



## Online sporting events, reinvented

Versus brings Tour de France to the Internet with breakthrough interactive experience powered by the Adobe® Flash® Platform and Level 3 content delivery network



In July 2009, leading online sports network Versus streamed the Tour de France live and on-demand over the Internet to fans across the United States. It was the first time the prestigious event was streamed live online in its entirety. Due to Versus, the Adobe Flash Platform, and the Level 3 global content delivery network (CDN), the event was a huge success with more than 26 million page views during the month it was broadcast online. It was also a model for how event-based offerings that provide not only live streaming video, but also engaging interactive experiences for fans, can increase revenues for content owners and boost customer loyalty.



The Adobe Flash Platform provides exciting new ways for fans to view and interact with prestigious sporting events like the Tour de France.

*"Using the Adobe Flash Platform, we provided an end-to-end content creation and delivery solution. We wanted to make the Tour de France a showcase for event content delivery and interaction on the Internet, and we succeeded."*

**Aaron Diaz, event management director, Level 3**



"The Tour de France presents the perfect opportunity—and the perfect storm—from a digital standpoint," says Jack Jackson, director of project management for Versus. "It takes place over several days, so people typically want to check out the event many days in a row, many times a day, for news updates and information, like GPS tracking and interactive maps, to stay current on the leaders. With the Tour de France, we don't have to prepare for one huge blast of traffic; instead, we have to prepare for a huge blast of traffic that goes on for days. That's why we need the Adobe Flash Platform and Level 3 on our side."

#### **From one million to 26 million page views in an instant**

Because the event occurs during the day while most fans are at work, the Internet is a perfect medium for cycling enthusiasts wanting to engage with the experience, even if they are interacting virtually. "The Tour de France from the digital standpoint is the biggest thing ever," says Jahaira Mercado, senior manager of content development for Versus. "Typically, our website garners one million page views per month. But with the Tour de France, we skyrocket to about 26 million page views during that month."



During the Tour de France, traffic to the Versus website skyrocketed from 1 million page views per month on average to 26 million page views.



Versus credits the drama and strategy of the event for garnering so many viewers. However, Versus also offers live GPS tracking, Twitter feeds, interactive maps and profiles, photos, instant messaging, and more—capabilities supported by the Adobe Flash Platform—that engage fans and let them experience the event in ways they can't when watching the Tour de France on traditional television or by simple, video-only Internet feeds. Using the Adobe Flash Platform and Level 3's CDN services, Versus is pushing the envelope in bringing the next level of interactive entertainment to fans.

With the Adobe Flash Platform, fans can customize their experience of the event based on how they navigate the content and what they are most interested in. With the Adobe Flash Platform, users can actively engage and interact with the Tour de France in ways that were never possible before.

"During the event, data was coming in such as GPS information noting where the riders were, live news feeds, and Twitter feeds. The difference between this and other events we've done was the level of data and information we provided to viewers at every second," says Neal Scarbrough, vice president of digital media for Versus. Viewers also had the opportunity to consume live feeds, or time-shifted, on-demand feeds as they were available.

#### **Content delivery, in an instant**

Race content was captured in Paris, then sent to a drop point in Washington D.C. From there, it was sent to New York for encoding into both live and on-demand formats compatible with Adobe Flash technology, and delivered to the North American audience for consumption.

"Using the Adobe Flash Platform, we provided an end-to-end content creation and delivery solution," says Aaron Diaz, event management director for Level 3. "We wanted to make the Tour de France a showcase for event content delivery and interaction on the Internet, and we succeeded."

#### **Versus**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
[www.versus.com](http://www.versus.com)

#### **Challenge**

- Support growth from 1 million to 26 million page views per month
- Provide interactive, engaging experience for fans
- Break new ground in delivering online sports events

#### **Solution**

- Use the Adobe Flash Platform to stream Tour de France live online in its entirety
- Work with Level 3 and leverage its global content delivery network to provide Tour de France experience to fans

#### **Benefits**

- Supported 26 million page views during Tour de France
- Delivered unique experience to fans with GPS feeds, interactive maps, and news
- Forged new model for delivering sports events online
- Provided a platform that enables expansion to new devices like mobile phones

#### **Toolkit**

- Adobe Flash Player
- Adobe Flash Media Server





Versus plans to extend the Tour de France to cycling enthusiasts watching the event on mobile phones, set-top boxes, and other devices using the Adobe Flash Platform.

#### New screens, new opportunities

As a next step, Versus plans to expand the Tour de France online coverage to new devices other than PCs, providing a more convenient way for fans to interact with their favorite event across multiple screens—and potentially provide Versus with new revenue streams.

“What’s really exciting is that next year, potentially, you’ll be able to watch the Tour de France on your mobile phone, or on your set-top box, so that we can reach fans not only in new, more interactive ways but also on new devices,” says Jackson. Versus has found one of the great things about Flash technology to be all the ways it allows users to interact. For next year’s Tour de France, the voices of the fans will be more involved and engaged and Versus plans to deliver across multiple devices, all enabled by the Adobe Flash Platform.

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**Jack Jackson, director of project management, Versus**



Source: L'ÉQUIPE Photographie: PAPON



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