

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY IS CONSTANTLY ENHANCING THE IN-STADIUM EXPERIENCE

By Brian Gainor
GMR Marketing

Sports entities are facing more challenges than ever before but their biggest current threat is the elevated, at-home viewing experience. As consumers weigh the cost benefits of attending a live game versus watching from the comforts of their home on a large HD television, sports teams are feeling the pinch when it comes to selling out venues.

To combat the threat of the “new” at-home viewing experience, sports entities are turning to new technologies in an effort to improve the in-stadium fan experience, offer corporate partners new inventory, and drive their bottom line. Here is a quick breakdown of seven new technologies that sports entities are turning to in an effort to enhance the game day experience for fans and offer new integration opportunities for corporate partners:

FanVision

FanVision is an in-stadium, handheld device that NFL organizations are distributing to fans to provide fans access to the NFL RedZone channel, live video of select NFL games, highlights, fantasy statistics, team-produced content (cheerleader channels, VOD content), cameras (Skycam), and more. FanVision uses its own dedicated band of wireless spectrum so the devices can avoid cellular and Wi-Fi networks that frequently clog under heavy use.

Teams Using the Device:

- 12 NFL teams: – Arizona, Chicago, Denver, Seattle, New York Jets, Miami, Philadelphia, Buffalo, St. Louis, Washington, Minnesota, Cincinnati
- 2 universities: University of Miami, University of Michigan
- Note: Miami Dolphins owner Stephen Ross acquired FanVision in 2009 and offered each NFL team 5,000 units to distribute to their fan base

Pricing: Additional units are being sold to fans for \$199

Client Implications/Opportunities: The FanVision devices present new branding opportunities for GMR clients. Some NFL teams have opted to sell branding rights for the actual devices and others are offering advertising and customized team content opportunities within (e.g. direct call-to-action to go purchase products, use a credit card or check out NFL RedZone on Comcast). Thus far, the devices have been well received and serve as a great play for any brands looking for ways to enhance the fan experience.



Yinzcam

Yinzcam is a Smartphone application for iPhone and Droid devices that allows fans to see instantaneous replays, live stats, real-time scores, VOD content, in-phone ads and the NFL RedZone Channel during games. Fans can access the Yinzcam mobile app on their smart phones by connecting to a stadium Wi-Fi network. Some teams have opted to use Yinzcam as opposed to the FanVision device because they feel fans would rather access additional, unique content from their own Smartphone than a device that they have to hold while watching the game and eating a hot dog.

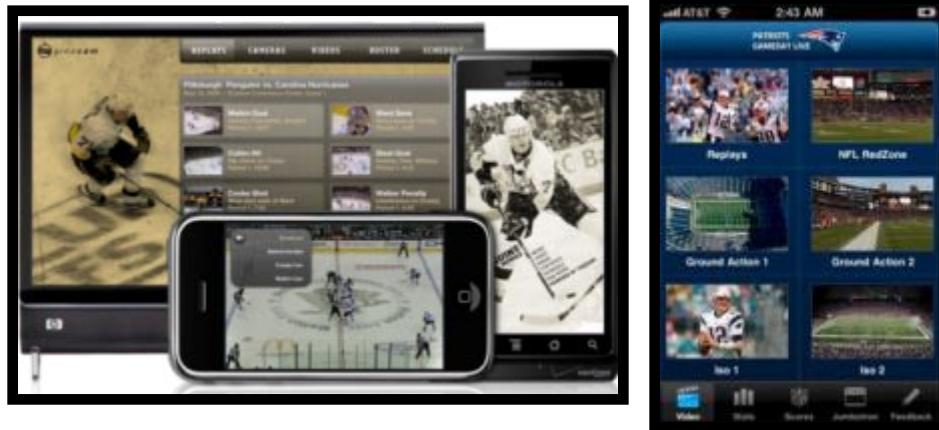
Teams Using the Device: New England Patriots, San Francisco 49ers, Pittsburgh Steelers, Pittsburgh Penguins, Jacksonville Jaguars

Pricing: Varies by team (e.g. the 49ers' Yinzcam app is free; the Steelers' Yinzcam app is \$1.99)

Client Implications/Opportunities: Similar to the FanVision devices, as teams produce custom content and new camera angles, new branding and "content ownership" opportunities should become available for team

partners. GMR clients could work with team partners to build couponing, direct CTA's, and additional information into the Yinzcam application.

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Augmented Reality Mobile Applications

Sports organizations are beginning to turn to companies like Thermopylae to create augmented reality applications that take the fan experience to new heights. At the U.S. Open, IBM created an “Around Me” augmented reality iPhone app that allowed users at the tournament to point their phone in the direction of the tennis court and receive real-time scores and statistics. Fans could also use the app to see what restaurants were on-site. (Videos: [Wimbledon App 1](#) / [Wimbledon App 2](#))

Thermopylae recently teamed up with Las Vegas Motor Speedway to provide race goers with information on seating, bathroom locations, concessions, merchandise and ticketing. Fans can use the augmented reality app to buy pit passes, upgrade their seats, capitalize on food specials and discover the easiest route to the track. Applying Google Earth technology, the Thermopylae app can track consumers throughout their experience to help marketers create a full fan profile based on their activity and interests.

Sports Entities Featuring Augmented Reality Apps: U.S. Open (tennis), Wimbledon, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Universities

Pricing: The app is free to consumers; pricing for the Thermopylae app varies for sports properties based on how many features they opt to purchase (high five figures to low six figures)

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Client Implications/Opportunities: GMR clients can work hand-in-hand with team/league partners to develop/feature content embedded in their augmented reality apps. Whether it's driving attention/traffic to party deck, "owning" the merchandise/concessions features of the app, or simply tracking the consumer experience on game day, the integration opportunities are endless.



At Bat Concessions App (Offering Geolocation Services)

Major League Baseball offers a popular "At Bat" mobile application, delivering a plethora of baseball content, which now offers geolocation services. While the app has been around for some time, MLBAM recently unveiled some new fan friendly features, including the ability to "check-in" to games (ala Foursquare/Gowalla), order concessions from their seat and receive exclusive video highlights.

The MLB At Bat app, operating over a secure 3G antenna network, allows fans to order food by providing their seat location and credit card. Aramark receives the order and has a staff of runners, cooks, and a manager to handle the delivery process. While the new features were only tested at Citizens Bank Park in 2010, MLB officials are optimistic that

they will roll it out to the rest of the league next year (and expect other leagues to soon follow in suit). Approximately 1,500 Phillies fans used the app each game.

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Sports Entities Offering Geolocation Apps: All MLB clubs are included in the MLB At Bat offering but the Phillies were the only team that has rolled out the new geolocation functionality. However, a number of other organizations have teamed up with Foursquare to create team-specific pages and official badges (<http://is.gd/fAe40>)

Pricing: The MLB At Bat app costs \$15 (but was being made available for Phillies fans on a trial basis for \$7)

Client Implications/Opportunities: With MLB clubs offering new concessions experiences via the MLB At Bat app, there likely are opportunities to incent/reward consumers for their purchases. While integration opportunities may come at a high price tag for league sponsors (with MLBAM operating the app for all clubs), the app could present a one-stop-shop to directly message to fans at all 30 MLB ballparks and a multitude of others watching at home.



Command Center Touchscreen Device

The New York Jets are testing a new touchscreen device that enables team personnel to track various aspects of their game day operations, from merchandise to concessions to tickets. The Jets are using a device created by design agency Roundarch that allows them to touch one button to receive a real time analysis of what merchandise/concessions

items are selling fast, where traffic issues are occurring, how many cars are entering the tailgate lots within a given time period, etc.

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Teams Using the Device: New York Jets

Pricing: N/A

Client Implications/Opportunities: Sports organizations will soon be able to provide clients with real-time results of how their products are selling on-site, how many transactions are taking place within select time periods, and where opportunities exist to sell more product and effectively market to consumers on-site. There will soon be more on-site tracking opportunities at venues across the globe than ever experienced before. For more information, click here: <http://is.qd/fBam2>



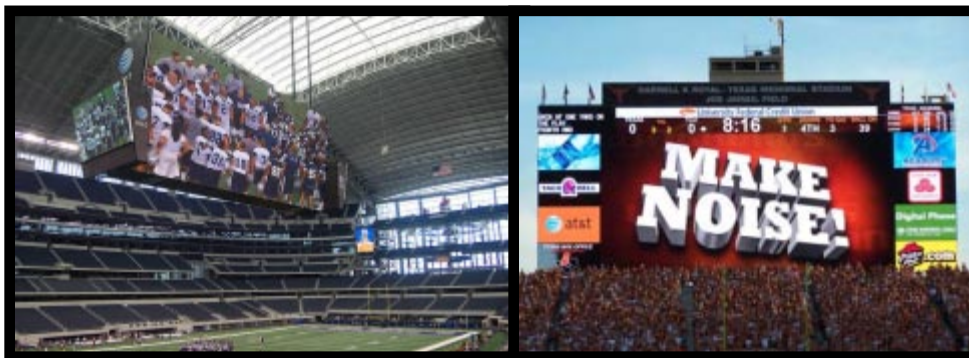
Massive Stadium LED Video Boards

The Dallas Cowboys set a new standard for stadium video boards in 2009 when they installed the world's largest video board spectacle over the field at the new Cowboys Stadium. The 72x160 Daktronics structure, spanning 60 yards, turned the new venue into a must-see attraction for fans. Soon after, the video board phenomenon began to trickle through professional sports, collegiate sports, and now NASCAR. Charlotte Motor Speedway recently announced that it was teaming up with Panasonic to install the largest video board to date – a one-sided structure spanning 80 feet wide x 200 feet high – in turn 4 at the race track (the third of its kind in NASCAR). CMS and Panasonic have agreed to share advertising sales reaped by the new structure (60% Panasonic, 40% CMS).

Sports Entities Featuring Massive LED Board: Dallas Cowboys, Charlotte Motor Speedway (coming), Richmond Speedway, Homestead Motor Speedway, University of Texas, University of Florida, FedEx Field, Gillette Stadium, Auburn University, Mississippi State University, Los Angeles Lakers and more.

Pricing: The Cowboys video board is priced at \$40MM; the CMS video board is expected to be priced as an eight figure investment

Client Implications/Opportunities: As sports entities continue to build video boards that serve as stadium attractions, scoreboard-branding elements will increase in value (as it's deemed to be more impactful). However, will this come at the expense of the value of static/LED/other signage featured around the venue? As seen with the AT&T-Dallas Cowboys example, massive stadium scoreboards also present new, impactful "ownable" assets, especially for brands in the telecommunications and technology sectors.



Internet Protocol Television (IPTV)

The Orlando Magic recently teamed up with Harris Corporation to create a state-of-the-art Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) system, integrated with digital signage that will allow the team to address 1,100 individual screens located throughout the arena with a click of a button. On the fly, the displays can be driven to show high-impact replays and highlights, venue messaging, OOH advertising, or any combination of the three. In addition, the system allows advertisers to have their name displayed on every screen in the facility at the same time, providing “moment of exclusivity” opportunities.

The IPTV system at the Amway Center is operated within a command center built inside the arena and monitored by Harris Co. employees at the company’s headquarters, located 75 miles away.

Teams Using the Device: Orlando Magic

Pricing: N/A

Client Implications/Opportunities: The new IPTV system will allow team partners to “own” moments of the game day experience (pre-game, in-game, timeouts, halftime, post-game, etc.), specifically tailor their messaging different periods of the game day experience (e.g. Welcome, Hungry?, Taking a bathroom break?, Thank you for coming).

In Conclusion

This is an exciting time to be involved in Sports. The challenges faced by organizations are leading to some of the most innovative ideas in the industry and have resulted in an almost unanimous focus: enhancing the at-venue fan experience. With the economy still uncertain and the at-home viewing experience improving tremendously, organizations are being forced to develop new ways to entice fan attendance. Think back to just three years ago and where things were. Then take a moment to think about where they might be in three more...

Brian Gainor is an account supervisor for some of GMR Marketing’s top sports clients, including his current assignment on the Comcast account, managing the company’s western partnerships and NFL-related initiatives. Prior to his current role, Brian oversaw Lowe’s soccer, NFL and theme park partnerships, including the nationwide La Cancha mobile soccer tour, which activated at Gold Cup,

SuperLiga, and Champions League tournament events and major Hispanic festivals. In 2008, Brian founded PartnershipActivation.com as a means to provide sports business professionals with sports marketing and sponsorship best practices, creative activation tactics and innovative ways to generate revenue. Brian completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Florida and MBA/MSA graduate work at Ohio University.

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