Thank you to the one billion World Cup fans who attended the Global Stadium.

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The Equalizer

FIFA invited the global football audience to join our digital platforms to connect with the game. By sharing our unrivalled access to the tournament with the world, we conveyed our belief that football makes us all equal.

This spirit of inclusiveness proved infectious with everyday football fans the world over, as well as chief football writers, City diarists, celebrities, global brands and their customers.

A passionate blend of insightful, interactive football content provided a truly global, digital platform that served to communicate FIFA’s campaigns, while achieving the deepest levels of audience engagement and contribution. Additionally, our Social Hub aimed to instantly capture the excitement and serendipity of the tournament across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

The Winner

We touched over a billion people with official FIFA World Cup content in what became known as the Global Stadium; a live and social hub which embraced technology to create a genuinely two-way, second screen experience.

The benefits felt by supporters are embodied in the huge audiences we touched online, mobile and social, making the 2014 FIFA World Cup the biggest sports event in the history of digital.
For the second tournament in a row, Nielsen measured FIFA to be the #1 World Cup Online Destination in the researched markets in June 2014, with 79% of all US World Cup digital citizens accessing FIFA official content, 45% of all UK World Cup online fans and 33% of all connected Brazilian World Cup fans.

We surpassed many audience records during the 31 days of the World Cup. An astonishing 350 million Facebook friends felt enthused to #JoinIn the official FIFA World Cup conversation. There were 672 million tweets recorded during the 2014 FIFA World Cup, more than the London 2012, 2014 Super Bowl and Oscars combined. After only twelve days of the tournament we had already become the most-downloaded sports event app in history. At the time of writing, over 30 million people have installed the official FIFA free app.

Fans were at the centre of all of our output and inhabited the FIFA team’s tireless passion for all things football. The #SayNoToRacism Selfie campaign attracted superstars who snapped and tweeted themselves promoting the hashtag. Supporters posted their own selfies, reaching 16.3 million Facebook users and yielding 31 million Facebook impressions, while 142 tweets garnered 13.7 thousand retweets and reached 10.9 million followers.

By July 14, 2014 FIFA’s ambition to invite the world to #JoinIn had been realised and fans, celebrities, football’s superstars and the journalist elite had shared experiences in the Global Stadium.
The FIFA Digital Platform (FDP) study aims to share FIFA's digital journey over the 2011-2014 cycle and reveal a glimpse of the next cycle, as it evolves.

For three years and 11 months, we evolve the FIFA digital experience and for one month, every cycle, FIFA, along with 4 billion+ World Cup fans, are immersed in the execution, events and experience of the planet's greatest footballing event.

The 2014 FIFA World Cup evolved out of in-depth research and new product development, user insights, emerging trends and product planning, which all started when Sepp Blatter sent his, now famous, vuvuzela tweet to the world in June 2010.

In one of the President’s opening tweets he cautioned the world's media against its campaign to ban the native South African ‘ear-splitting’ horn, he wrote, “I don’t see banning the music traditions of fans in their own country. Would you want to see a ban on the fan traditions in your own country?”

The tweet reached 52 million eyeballs, from the front pages of the New York Times to the Huffington Post. The interplay between print and online platforms needed investigating.

After 24 months of focussed research and insights into mobile, social and online behaviours, we concluded that sports fans are the most connected of all digital media consumers.

“FIFA voice in social context loses formality, striking a human chord with Presidential tweet”
We then used the consumer insights around these digital behaviours to deliver the official 2014 FIFA World Cup product offering across significant digital platforms. In 2014, the Global Stadium delivered an integrated live and social capability to keep world football fans connected for longer and engaged deeper with official FIFA content.

There is always a serendipitous aspect to each World Cup tournament, things that happen outside the control of the organisers, for example, who knew World Cup Fever would go viral across the USA?

Measuring the impact of the evolved FIFA digital offering is just as important to us as the delivery of the products which stimulate usage. In fact, you can’t have one without the other. As we embark on the journey into the next cycle, we are delighted to share our early insights with you in the Future Products chapter.

For now, we’d like to share the FDP journey so far and provide a deeper understanding of our audience, their loyalty, engagement and how new social audiences have been reached through the Global Stadium.
Evolution
The ever-evolving era of social and mobile
Events and trends always emerge during every World Cup to reveal deeper insights into human behaviours around the event.

In June 2010, when President Sepp Blatter gave his considered reaction to the global media furore around the use of the South African vuvuzela, a plastic horn, about 65 centimetres long, which produces a loud monotone note - no one was prepared for the scale of reaction on social, online and in print.

A step change in perceptions had occurred which extended further than the president's rapid followership on Twitter. It signposted an emerging trend in the transfer of power, from the unilateral online and print news machine, to something completely out of the control or manipulation of media owners.

With the emergence of Twitter and Facebook in our daily lives, everyone now had a voice - anyone could make themselves heard. Social media is now for people who, ironically, don’t care about social media but who care deeply about the content that social media can champion.

By the middle of 2012, there were four billion mobile phone owners on the planet, with a quarter of them using smartphones and that uptake was growing fast.

A deeper dive into mobile behaviours revealed that sports fans preferred the app to mobile web experience and users were returning more frequently because of their personal connection to the content they loved and consumed.
Evolution

Mobile, as a media touch point had become mass market by mid-2012 and the explosion in consumer apps was supercharging sports audiences’ time spent engaged.

We assessed large-scale sporting events, like the Super Bowl and London 2012 Olympics in order to learn more about what made sports fans so engaged. Personalised sports content was the answer, especially if it enabled the digital audience to remain connected.

The sports audience wanted constant opportunities to consume and engage with content on mobile and social, as well as online.

The 30 million FIFA Confederation Cup fans in June 2013 reinforced the gathering insights around sports fans’ digital behaviours. Mobile was becoming an increasingly essential means of consuming official FIFA content and social editorial was engaging the football fan for upwards of 14 minutes, per session.

By the end of 2013, FIFA had launched consumer-facing social and mobile platforms, which now needed a destination that would adjust perceptions of FIFA forever.

Social media is now less about the delivery platform and more about the content.
Execution
FIFA launches the Global Stadium
FIFA's responsibility was to utilise technology in order to provide a seamless user experience for the world’s greatest sporting event to a demanding, global digital World Cup audience and convey our mission: *For the Game. For the World.*

FIFA aimed to increase global audience reach and enhance engagement on its digital platforms in order to measure changes in mass market digital behaviour in the context of events.

Through the Global Stadium, a live, social hub available online and on mobile throughout the tournament, World Cup fans were able to get closer than ever to the action during Brazil 2014.

FIFA now embraced the latest technology with the aim of transforming the second screen experience altogether. The Global Stadium created a single digital destination for World Cup fans, with participants joining from every single country around the world.

Fans were able to follow the action of all 64 World Cup matches live, with minute-by-minute text updates, while engaging with friends, players, coaches and fellow fans across the globe, as they supported their favourite teams at the tournament.

The Global Stadium adapted to the constantly changing consumption and technology habits of users, by incorporating the second screen to the television-viewing experience — on laptops, tablets, computers and smartphones — enabling consumers to absorb as much content as they wanted.
The Global Stadium opened one hour before the kick-off of each match. Whether the audience accessed official digital content on FIFA.com, the official app or its social touch points, they always had the access at their fingertips to exclusive team sheets, live information, and exclusive competitions.

The Global Stadium offered users live, play-by-play commentary, up-to-the-minute statistical analysis, updates from players and coaches on social media, in-game photo galleries, links to insightful news stories, and Man of the Match voting accessibility, all in one place.

The total attendance of the Global Stadium exceeded one billion, more than 13,380 times the capacity of the Maracana – the venue where 74,738 fans were on hand to see Germany triumph over Argentina in the Final.

A cumulative 11,077 years and 248 days of engagement was clocked up by FIFA’s digital audience, via the Global Stadium.

FIFA achieves true global audience reach, enhancing engagement on its digital platforms.
Events

FIFA story goes viral across global media channels
Perhaps the most astonishing sustained behaviour came from fans in the USA, where 79% of the entire internet population who were interested in World Cup content consumed the FIFA official offering.

World Cup mania reached a fever pitch in the United States as the number of fans from the USA engaging with FIFA’s digital platforms reached a total of 46.3 million, 13% of the actual US population.

FIFA tapped into this real-life phenomenon that was spreading across the US and global media by providing official audience data to the top tier US national press and their associated digital touch points on social, online and mobile platforms.

The FIFA-supplied metrics went on to become the factual hub of ‘World Cup Fever’ front page news stories in the New York Times, Washington Post, Bloomberg, CNN and ABC News, totaling an aggregated reach of 600 million opportunities to see, according to media owner readership sources, across the globe.

Twitter was ablaze with World Cup content. Every second of the first day of the tournament saw FIFA’s official Twitter accounts attract an average of ten new followers, with 35.6 million World Cup tweets recorded during and immediately after the Brazil-Germany game.
The Global Stadium attracted stars from outside the world of football, with Shakira, Claudia Leitte, Anderson Silva and Wyclef Jean engaging with @FIFAWorldCup and @FIFACom during the tournament. Rihanna live-tweeted the whole of the tournament from the Global Stadium to great effect, offering predictions on fixtures, not only proving football’s global attraction but also its unpredictable appeal.

As the Guardian Sport put it:
“Her (Rihanna’s) commentary has proved both insightful and witty, and more often than not she’s echoed the thoughts and enthusiasm of all of us watching along at home.”

World Cup goes from niche ‘exotic’ foreign sport to front page news, fuelled by official FIFA digital audience metrics.
Measuring the impact of the evolved FIFA digital offering is just as important as the delivery of the products which stimulate usage.

So what had we learned about the FIFA digital audience by the end of the cycle?

**Appetite**

The Global Stadium was a crowd-puller, filling the capacity of the Maracana an astounding 13,380 times and attracting visitors from every country in the world.

**Hyper-engaged audience**

The FIFA digital audience are “hyper-engaged” with official World Cup content, consuming 53.9 billion impressions from official web, mobile, app and social feeds. Over 11 millennia were spent engaged on FIFA’s digital platforms, 11,077 years and 248 days.

These massive metrics of time highlight the interplay of tablet and mobile devices as a default second screen throughout match time for sports fans, who either complement or substitute TV-viewing with FIFA’s digital platforms.
A deeper dive into Mobile habits showed that 122 million fans connected with official World Cup content on their mobile phone and, at the time of writing, more than 30 million people have downloaded the official free app, making mobile media consumption as natural as flicking through the channels on the TV.

Social currency
It was also clear that the posts being shared by stars of the game and fans were set to be just as much a part of the fan experience as the games themselves.

The Social Hub provided an organic representation of the fluctuating trends over the World Cup at significant moments across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. By delivering visual data on trends and posts from influential players, journalists and celebrities – the FIFA message inhabited fan posts and photographs.

What FIFA digital products mean to users
FIFA.com ran an Emotions survey before and after the tournament on what fans really liked about our digital products. Before, it was all about the content elements such as match centres and live blogs. As the World Cup got underway preferences changed, namechecking ‘mobile app’ alongside, simply ‘football’, indicating that the most personal of devices, the mobile phone, was bringing fans closer to the game.
Case Study
Corporate messaging and engagement
The increased audience appetite for corporate content was a major agent of perception change during the tournament.

Ease of content discovery, blended with global sports personality endorsements, on social and mobile, reached an audience of 43 million.

The interplay between web and app corporate content consumption spurred an eight-fold increase in page consumption compared to 2010, with the 282 content articles published up to August 2014, yielding 61 million views.

A greater focus on content richness such as VIP interviews and Have Your Say sections created compelling reasons for audiences to engage and return to corporate content with 1.7 billion seconds spent engaged.

The jewel in the corporate crown is the massive reach achieved by FIFA’s #saynotoracism Selfie campaign, with huge names from world football presenting coloured cards emblazoned with the hashtag to promote our work.

Grassroots supporters printed off copies of the hashtag and posted their own selfies, which were retweeted and posted in the Global Stadium.

We were able to provide exclusive views to fans around the world of behind-the-scenes action in Brazil and contribute reliable information ahead of any other channel, while connecting fans directly through stars who took part in live Q&As.

Daily infographics produced in six languages, provided current and relevant insight into the tournament via popular, easy-to-digest ‘digital facts’ which celebrated fans’ unprecedented interaction.

Overall, the corporate output was bespoke to each social medium. Twitter was all about the live experience, Facebook provided longer-lasting content to users and Instagram showcased the outstanding, exclusive images from Brazil, available only through official FIFA social outlets.

16.3 million Facebook users reached through the #saynotoracism campaign
Audience Insights

The eyes behind the #1 World Cup online destination
The FIFA digital audience figures were astonishing in themselves but we wanted to understand more about who is represented in the numbers, across digital and across continents.

FIFA uses the latest big-data analysis techniques to better understand our audience so we can develop relevant digital products. We also commissioned long-term panel data to track digital football audiences, in the run-up and throughout the 2014 World Cup so we could benchmark engagement.

Global, mobile
Our audience is truly global, attracting visitors from every country in the world. Half of all visitors engage with FIFA content from their mobile device. The introduction of the official FIFA World Cup app contributed to hyper levels of consumption, 62% of all pages were consumed on a mobile device.

Deeply social
The official FIFA World Cup Facebook page was the largest for any single sporting event, passing the 40-million mark by July 19, 2014. The stickiness of our 6,000 posts is exemplified by the 451 million Facebook users we reached and the 77 million of them who actively engaged with our content.
“FIFA.com continues to lead as the top Online destination for World Cup content compared to markets researched.”

Nielsen, June 2014

Entertainment audiences
FIFA’s official Twitter accounts attracted new entertainment audiences from outside the world of football, like Shakira, Claudia Leitte, Anderson Silva and Wyclef Jean.

Content connoisseurs
A user survey of 1.5k FIFA.com users in June 2014 revealed 94% of them trusted FIFA to deliver dependable, accurate information, while 93% said they relied on us for insightful, editorial opinion.

Female audiences
FIFA.com retains its position as online leader for World Cup content in the USA and UK markets, according to Nielsen. It’s interesting to see how the female audience is outperforming the competition: 35% of US, 34% of Brazilian and 32% of all UK females, who consumed World Cup content, were actively engaged with FIFA.com content in June 2014, with FIFA.com attracting the most females of any mainstream online football provider in the UK market.

Most engaged
The FIFA digital audience is consistently more engaged than the competition, across all markets researched by Nielsen. In the USA the average time spent engaged with FIFA official football and World Cup content is 23 minutes, compared to ESPN’s 11 minutes. In Brazil it’s 46 minutes, compared to Globo Esporte’s 37 minutes.

94% of the FIFA.com audience trust us to deliver dependable, accurate information
Data Storytelling
Making metrics mass market
The mass market is more technologically adept than it has ever been before, smartphones have reached critical mass and tablets are becoming the default second media consumption tool.

Against this backdrop, FIFA wanted to bring some of the incredible statistics flowing out of our digital platforms to a wider audience. Data visualisation is an emerging method of communicating insights to a consumer audience.

On every day of World Cup action, FIFA released statistics and insights in easy-to-follow, shortform infographics known simply as FIFA Digital Facts, illustrating how fans were interacting with the tournament online, on mobile and across social media. These insights were shared with an opted-in list of journalists, in daily bespoke alerts and also distributed via FIFA’s digital social media platforms.

The digital facts focussed on how FIFA’s live and social hub, the Global Stadium, provided football fans with the digital platforms they needed to join in the biggest conversation in history. FIFA then provided opted-in recipients with big digital figures as longform infographics.

As journalist interest in FIFA digital facts increased, so too did the coverage FIFA enjoyed in the top-tier global press. FIFA’s engagement data were used as official sources in, for example, World Cup Fever newspaper stories to illustrate the growth in popularity of football in the USA. The data was used prominently by the New York Times, CNN, Bloomberg, ABC News, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Reuters and Dow Jones wires.
By the end of the tournament 100,000 words had been written about the Global Stadium, most using official FIFA digital audience data to illustrate football fan phenomena, ranging from the Social Media World Cup to the Global Stadium as a future alternative to physical World Cup stadia.

The data visualisation campaign captured the imagination of the global press, from the highest news tiers to bedroom bloggers and generated at least 1.1 billion opportunities to see relevant FIFA digital facts and figures, according to media owner readership sources.
Future Products

Digital platforms are constantly evolving
By the end of the 2011-2014 cycle it is clear that the World Cup digital audience is the most involved of all sports events audiences.

The voracious audience appetite for official FIFA content was satisfied through the delivery of news, video, photos, scores, interviews, interactive content and data visualisations in timeframes to fit their lifestyles. FIFA’s digital platforms attracted over one billion people to the Global Stadium and delivered a hyper-consuming second-screen experience. So where do we go from here now that all the platform boxes are ticked?

Over the next 24 months we will take a deep dive into emerging user behaviours to assess the best method to achieve a targeted content experience, in line with user’s individual engagement.

The social success of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, across all major platforms, indicates a need to deliver advertising messages which enhance fan engagement around FIFA events.

We are particularly interested in how social dialogues can tap into real-time audience moods, based on location, time of day, device and emotional language as starting points.

A dialogue with real user behaviour will make advertising messages more appropriate, relevant and targeted to user’s actual needs.

The focus will be on the FIFA digital audience, rather than the platforms themselves, with specific emphasis on user experience, based on business information metrics like membership, user IDs, geo and user preferences, all of which will be informed by user generated content (UGC).
The result is likely to be an optimised, content hub in some form, which serves audiences using criteria such as gender, age, mood, device, time, place, interest etc.

We anticipate that more sophisticated and accurate forecasting, particularly around advertising and content, will be part of daily editorial duties as well as technical housekeeping.

Critical to all future-proofed solutions will be the ability to successfully identify significant new and relevant audience behaviours at a global level so that FIFA can continue to grow as the biggest sports events experience in the world.

The FIFA journey over the next four years will be conducted with an ambition to segment our diverse audience across the platforms they use and integrate messages by which we can measure transactions as well as engagement.

Zurich, September 2014
Thank You!