alteryx   accenturedigital

Alteryx and Qlik Help Accenture Deliver In-Game Stats to RBS 6 Nations Fans

CHALLENGE

Accenture worked with RBS 6 Nations to develop the official mobile application that would make it easier for fans to access, understand, and interact with match data.

SOLUTION

With the help of Alteryx Analytics, Accenture built a feed to the official RBS 6 Nations Championship application that gives fans access to features such as a live momentum tracker and head-to-head player positional battles. Accenture also used this advanced analytical capability to build near-real-time and visual applications in Qlik Sense to send live, in-depth statistics to sports pundits and media outlets during each game.

RESULTS

- **Deeper Insights:** Helped enable virtually unlimited views of match data, allowing users to compare players, visualize where plays happened on the pitch, predict match outcomes, and more

- **Hours vs. Weeks:** Reduced time required to run complex analytic processes by more than 75 percent

- **Intuitive Workflow:** Created a visual app for rugby fans that processed 1.9 million rows of data per game, enabling users to experience the thrill of every match before, during, and after the game was played

Introduction

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology, and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions—underpinned by the world's largest delivery network—Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With approximately 373,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives.

As the Official Technology Partner of the RBS 6 Nations Rugby Championship, Accenture was tasked with developing a mobile application that would allow fans to access each game with live play-by-play commentary, news, statistics, video highlights, and up-to-the-minute scores. Creating this application required seamless access to and near-real-time analysis of the behind-the-scenes data—including multiple data sources—and a visual front end that would make it easy for fans to understand the data and follow the game.

Situation

"When we first joined forces with RBS 6 Nations in 2012, they didn't have a mobile app. So we created a mobile app, but there were no analytics involved. Then, in 2013, they asked us to add basic statistical data, such as how many tackles, how many passes, and the like, for consumption by the media," recalls Thomas Welgemoed, analytics delivery manager at Accenture. "We thought that we could do better than that, conducting positional analysis, showing where specific events occurred on the field, and enabling fans to interact with the data. But to do this we needed the right analytics and visualization partners."

At the time, Welgemoed was using a traditional ETL tool for his data requirements, but he recognized that his existing workflows would run too slowly to be useful in the RBS 6 Nations app. An Accenture colleague suggested that he try Alteryx. Says Welgemoed, "There was a certain workflow that was taking about twenty seconds to run; I needed it in less than five seconds. With Alteryx, it ran in about two seconds. That got my attention!"

Solution

To process and compare the more than 1.9 million rows of data that enable Accenture to power the RBS 6 Nations app, Welgemoed now uses Alteryx Analytics. The resulting data is transferred directly to the RBS 6 Nations app and to a QlikView dashboard available for VIPs, giving fans a highly visual representation of the data so they can experience the thrill of each game before, during, and after the match.

"It's not so much about multiple sources and combining them as it is about speed of processing, because the data needs to come through in as close to real time as possible," notes Welgemoed. "We get new files every five to ten seconds, and within just thirty seconds, Alteryx processes the data and updates match-winning probability scores. Then we just need to refresh it. We couldn't have done this with our old technology solution."

According to Welgemoed, with this probability tracker, which is powered by Alteryx, "We receive live data from the official RBS 6 Nations data provider that captures the data as the game is happening. Then we feed that data into our Alteryx module and calculate, at any minute of the game, the probability of either team winning based on certain plays and action taking place. To produce this one view, we process the data and ingest that into a predictive model, which Alteryx handles with ease."

What's more, Alteryx helped Welgemoed design, build, and feed the new mobile app more quickly than he would have been able to using the previous technology. "With the previous technology, if anything went wrong, we would get these unfriendly and unhelpful error messages and then we would have to stop development and determine what needed to be fixed— without any guidance," remembers Welgemoed. "Alteryx has real-time warnings, so if we're doing something wrong, we know that before we try to run it. That speeds up development of new processes immensely."

Results

When asked to quantify the benefits of using Alteryx, Welgemoed says it comes down to speed and data diversity. "A job that previously took twenty seconds to run now takes two seconds in Alteryx. Another job that used to take two minutes now takes thirty seconds to run," comments Welgemoed. "Even more impressive is how quickly I can bulk-load the five hundred or more files, regardless of their structure. It can be semi-structured like JSON or XML and then run the analytics and algorithm components for an entire game. With the previous technology, it would take half an hour or more. In Alteryx, I can do it in just over one minute."

Plus, thanks to the integration between Alteryx and QlikView, pundits can see the data results in a graphical manner. "We populate the visual front end with all the heavy data lifting that Alteryx does on the back end," says Welgemoed. "Alteryx populates all the data and pushes the results to Qlik, automatically refreshing the QlikView visualization so you can see how individual players perform and some of the key events."

But the ultimate benefit of Alteryx, says Welgemoed, is realized when the fans interact with the app. "A key objective for us when we built this app for RBS 6 Nations was to make something that fans can relate to, something that feels familiar, something they can interact with. Alteryx is at the heart of each piece of this app and allows us to take fan engagement to a whole new level."
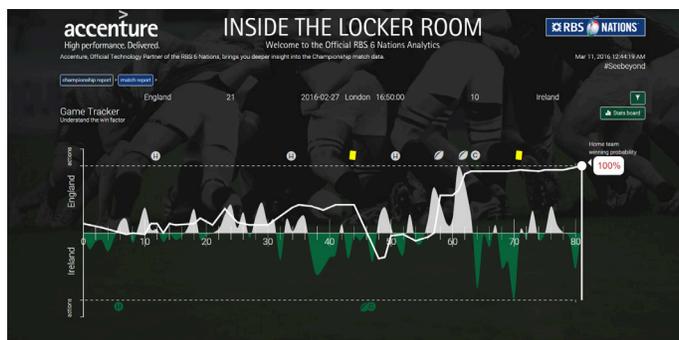
Fans can view the latest match data using a gametracker dashboard powered by Alteryx and QlikView

alteryx