



NBC OLYMPICS SITE: 2200 HOURS OF ONLINE COVERAGE

The Web-based Olympic coverage was expected to be a watershed for online content. NBC covered the Olympics for the US market like never before. Earlier this year, NBC announced it would be using Microsoft's Silverlight to provide complementary web coverage for its broadcast of the event. In all, the ambitious NBCOlympics.com planned to deliver, over the 17 days of the Olympics, 2,200 hours of live event video coverage and more than 3,000 hours of on-demand video content including full-event replays, highlights, features, interviews and encore packages. At peak times there may have been more than 20 simultaneous live video streams. In fact, the Olympics content is still available for viewing at the site, including highlights and montages.

THE CONVENIENCE OF THE WEB FOR PACKAGING NEWS CONTENT

NBC was not the only entity that used the Web to provide streaming video focused on the Olympics. The NewsMarket provided video clips, prepared by Olympics sponsors and organizations such as Adidas, Visa, Samsung, Volkswagen, and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), free to news organizations throughout the world. The organization launched a Beijing 2008 channel in April and supplied material for more than 350 news organizations starting in July. Both content and demand were expected to grow exponentially as the Olympics approached, and continue as it played out.

In an article by Bill Greenwood datelined July 24 on streamingmedia.com, he quoted NewsMarket president, CEO, and co-founder Shoba Purushothaman, "There's a lot riding in the video world around these Olympics," she said. "The power of video, I think, is really going to come into its own

after this Olympics. As a business model, I think we will be taking one giant step forward."

WORLDWIDE COVERAGE AVAILABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME

In addition to the United States and other major markets, as reported on the Olympic Official Website, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had an agreement with YouTube to broadcast a selection of clips from the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games in 77 regions across Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The Video on Demand clips were accessible via the YouTube channel only where digital VOD rights were not sold or acquired on a non-exclusive basis.

This was the first time that digital media coverage was freely available across the world, provided either by rights-holding broadcasters or via the IOC's Channel.

WEB-ENABLED PARADIGM SHIFT

Web-based streaming media enabled Olympics coverage that was a far cry from that of only a few years ago when coverage was limited to an hour or so of edited replays of US athletes during evening Prime Time. With the ambitious NBC Olympics site, US audiences enjoyed beginning-to-end coverage of their favorite sports competitions, not just the finals. In fact, NBC provided online video of 25 sports that were not even included in broadcast coverage.

For an entirely new Olympics experience, NBC utilized Web 2.0 technology to create a streaming video fest that included viewing multiple video streams simultaneously, pausing events, and sharing streams with friends.

This massive undertaking was the result of more than 18 months of planning, and an intensive push with Microsoft that began in early 2008. Rich Internet content

that takes advantage of Web 2.0 technology provided high quality streaming video and interactive features that had never before been available.

TESTING AND MONITORING FOR SUCCESS

It goes without saying that performance testing and monitoring played a significant role in getting NBCOlympics.com ready for prime time – and in keeping it performing at peak capacity as the site was, and still is bombarded by avid Olympics fans. Microsoft, a partner in the NBCOlympics.com site, used Keynote LoadPro and Keynote's massive global test and measurement infrastructure to test the specialty site to ensure its readiness for the Olympic-sized load.

During the games, Microsoft used Streaming Perspective to monitor the delivered quality of the streaming video content. Overall, Keynote's worldwide monitoring capability was called into play and, during the Olympics, Keynote monitored Web performance at 15 global Web sites, 46 European Web sites, 5 US Mobile sites and 13 US Web sites, measuring both Performance (Average download time in seconds) and Availability (Average availability).

MEDALISTS IN OLYMPIC WEB PERFORMANCE MONITORING

To reflect the digital video rights set by the IOC accurately, Keynote monitored US Olympic sites from its US agents, and monitored international Web sites from its global infrastructure.

THE STATISTICAL AVERAGES ARE:

Performance: International = 5.338 seconds
US = 3.807 seconds

Availability: International = 98.07%

US = 99.49%
Keynote generally expected to see



availability at the 99.5% level, and the availability for these sites was more likely explained by the popularity of the event with slight variation for unforeseen technology issues.

Several sites implemented only a few of the available new technologies, and had express timing. Other rich internet sites like ESPN and FOX Sports, who had a history with rich interactive sites, were ready for and handled the onslaught with excellent performance. However, the Beijing games generated highly aggressive specialty Web sites, based on streaming video and other Web 2.0 components. The most aggressive web sites for Olympics coverage fared as follows:

	Performance	Availability
NBC Olympics	4.481	99.37%
Beijing Olympics 2008	7.862	99.90%

NBC definitely saw the impact of large users going online to download the

As of Aug. 12, the top Web sites covering the Olympics were:

Rank by Performance (US)			Rank by Performance (Int'l)		
Rank	Websites	Perf	Rank	Website	Perf
1	US Track and Field	1.450	1	Olympic Movement	1.269
2	Associated Press	1.815	2	Coca Cola	1.726
3	ESPN Radio	2.657	3	Samsung	2.258
Rank by Availability (US)			Rank by Availability (Int'l)		
Rank	Websites	Avail	Rank	Website	Avail
1	Fox Sports	99.96	1	Samsung	99.99
2	StubHub	99.93	2	Olympic Movement	99.94
3	ESPN	99.89	3	Coca Cola	99.93

streaming videos, get updates, check schedules, and other activities. They did very well, but during peak hours the performance did slow a bit. The same was true for the main Beijing 2008 Olympics site, from the global perspective. Generally speaking, most of the sites planned ahead and performed well; however, as you can see through the averages

aggregated from August 7 to August 12, some did not. Performance and availability continued to fluctuate all during the Olympics. Those sites that regularly monitored their sites' performance had the best chance of improving their numbers.