

Scoring in online publishing in Africa

The last three years have seen strong growth for online publisher Goal.com. According to Effective Measure, in February 2016, Goal.com broke the half a billion page views per month mark in Africa. Effective Measure is the sanctioned digital measurement tool by IAB SA in South Africa and has recently extended its reach into Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria.



Image by 123RF

Digital expansion in Africa's key markets continues to be driven by the explosive consumer growth in volume and duration of time spent online. There are currently five local 'Goal' editions in Africa - namely Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania.

The Goal.com platforms include, the Goal News App and the Goal Live App, all tracked using Effective Measure site and app measurement methodology.

The Goal Live app which delivers live scores and information on football matches from across the globe is growing at a rate of 20% a month while the video platform, ePlayer, is returning 4 million views a month in Africa, according to an Effective Measure case study.

Local content

These figures continue to climb and publishers like Goal.com are tapping into the need for relevant, locally appropriate content. With close to a 90% male skew, tracking, measuring and understanding Goal.com's audience has helped ensure content is tailored to meet their needs.

The team invest heavily in African content production, which delivers localised versions of European football content and of course, domestic African football news and views. Holding their own against international content is key.

The advantage afforded to local publisher Goal.com is the lack of local sports content availability. African football fans who

want to follow their local teams have fewer choices, which means greater exposure for Goal.com in these markets. Retaining local traffic meant developing home-grown resources to complement the global football coverage. As such, Goal.com have created a one-stop shop for African football fans.

Preserving a global standard for domestic football coverage has not been without its challenges. Unlike international photography, there is no comprehensive image provider that covers all the African leagues. The teams' focus and drive to compete against international standards meant constructing their own network of freelance photographers across the continent to secure up-to-date images of the matches, teams and players being reporting on. Up to 48% of Goal.com's Top 100 content items a month are now produced by local Africa teams.

Retaining audience

Once eyeballs have been exposed, the challenge of retaining them remains. Top quality content goes without saying, but over and above that, Goal.com regularly produce 'tent-pole' content series such as the recent Legends World Cup. In this series, users seek out the 'Goal Opinion' on all things football. This affords the team the opportunity to engage with football fans on a deeper level, forming relationships with their audience that go beyond reporting.

Encouraged by their resounding success in Africa, Goal.com are constantly looking to expand the local African coverage and launch new editions, with new market launches planned towards the end of 2016.

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