

Thuuz takes automated highlights solution down under with Kayo



By Simon Ward

Thuuz Sports, the USA-based media technology company, is rolling out its automated highlights product in Australia for the first time via a new tie-up with Kayo Sports, the multi-sport streaming platform.

Under the partnership, Kayo customers can access tailored highlights of sports including cricket, rugby union, basketball and soccer just minutes after matches have finished.

Thuuz, a business-to-business specialist located in Palo Alto, California, uses artificial intelligence-based metadata to measure the excitement of incidents in a sporting event, and creates the back end for bespoke highlights packages that

broadcasters, streaming platforms and leagues can share with their customers through website video players and mobile apps.

Clients have included Fox Sports, NBC Sports, the NFL, DirecTV, Dish Network, Hulu, IBM, Liberty Global, Charter Communications and Deltatre.

However, the partnership with Kayo, which is owned by pay-television operator Foxtel, represents a first venture in Australia, and has enabled Thuuz to add cricket and rugby to the sports it now provides highlights of.

Featured events in 2019 will include the Cricket World Cup presently taking place in England and Wales, Australia's home cricket matches, the Rugby World Cup in Japan, the Basketball World Cup in China and Australian soccer's A-League.

In an exclusive interview with Sportcal, Wayne Sieve, the executive vice-president of Thuuz, said: "They [Kayo] needed something quite specific and we're able to service that. They have a huge amount of content and are in sports we wanted to do."

He added: "It's a first deal in Australia and a big brand."

Kayo launched last November as a standalone sports streaming service, and with telecoms operator Telstra as its exclusive telecoms partner.

It offers live, catch-up and on-demand coverage of 50 different sports and leagues, including Australian cricket, AFL Australian Rules football, NRL rugby league, A-League soccer, tennis and Formula 1.

Julian Ogrin, the chief executive of Kayo, welcomed the new highlights offering from Thuuz, saying today: "Kayo is transforming the way fans consume sport. This new partnership will help deliver more ways to watch, when and how they choose.

"We are excited to bring this innovative technology to Kayo customers through a partner that is leading the way in creating and delivering automated highlights to consumers."



Thuuz works in 12 sports, notably soccer, American football, basketball, baseball, ice hockey, tennis and golf, offering highlights packages in eight and collecting metadata and measuring excitement from the others.

The data derives from multiple sources, including audio and video, play-by-play, ball-striking and betting and social media platforms.

Sieve said: “The real magic is our AI, machine learning and predictive analysis.”

On the company’s international ambitions, Sieve stated: “We’ve had relations with Deltatre and Liberty Global and done some work overseas, but this [partnership with Kayo] is certainly a move into Asia-Pacific, and there’s certainly [now] more business [potential] outside the United States than in the United States.”

Asia, Europe, the MENA region and the rest of the Americas are seen as particular areas of interest.

IBM, the global technology company that has its own AI system in IBM Watson, is a prominent partner, and worked with Thuuz to provide tailored highlights on Fox Sports platforms in USA of last year’s Fifa World Cup held in Russia.

IBM built the front end, including the full layout and user interface, and turned to Thuuz for the back end in order to generate customised highlights based on fans’ search queries on, for example, teams and players. There were also clips of more than 300 archive matches from previous World Cups.

IBM is well-versed in such technology having worked with the organisers of tennis’ Wimbledon Championships, of which it is an official supplier, to produce automated highlights of matches since 2017.

Sieve said of the 2018 World Cup experience: “There were certain technologies created around that that we’re using now.”

Evolutions of the Thuuz product include enabling viewers to watch highlights so far of a match they have just tuned in to, which Sieve said operators were “drooling over,” and personalised highlights reels for fans incorporating their favourite sports, leagues and clubs.

He concluded: “It’s about how can I create not just customization, with mobile and OTT, but personalization?”

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