

IBM Study: Fan Engagement and Consumption of Sports Shifting, Reveals New Opportunities for Technology Integrations including AI

- International sports fans surveyed are optimistic about the impact of technologies like AI on their digital sports experiences.
- Real-time updates and personalized content rank as top priorities for fans when it comes to how generative AI can enhance following and engaging with sports events.
- Younger sports fans overwhelmingly embrace AI-powered experiences and digital platforms for sports content consumption and engagement.



ARMONK, N.Y., June 26, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- As sports fans worldwide tune in to a myriad of athletic events this summer, [new research](#) commissioned by IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) reveals a growing generational shift and acceptance of technology-driven experiences that will impact the future of sports consumption.

The international study*, conducted by Morning Consult, gathers insights from more than 18,000 sports fans across 10 countries to better understand both how they follow and engage with sports, including live coverage, highlights, and summaries, as well as preferences for future engagement and consumption. The findings confirm that fans are prioritizing more personalized and time-saving digital sports content, with the majority recognizing the positive impact technologies like [artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) will have on these experiences.

The data also confirms that younger sports fans are more likely to favor AI-enhanced features as they increasingly turn to digital platforms for sports content. Surveyed fans aged 18-29 are using a mobile phone or tablet as their primary device to watch sporting events more often than older fans, with subscription streaming of live sporting events being most popular among the younger age group. More than half (58%) of 18-29 year old respondents also believe AI will have a positive impact on sports.

Alternatively, respondents from older age groups remain loyal to traditional methods of consumption, with linear broadcasting being most popular among fans 45+. Forty percent of surveyed fans over the age of 55 believe AI will have a positive impact on sports.

"Fans worldwide are continuing to embrace platforms and solutions that allow them to feel more connected and informed on their favorite sporting events and athletes, and IBM's new study confirms this now includes embracing technologies like AI to deliver these experiences," said Noah Syken, Vice President, Sports and Entertainment Partnerships. "IBM's longstanding portfolio of Sports and Entertainment partnerships aims to deliver on these expectations from fans by putting in the hands of our partners the most advanced IBM technologies from our AI and data platform watsonx."

Other key study findings include:

Fans are optimistic about the impact of technology on sports, paving the way for generative AI powered experiences

- 63% of respondents point to data analytics as having the most positive impact on sports, while 50% of respondents think AI will have a positive impact.
- When it comes to how generative AI can improve engagement, surveyed sports fans identify real-time updates (34%) and personalized content (29%) as the top priorities.
 - India, UAE and Saudi Arabia rank the highest in countries where fans are prioritizing real-time updates and personalized content powered by generative AI.

Fans now prioritize personalized, bite-sized content when it comes to their consumption of sport content

- More than half (56%) of respondents turn to social media for additional sports content; 46% are getting additional content from broadcast/video news while 35% are turning to news articles.
- 64% of those fans engaging in additional sports content are viewing highlight videos of best moments; 48% are consuming post-match recaps and analysis.
- Among those engaging in additional sports content, respondents rank summarized content (33%) as their top priority followed by personalized content (26%).
- Sports fans are watching event summaries more often, with 41% of respondents indicating they watch summaries or highlights weekly; 24% report daily engagement.

Younger fans may be reshaping how consumers experience sports content, as they engage with content via multiple screens and are more likely to favor AI-powered enhancements

- Younger fans (18-29) are most likely to view sports highlights through social media over other platforms.
- When it comes to consuming sports content, fans aged between 18-29 are more likely to rank personalized content as their top priority.
- Fans aged 18-29 are more likely to rate AI improvements as high priority, with real-time updates (40%) and personalized content (36%) topping the list of priorities.
 - While real-time updates (26%) and personalized content (19%) also top the list of AI improvement priorities among older fans (55+), these respondents are much less likely to consider AI improvements a high priority.
- Younger fans are also more likely to be using multiple devices while engaging with sporting events than older fans (55+). 10% of younger fans surveyed use three or more devices while watching sports compared to only 2% of older fans.

While TV is the most common method for viewing sports, fans are increasingly using multiple devices to follow sporting events

- 64% of surveyed fans say linear or streaming TV is their top choice for watching sports.
- 31% of respondents say they are most likely to watch a live sporting event on linear broadcast; 28% say they use a subscription streaming service and 23% use a free streaming service
 - Subscription streaming of live sporting events is most popular among younger fans aged between 18-29.
- Mobile devices are a noteworthy alternative for watching sports, with 20% of consumers reporting it is the top way they watch sporting events and 38% saying it is their second most likely options.
- 28% of surveyed sports fans use at least two devices while watching sporting events; 24% report they use at least two devices while listening to sports
 - Fans between 18-44 are more likely to be using three or more devices.
- Respondents rank multi-tasking as the top reason for using multiple devices when consuming sports, followed by finding more game information while watching or listening to the sport.

To view the full study, visit:

<https://newsroom.ibm.com/image/IBM+Global+Sports+Attitudes+and+Behaviors+Report+June+2024.pdf>

***Study Methodology**

This survey was conducted in May 2024 among a total sample of 18,082 sports fans 18+ in the US, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, India, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. The interviews for each country were conducted online, and the data is unweighted, with ~2,000 responses per market in the US, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and India and ~1,000 responses per market in the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

To qualify for this survey respondents must be at least an average sports fan and follow one or more of the following sports: Soccer, Cricket, Tennis, Basketball, Baseball, Rugby, Golf, American football, F1 racing, Track and field, Swimming, and the Olympics.

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