USGA U.S. Open Digital Experience Case Study

Designing the Ultimate Golf Fan Experience

Overview

This case study showcases the digital redesign process for the USGA's U.S. Open website and app experience. The initiative aimed to unify content, modernize interactions, and create a scalable platform to support fan engagement before, during, and after the tournament.

Primary Goals

• Modernize the visual design and navigation across devices
• Deliver a responsive, immersive fan experience with live scoring, stats, and VR features
• Strengthen the brand's digital presence against global golf event competitors
• Enable cross-platform integration including social, video, API-driven stats, and course interactivity

UX Strategy & Design Process

The engagement followed a structured design methodology divided into three phases:
- Discovery: Analytics, stakeholder interviews, competitive benchmarking
- Conception: Content strategy, personas, wireframes, workflows
- Execution: Creative treatments, testing, prototypes, and VR integration

Key Features Designed

• Fully responsive site with adaptive homepage layout
• Modern leaderboard with expandable player stats and hole highlights
• VR-enabled course tours and 360° fan immersion
• Modular components for scores, news, social, and player profiles
• Streamlined search, filter, and content personalization

Fan Journey & Engagement Lifecycle

User engagement was mapped across four key phases:
- Investigate: Venue, tickets, player info, and early hype
- Build Up: Social sharing and pre-tournament buzz
- Enjoy: Real-time scoring, stats, video, and interactivity
- Celebrate: Post-event highlights and legacy content

Competitive Benchmarking

Extensive analysis was conducted comparing the U.S. Open to:
- The Masters
- The European Tour
- PGA Tour
- The Open Championship
- Golf Channel

Evaluation criteria included mobile performance, social presence, VR experience, stats access, and player profiles.

Technology & Innovation

Opportunities identified for innovation:
- Virtual Reality integration across web, mobile, and app
- GPS-based interaction and wayfinding on course
- On-site beacon tech and digital wallet ideas
- TV Everywhere features
- Real-time content delivery through robust CMS and APIs

Conclusion

The USGA U.S. Open redesign provided a best-in-class sports experience, integrating cutting-edge technology and elegant design. It set a new standard for golf tournament engagement and laid the foundation for scalable, fan-first experiences across all digital touchpoints.