Fox Sports + IBM Watson | 2018 FIFA World Cup

Fox Sports was the official US broadcaster of the 2018 FIFA World Cup and wanted a breakthrough digital media experience that would allow users to build and watch their own highlight reels. IBM Watson developed the application and Thuuz powered the on-demand highlight creation with their SmartReels™ automated highlights platform. Thuuz and IBM also supported the Fox Broadcast team with real-time metadata for continuous updates on key plays that would merit highlight production. Fox Sports made the FIFA World Cup™ Highlight Machine, sponsored by adidas, a primary feature on the foxsports.com site before and throughout the 2018 tournament, including deep highlight content from 300 archive games.

Live and historic matches
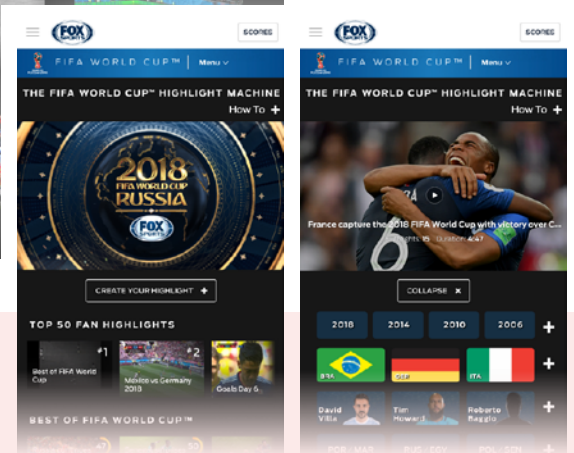
Dynamic, real-time highlight playlists

Ultra-flexible search enabling trillions of custom highlights

User generated reels by popularity

Curated reels for featured themes

The Challenge

Fox Sports wanted to showcase the World Cup in a way that had never been tried before: letting anyone easily mix and share their own personal take on the best moments, in a browser or even on a mobile phone. Fox had selected 300 of the best games in history, going back to 1958, to use before the 2018 tournament started, with a goal to generate custom playlists with any combination of teams, players, matches, and play types in seconds and share the custom reels they generate. As each 2018 match took place, the plays from that match would automatically become part of the available content. This involved a range of video formats and resolutions as well as deep data integration to manage the relevant players and organize them to slice and dice in real time. Every highlight-worthy play for every game had to be broken down and made available as a searchable video clip by year, team, player, match, and play type.

THUUZ sports

Thuuz Sports: SmartReels™

Dynamic playlist generation for any user search
Excitement-based order for players, teams, matches
Adaptive playlist title and thumbnail generation
Text descriptions of every play

IBM Watson: Front-end UX

Consumer facing user experience (web + mobile)
Video player optimized for dynamic playlists
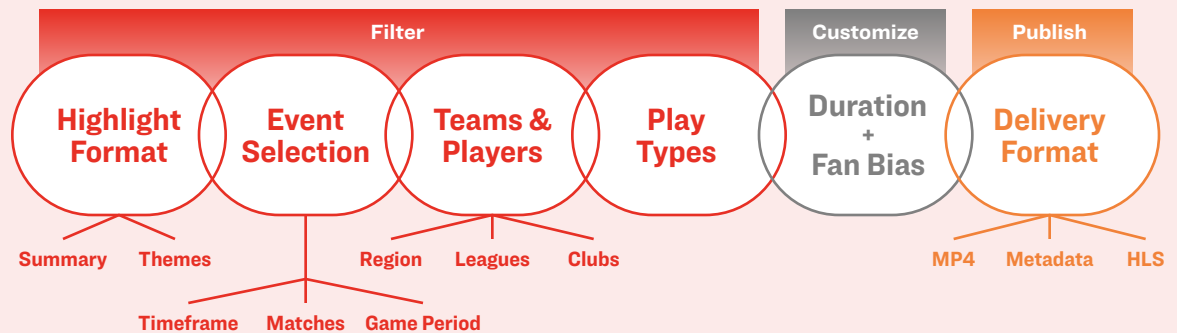Video sharing
Ad integration

The Solution

For the Fox FIFA World Cup™ Highlight Machine, Thuuz and IBM had to integrate on a very short timeline to bring together the SmartReels™ automated highlights technology with a web/mobile experience to build and present these playlists from potentially hundreds of matches in a matter of seconds. This involved rapid iterative design, custom APIs, and an architecture to optimize content search and video delivery for the Fox Sports audience.

Thuuz ingested the 300 games and ran its SmartReels™ engine on each game to break them down into dynamic video segments that could be assembled in any combination within seconds. The team also developed a custom API for IBM to directly support the

Highlight Machine functionality, including dynamically filtering players, teams, etc. based on available highlights as users made selections. Thuuz produced custom titles and thumbnails for each reel and served carousels for both the most popular playlists and a Fox-curated set of playlists that updated as each game concluded.

Once live matches started, Thuuz adapted the workflow to directly process both a live stream from Russia and a backup stream, for redundancy, seamlessly integrating these matches with the historic matches as selectable content. Since SmartReels™ is built for real-time highlights, we could easily support Fox Broadcast with metadata about key events as they happened in each game.

Filter	Customize	Publish

Highlight Format — Event Selection — Teams & Players — Play Types — Duration + Fan Bias — Delivery Format

Summary   Themes

Region   Leagues   Clubs

MP4   Metadata   HLS

Timeframe   Matches   Game Period

The Results

Fox Sports and IBM expressed delight about working with Thuuz on these projects, and the Fox audience experienced a first-of-its-kind digital media application for immersing themselves in World Cup history.

Soccer fans and their broader community could view any combination of teams, players, matches, and play types in seconds and share the custom reels they generated.

Literally trillions of highlights could be streamed instantly using this platform. Playlists drew from 60 years of great soccer action, including all of 2018, within minutes of the final whistle. This unique application, for both mobile and web, showcases how Thuuz AI finds the best plays in sports and tags, blends, and delivers a seamless experience for fans, instantaneously.