

# CTVOlympics.ca



One hundred and twenty-five million page views. It's a staggering number. For a team of digital media pros linked to the Olympic Broadcast Consortium, it represents their quest for gold.

During February, CTVOlympics.ca plans to provide unprecedented depth of coverage for both the Olympic and Paralympic games, supporting traditional broadcast efforts and emerging as their own audience powerhouse.

Lead by sports broadcast veteran Alon Marcovici, vice-president, digital media and research for the Consortium, the team of about 30 content producers, developers, technology experts and systems integration professionals will help deliver over 4,000 hours of multiplatform coverage to Canadian audiences.

BY BARBARA JONES

Marcovici believes the Internet is a key delivery component for providing depth of experience for consumers both before and during the games. The Consortium's Internet efforts span three distinct phases of user experiences.

CTVOlympics.ca launched in February 2009—along with its French-language counterpart RDSolympiques.ca—featuring extensive video, participatory games, and event and athlete-focused content. Marcovici boasts that unlike any previous Olympic online presence, the Canadian sites were launched a year in advance of the Games, and over nine months ahead of NBC's Olympic site. The intention was to build both online audiences and local athlete awareness in the year leading up to the Vancouver Games.

The second phase of the sites followed the Torch Relay, streaming live national coverage over 100 days and across 45,000 km. Online, tracking the relay route incorporated interactive maps, a count-down clock and user-generated content.

The Games themselves will test the limits of streaming technology. Up to 14 concurrent live streams will be available, including feeds from five networks and host broadcast streams of every Olympic sport and discipline. Audiences will access enhanced definition content—features, interviews, replays, highlights—on-demand and on their desktops.

Web-exclusive content is part of the programming mix as well. Team Canada men's hockey coverage includes live pre- and post-game programming on the English and French sites. As well, a crew of roving reporters will be scouring Vancouver and Whistler capturing and sharing local Olympic colour. Viewers will also be able to voice and share their own event play-by-play.

The Broadcast Consortium represents a unique relationship between CTV and Rogers. Combining cross-platform forces for both the Vancouver 2010 and London 2012 Games, it will provide broadband, mobile, print, VOD, PPV, theatrical and traditional broadcast (radio and television) coverage, in multiple languages.

The digital media team is responsible for the online, mobile and VOD elements of the audience experience. The team is confident it will ensure that powerful interactive tools and content are placed in the hands of eager Canadians throughout the Games.

Speaking passionately, Marcovici says he personally wants to create a legacy of multiplatform and holistic Olympic experiences for audiences. And he knows how to do just that, having twice managed the on-site NBC Olympics Research Room at the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney and the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City. The former newspaper and magazine sportswriter also brings Commonwealth Games, NHL and NBA marketing and media experience to this latest assignment.

"We made the decision to provide the best possible presentation of the games so we will be streaming every second of them, in an HD PVR-like experience," says Marcovici, "so you can see your family member competing on any of four curling sheets live and on-demand, and like you're watching TV." Viewers will even be able to voice and share their own event play-by-play.

The CTVolympics.ca HD video player will allow users to pause, rewind, fast forward and create triggers on a 'scrub bar' to view medal events, check out game highlights or, for example, zip directly to the end of a period in a hockey game.

If a user happens to be watching the on-demand services to view one event when

a Canadian athlete wins a medal, or is about to win a medal, in another event, an overlay will appear announcing the breaking news. The intention of this push technology, says Marcovici, is not to interrupt the viewer but to celebrate the successes of Canadian athletes.

The HD video player includes a guide button permitting viewers to track all live events simultaneously and to assist in seamless navigation between concurrent streaming coverage.

Understanding how to manage the data requirements of 85 nations and 86 events requires a unique skill set and a sophisticated technology engine. The Broadcast Consortium enlisted Italian developers Deltatre to build and manage all of the Vancouver Games content.

The company has been in business for over 25 years and is accustomed to the rigours of multi-event sports and live results coverage, having worked with the Football World Cup, European Football Championships, Skiing and Athletics World Championships and the Commonwealth Games. The Turin-based company received an Emmy Award nomination for outstanding technical achievement for its contribution in the development of the NBC Olympics video player for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Combining the site's slick design, courtesy of the creative agency and marketing group at CTV, and the extensive content produced and planned by the Olympic digital media team, the Deltatre developers have built a content-rich site, geared to deliver results rapidly.

With all of the tools available to users before and during the Games through CTVolympics.ca and RDSolympiques.ca, one simple channel of sound may prove to be among the most popular—a director's cut audio track of the Opening Ceremonies.

Will it be the precursor to a 125,000,000 page view month for Marcovici's digital media team? Click and see.

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