sales or integrating partners into certain Fan Stories™.”

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WHICH TYPE OF FAN STORY™ WORKS BEST WHERE?

Best-performing Fan Stories™ on Instagram

Player Training Session – 9.3%
Game/Season Countdown – 8.7%
Behind the Scenes – 7.6%
Game Commentary – 7.5%
Event Highlights – 5.3%

Best-performing Fan Stories™ on Twitter

Game Commentary – 31.1%
Player Q&A Sessions – 8.5%
Before the Game – 6.0%
Transfer News – 6.0%
Statistics – 5.8%

Best-performing Fan Stories™ on Facebook

Event Highlights – 17.5%
Player Q&A Sessions – 15.7%
Game Commentary – 12.1%
Game/Season Countdown – 8.9%
Fan Competition – 5.8%

» **Instagram** is an excellent platform for engaging fans between games – ‘training updates’ and ‘behind the scenes’ content performed particularly strongly on this platform.

» **Twitter** is a real-time platform: 30 per cent of engagement came from ‘game commentary’ tweets provided by official club accounts.

» **Facebook** can provide Twitter with a challenge when it comes to ‘live’ engagement – ‘game commentary’ posts on Facebook contributed 12 per cent of the overall engagement with content on the platform.
TOP 5: THE MOST EFFECTIVE FANSTORIES™ (by interactions per post)

1. AWARDS

Who's doing it well?
**Liverpool FC**

Goal or player of the month/season awards invite interaction and are an effective catalyst for discussion.

2. CLUB MERCHANDISE/PROGRAMMES

Who's doing it well?
**Chelsea FC**

Digital versions of programmes or offers on club merchandise can draw social followers back to an official site, where the club controls the advertising.

3. STATISTICS

Who's doing it well?
**NFL**

Quenching the thirst of a particular segment of fans – the Game Experts – clubs and leagues offer statistics, key facts, infographics and animations.

4. TRANSFER NEWS

Who's doing it well?
**Major League Baseball**

Fans tend to look to official sources for confirmation of a new signing and first interviews.

5. PLAYER Q & A

Who's doing it well?
**Mercedes AMG Petronas**

Rights holders are increasingly using video on social platforms to interact with fans and answer questions posed by followers.
THE DIGITAL STORYTELLING MASTERPLAN

THE FOUR KEY STEPS FOR A RIGHTS-HOLDER

MAP A RIGHTS HOLDERS’ DIGITAL LANDSCAPE:
How many website views, Instagram or Twitter followers, Facebook ‘likes’, Snapchat views, mobile app downloads and YouTube subscribers?

CREATE A CLEAR STORYTELLING AND SERVICES STRATEGY FOR EACH PLATFORM:
Assign particular Fan Stories™ to particular platforms, based on engagement rates: for example, fan competitions, score announcements and a fantasy game on an official website, with game commentary on Twitter and footage from training on Instagram.

USE THAT INFORMATION TO CREATE A DIGITAL CONTENT CALENDAR:
Which Fan Stories™ should appear when and on what platform during the build-up to, during or after a game? A Fan Story can be consumed across multiple digital platforms to generate impressions, engagements and media value for brands.

USE THE DIGITAL CONTENT CALENDAR AND DEFINED FAN STORIES POSITIONING AND PLATFORM TO APPLY A MONETISATION STRATEGY:
Build a brand into a particular Fan Story — i.e. Manchester City/Nissan Player of the Month awards, positioned on the club app, website and social platforms; and identify which Fan Stories will point people towards a team website and revenue generation opportunities such as subscriptions (a League Pass-type product), or buying merchandise or tickets.

Club partner Nissan have been successfully integrated into Manchester City’s Goal of the Month posts.
LET’S GET CONNECTED

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