
It's Time to Talk Technology

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It is inescapable that as investment in sponsorship continues to rise and more and more brands invest in sport, digital activations and technological innovation is key. Nowadays, the opportunities to engage fans and consumers have never been greater and this is a chance that should not be missed or neglected.

The most recent example of a brand using new and innovative technology to activate a sponsorship came this week when Nike launched their brand new NBA jerseys, the first of an eight-year partnership. Nike launched a jersey-connected app which means fans can now access Nike's newest app simply by tapping their phone on their new NBA jersey using NFC technology.

Users can access NikeConnect by tapping an embedded chip hidden behind a tag at the bottom of their jersey with their smartphone, which will then launch the app. Each NFC chip

will generate different content depending on which player's jersey you buy. Sign in with a NikePlus account to land in the central "Team" tab of the app, with a status bar, player stats, pre-game countdown, in-game score, or post-game final score. You can access pre-game arrival footage, highlight reels of your team and interviews 30 minutes after every game. The app also features early access to gear, special event tickets, Spotify playlists from athletes, boosts to NBA 2K18 and more.

This follows on from the news in the summer that Bundesliga side Schalke 04 will have an integrated chip in its replica shirts this season for fans to pay for services as part of the club's deal with Allynedfresh online supermarket. The club will have the supermarket's logo on the sleeves and will contain a chip that means fans can pay with their shirts in the stadium. New technology isn't something that just brands should look to utilise either. Arsenal have launched the Arsenal Innovation Lab to work with start-up organisations to identify new fan experiences.

We are living in an age where technology-driven sponsorship is creating a win-win situation for rightsholders, fans and sponsors. For the rightsholder, it drives fans into the stadium for a unique game day experience. For fans, it provides a visceral opportunity to experience the live environment of proximity, comradery, and lasting memories. And for sponsors, technology-enabled sports sponsorships provide the ultimate platform to build fan engagement and brand loyalty. For more on how sponsorship is breaking away from tradition [listen to Misha Sher talk about football's new sponsorship assets at Soccerex.](#)

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