

NTT and A.S.O. continue to transform and revolutionize the fan experience of the Tour de France with new technology deal



Newly launched, world-leading technology company NTT extends global partnership until 2024

NTT (NTT Ltd.), a newly launched, world-leading global technology services provider and Amaury Sport Organisation (A.S.O.), the organizer of the Tour de France, have renewed their partnership until 2024, which was initiated by Dimension Data in 2015. The extension of this agreement enables NTT to continue providing innovations to both enhance the viewing experience and attract an entirely new generation of digitally savvy fans.

Five years into the partnership, NTT and A.S.O. have led the way in the use of advanced technology in cycling, demonstrating how the use of data can truly revolutionize the sport's fan experience. This paves the way for NTT to use its expertise to digitize other areas of sport such as connected stadiums and velodromes.

This year, a number of updated technology features are being implemented or tested to further enhance the viewing experience:

- Enhanced TV Graphics - enriching the international television broadcast with new graphics including data insights from NTT's live data team, and 3D mapping of the live race situation.
- Trialling augmented reality - using technology to create a vision for how home-based fans could watch and interact with the race in the future.
- "Le Buzz" - a new machine-learning model being trialled for the first time at the 2019 Tour de France. It analyses the movements within the peloton to predict potential key moments such as the increased likelihood of a crash, a split in the peloton, or a change in the race dynamics.
- "Catch the Break" predictor - the #NTTPredictor has been enhanced to better account for the different race strategies that are in play at different points in a stage, through the creation of individual machine-learning models for every 10km section of the race.

- Live stage favourites – stage predictions can now be updated live throughout the stage based on the events occurring within the race.
- Cloud platform automation – all solutions delivered at the Tour De France will be hosted on the NTT cloud, and developed and supported by a distributed global team. Through the combination of DevOps and cloud automation, production environments can be scaled up and scaled out faster based on user demand.
- Platform-delivered Managed Services – powering all innovation in fan experience at the Tour de France, providing a robust, reliable platform.

Yann Le Moenner, CEO at A.S.O. said, “Since 2015, A.S.O. and NTT have revolutionized the viewing experience of the Tour de France for fans all over the world on a variety of media (onsite, mobile, TV and social channels). Together, we’ve also accelerated the digitization of the Tour de France to engage younger fans. By launching a new mobile app, developing an all-in-one digital platform to follow the race in real-time (Race Center), and creating @letourdata, we’re allowing data to tell the story of the race. NTT’s real-time analytics platform and our co-developed “content factory” allows us to produce around 2,000 exclusive pieces of content every year to be broadcast on all types of screens. New additions to add extra colour to the tour have also been incorporated including graphical charts, 3D mapping and even an interactive ‘Palette’. Through this partnership, we’re confident that we can face the challenges and achieve even greater things in the coming years.”

Since the beginning of the partnership, A.S.O. has already seen impressive results across all its digital platforms. Its social media fans grew from 2.7 million in 2014 to 7 million in 2019, there was a 14% growth in traffic to live-tracking website (Race Center) from 2016 to 2018, and video views increased by more than 1,000% (from 6 million to 75 million on the official TDF platforms). Through sensors installed on every bike, NTT’s specialist team will analyse over 150 million data points per stage of the Tour de France and use analytics to provide fans with daily real-time data visualizations on official social channels such as @letourdata.

Jason Goodall, CEO for NTT Ltd. added, “As Dimension Data, we increased the appeal of the Tour de France and brought its supporters closer to the action and their favourite cyclists. As NTT, we now enter a new and exciting era of innovation, driving the continuous innovation of software-defined technologies to support the transformation of our client’s business. We’re excited to continue working with A.S.O. on the biggest cycling stage in the world to engage millions of fans with this compelling story of innovation.”

The 106th edition of the Tour de France starts on 6 July 2019 in Brussels celebrating 100 years of the Yellow Jersey. Brussels is also the home of Eddy Merckx who holds the record for wearing the most Yellow Jerseys. The Tour finishes in the Champs-Élysées, Paris on 28 July 2019.

NTT brings together Dimension Data and 28 remarkable companies into one business. As one of the world’s leading technology services companies, it offers a combination of intelligent technology and services to provide a full range of unparalleled capabilities. It’s expertise in innovation through its access to a comprehensive research and development program in Japan will not only boost innovation and brand value, but also provide robust financial support.

In the future, both NTT and A.S.O. are looking to develop connected services for spectators on the road called “Smart Outdoor Stadium”. They will also focus on the creation of new technology to innovate the future of cycling, particularly around smart cities, as well as continuing to engage more fans through digital innovation.

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