

ADVANCED TELEVISION

Demand for mobile streaming to surge during World Cup

June 12, 2018

Independent research based on over 3,000 European subscribers on behalf of Openwave Mobility has found that 1 in 3 football fans (31 per cent) will watch the 2018 Russia World Cup using mobile data. This is nearly double the number of people that watched the 2014 Brazilian World Cup (17 per cent) using mobile data. The 2018 World Cup study was conducted in the UK, Spain and Germany and found that mobile operators can expect a surge in live streaming traffic over the course of the tournament.

Many subscribers (29 per cent), however, revealed that they will shun their mobiles owing to poor Quality of Experience (QoE) and bill shock. During the 2014 Brazilian tournament, European subscribers shared the same worries through a study conducted in May 2014. Even after four years, the same fears of poor QoE and bill shock still dog the industry.

“While the demand for mobile video has grown dramatically, improvements in QoE have not necessarily gone hand in hand,” said John Giere, CEO of Openwave Mobility. “Consecutive studies have shown that subscribers will only tolerate six seconds of buffering before switching off in frustration. And a global sporting phenomenon like the World Cup adds another layer of complexity. Live streaming coupled with a surge in demand can strain mobile networks more than Video on Demand streaming. So, whether it is watching a funny cat video or Mo Salah’s dribbling skills – buffering and stalling can get the red card treatment from subscribers!”

Giere continued: “However, operators should note that there is money on the table for monetising mobile video on the back of major sporting events. The survey found that almost 2 in 3 (62 per cent) football fans would switch to a mobile operator who offered a price-plan to watch unlimited football on their mobile data connection – and 20 per cent were prepared to pay extra for this.”

Additional findings from the research include:

- Football fans in Spain are much more inclined to watch matches on the go, compared to other nations. 1 in 2 (51 per cent) will watch Sergio Ramos and the team in Moscow on a handset. Spanish footy fans topped the table again during Brazil 2014 when 1 in 3 watched on mobile data, beating the British and German fans.
- 39 per cent of European Millennials will watch the 2018 World Cup over mobile data. That is twice the number of Baby Boomers (21 per cent) watching the Russian tournament on a handset.

“Openwave Mobility has over 30 global deployments and during the World Cup we will be closely tracking the impact live streaming video has on mobile networks,” he advised. “In the autumn, we will be launching the Mobile Video Industry Council and the detailed findings will be discussed with the world’s leading operators. Watch this space for more details.”