

Internet Broadcast: UEFA Video Service provides live streaming for all UEFA Champions League Matches



Customer: UEFA

Installation: UK

Industry: Sport

More at: www.ntteuropeonline.com

Streaming live football to the world.

As an organisation that prides itself on innovation and best-quality service, UEFA embarked on a mission to develop the UEFA Video Service; a groundbreaking offering that enables over 35 broadcasters to stream live UEFA football matches online, providing football fans in more than 120 countries with access to 125 matches per season, including all UEFA Champions League matches.

For over six years, NTT Europe Online has successfully supported uefa.com, the largest and most successful football portal on the Internet. UEFA once again turned to NTT Europe Online to design and deliver the content delivery platform to support its global streaming service.

"UEFA Media Technologies was set up to ensure the association continues to be able to provide its partners and audiences with a premium interactive service" UEFA Media Technologies Head of Technology, Daniel Marion, says. "We wanted to be able to stream live UEFA football to a global audience. For this project we needed far more than a global infrastructure provider. We needed a partner with the personnel and expertise to provide assurances that the project would succeed and would be of the highest quality for our stakeholders."

Reaching out to a football-mad world

If the project was to succeed, there were a number of challenges that NTT Europe Online and UEFA Media Technologies had to overcome. Firstly, the solution had to guarantee its broadcast partners that it could protect their digital broadcast rights over national and regional boundaries while maintaining IP and content security on the notoriously borderless Internet.

Secondly, the online video service had to be completely reliable and capable of supporting huge numbers of simultaneous users, especially on match nights. All parties were clear from the start that one fault could damage the service for good in the eyes of the audience.

Finally, the service needed to adhere to high-quality assurance standards. The network had to be robust, deliver the highest-quality video streaming available and be intuitive to interact with. The organisation had to ensure a positive end-user experience or the project would not progress past the planning phase.

"Only by creating a solution that met our strict quality, reliability and security requirements could we then encourage broadcasters to take up the service and ultimately meet our main goal – enabling

broadcasters to provide UEFA football content to a global audience," Marion says

Playing as a team

In order to make the service available to as many football fans as possible, broadcast partners in Europe are encouraged to make live matches available on the Internet as well as TV. Aware that not all broadcasters had the in-house technology or infrastructure in place to do this, UEFA and NTT Europe Online developed the UEFA Video Service.

Hosted and managed by NTT Europe Online alongside its partners deltatre, a leading sports technology specialist, and Entriq, a pay-media specialist, the UEFA Video Service provides a package which integrates seamlessly with a broadcaster's existing web presence, allowing them to stream matches from their websites. Using national and regional geo-blocking software, the solution allows UEFA to maintain complete control over who can log on to each broadcaster's service – upholding audience boundaries and protecting the digital rights of its partners.

"The video service platform was tailor-made for our needs and the needs of our broadcast partners. Content security was paramount and knowing NTT Europe Online

is certified to ISO 27001 for Information Security Management meant we were able to guarantee that digital rights would not be breached," Marion says.

Together with NTT Communications, NTT Europe Online used its Smart Content Delivery technology to give UEFA enough on-demand bandwidth to cope with peaks in usage. On any given match night, eight matches are streamed in eight different languages. The content delivery platform uses a number of strategically located cache servers in Europe, the USA and Asia/Pacific to balance the load so no single server has to handle all of the user demand. As a result, NTT Europe Online offers a 100 per cent Service Level Agreement for match days and meets UEFA Media Technologies' stringent service delivery criteria.

Additionally, in order to prevent any individual problems disrupting the end-user viewing experience, NTT Europe Online provides UEFA Media Technologies with a multi-lingual match night support centre, manned by a dedicated team of 30 customer service representatives. The support centre has the capacity to deal with any user enquiries via live chat and email.

"From the network infrastructure and content delivery to the managed hosting solution and dedicated support services, NTT Europe Online and its partners provide us with a global solution – literally from football pitch to PC. They continue to deliver the quality of service we demand and have the expertise and technology to continue to grow our offering and improve our service for our broadcast partners," he says.

Achieving the ultimate goal

Thanks to NTT Europe Online's innovative solution, UEFA Media Technologies is maximising the reach of its competitions – providing a quality, live-video streaming service to more than 35 broadcast partners, reaching over 120 countries worldwide.

UEFA's extensive archive, with the UEFA Champions League footage stretching back to 1993 and complete matches from 2001, is also available via its portal. In addition, the biggest European Championship ever, and UEFA Euro 2008™, was also made available via the video service.

NTT Europe Online and UEFA Media Technologies also continue to innovate and are already looking at next generation technologies, including NTT Communications' IPv6 network with its multi-casting capabilities, to offer content owners the highest quality of video streaming while supporting even larger numbers of simultaneous users online.

"Football is the number one sport in the world – billions of people across the world support the game in one form or another. UEFA's competitions are only going to get bigger, and our broadcast partners potential audience across the world will grow," Marion says. "We need to be providing the best possible service for our partners and football fans worldwide – allowing them to benefit from the latest content delivery technologies to improve their viewer's experience, not just in Europe, but globally. With NTT Europe Online, we will achieve that goal."

UEFA, the Union des Associations Europeennes de Football, is the governing body of football on the continent of Europe. Founded in 1954, its headquarters are located in Switzerland. With 53 member associations, it is responsible for organising European competitions for male and female players at club and national-team level, as well as handling administrative matters related to football in Europe.



NTT Europe Online

NTT Europe Online provides managed hosting, application management and security management solutions to enterprises globally. These solutions give the reliability, availability, security and scalability needed to underpin business success online.

NTT Europe Online is a wholly owned subsidiary of NTT Communications, the international arm of Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Group (NTT Group), one of the largest telecommunications companies in the world.

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