



## COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

### ALEX GILADY

IOC representative • International Olympic Committee



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I was asked to speak on the theme of communication with stakeholders in the digital age, and I must say that it is very exciting age we live in.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, many major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining and transportation had a profound effect on society. The onset of the Industrial Revolution marked a major turning point in human society; almost every aspect of daily life was eventually influenced in some way.

It would not be outrageous to say that the Digital Revolution of this millennium, which we are all experiencing now, will have a similar or even greater affect on the way we talk, walk, think, consume, interact and live. We can feel it in virtually every aspect of our lives.

First, I would like to express thanks for all the insightful contributions we have received from our own members and from people all over the world who support the Olympic Movement and care about its values and what it stands for.

The contributions we received suggested, among other things that new technologies can help us to:

- communicate globally with customers, broadcasting partners, National Federations (NFs) and National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and bridge the gap between the NFs and NOCs;
- create a mechanism to tackle the IOC's absence between Games;
- bring together the best practices of broadcasters in similar markets; and
- provide footage of the Games for training-related use.

These are all great suggestions and I can assure you that the IOC is listening, reading, processing and taking into consideration every suggestion that can help the Olympic Movement keep marching proudly with a lighted torch.

Before I delve into this important matter and try to answer how the IOC tackles significant questions such as what the terms “communication with stakeholders” and “digital age” actually mean, it is important that we get some perspective on the world we live in:

- The top 10 jobs of 2010 did not exist in 2004;
- There are 31 billion searches on Google every month (compared to only 2.7 billion in 2006);
- The number of text messages sent every day exceeds the total population of the planet; probably many of you are sending text messages as we speak;
- It took 38 years for the radio to reach a market audience of 50 million, 13 years for television, four years for the internet, three years for digital radio, and less than two years for some social networking sites;
- If Facebook were a country, it would be the fifth largest in the world.

As you can see, since the last Olympic Congress the evolution of digital media has changed the media landscape beyond recognition. Nevertheless, I am proud to say that the IOC is well positioned to leverage the digital revolution to better serve its stakeholders, communicate with its customers and broadcast partners, and be a connector between athletes and their respective rights-holders. Digital technology can bridge the gap between NFs and NOCs and better deliver coordinated messages with the International Federations (IFs).

Digital has not yet replaced the printed word, television or any other medium, but combines, extends and complements them.

New technologies have aided the Olympic Movement to gain more cohesion and public awareness. We are aware that there is a new trend within these technologies which can boost Olympism even further. The IOC is using a number of the most popular “virtual communities” to promulgate the Olympic Movement and its social network, through which athletes, trainers, directors, sponsors and public authorities could have access to content of common interest.

Over the last decade, following the digitalisation of television signals, we have witnessed the emergence of new broadcasting methods: Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), personal mobile television, 3G mobile telephony, internet protocol television (IPTV) and a wider use of High Definition (HD) images. Additionally, the widespread use of the internet has become mandatory for the coordination of the emerging new media platforms that enlarge information and communication opportunities and enable the fast transmission of audiovisual services, at low cost.

The new forms of interactive communication through text (blogs, chat forums, wikis, social networking, citizen journalism etc.) or video streaming (YouTube, etc.) are empowering the Olympic Movement by offering new fields of interaction and direct involvement in various social areas and activities. These new services are convergent and complementary, offering our stakeholders and customers new diversified opportunities for communication, information and entertainment, either at a fixed place or on the move.

The IOC acknowledges that we are not in the business of producing newspapers or television broadcasts. We are simply in the business of content and storytelling. And since there is no greater globally admired content than the Olympic Games, the IOC is well positioned to leverage this Digital Revolution to better serve its stakeholders.



The IOC's communication activities are organised as part of an "Integrated Communications Strategy", a long-term strategy approved in 2006 and based on:

- the vision and goals set by the IOC President;
- the events managed by the Olympic Movement; and
- the Olympic values and principles.

The strategy aims to provide an integrated approach across all Olympic Movement partners and IOC departments, coordinating communications activities for maximum effect when communicating with stakeholders, the media and the public.

Our communication goals are to:

- lead and educate about issues relevant to sport;
- unify and use the voices of the Olympic Movement;
- demonstrate the Olympic values and inclusiveness of the Olympic Movement;
- find ways to make a greater impact in the developed and developing world;
- win and maintain the youth audience and their interest in sport;
- broaden the communication framework through the greater use of digital media.

The final goal of "broadening the communication framework through the greater use of digital media" has never been more relevant than it is today. And I can assure you that we are exerting maximal effort to achieve it.

The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games were the first truly digital Games, harnessing the power and potential of digital technology.

The Digital Revolution provides us with a whole new range of opportunities for the dissemination of Olympic content and values, and for better communication with our stakeholders.

The IOC's website Olympic.org has taken on an increasingly important role in the communication, operation and promotion of the Olympic Movement and its events. It acts as the reference on Olympism, the Olympic Movement, the Olympic Games and the Olympic Museum, and is a hub for everything related to the Olympic Movement.

With regards to media, the IOC's website continues to be an important means of communication. In addition to online information such as press releases and publications, the IOC is able to provide "broadcast quality" audiovisual material in a timely fashion for our stakeholders to use.

The IOC will be relaunching its official website before the end of 2009, to better address the needs of our target audience, the general public, with a greater emphasis on the younger demographic.

Furthermore, we are looking beyond the Olympic.org website for ways to engage with our audience and stakeholders. For example, our video channel on YouTube during the Beijing Games, which provided highlights to those territories where digital VOD rights had not been sold, was a great success and generated millions of views and substantial amounts of traffic.

We see this as a great tool for staying connected with our customers between Games, and we shall be putting resources toward launching dedicated Olympic channels on all the leading social networking sites.

In order to develop closer collaboration among the various organisations in the Olympic Family, the IOC is developing an extranet platform, which will offer relevant services to all its stakeholders. In the future the IOC could expand this platform to offer shared services between stakeholders, such as Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs), NOCs and IFs, and to facilitate access to our archive assets.

All our digital developments are coordinated at the IOC within the 3Net program i.e. internet, extranet and intranet.

It is also important to note that, in addition to our own digital strategy, most organisations within the Olympic Movement, from NOCs to OCOGs and from sponsors to broadcasters, are investing heavily in sophisticated digital media initiatives that we shall all benefit from in the near future.

In the next few years, we are likely to experience a stronger convergence of devices as well as smaller devices that will perform greater tasks. One device we shall be carrying around will combine our ID cards, keys, wallet, phone, camera, radio, TV and internet access. We shall have the world at our finger tips wherever and whenever we choose.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (the great American Philosopher) said: "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

This quote emphasises mission and innovation, and encapsulates exactly what we aim to do!