

BLOG REPORT

Galloping into the Future: How digital immersive experiences will revolutionise global horse racing



TIAKI

The Digital Immersive Juggernaut is set to Re-Imagine the Horse Racing Experience for Global Fans

The thunder of hooves, the flash of silks, the roar of the crowd – horse racing has captivated audiences for centuries. Events like the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, Kentucky Derby, Royal Ascot, Melbourne Cup, Dubai World Cup, and Japan Cup stand as pinnacles of sporting and social prestige, drawing millions of spectators and generating a palpable buzz that extends far beyond the racetrack. Yet, despite this immense popularity, the industry has largely failed to harness the power of the digital realm, leaving a vast reservoir of fan engagement untapped.

The numbers speak for themselves. A staggering **220 million TikTok posts** linked to these six premium horse racing events demonstrate the fervent desire of fans to share and immortalize their experiences. However, this digital outpouring has, until now, remained largely unmonetized by race sports properties. This is set to change dramatically in 2025, with the advent of sophisticated digital immersive experiences poised to revolutionize the way fans interact with the sport.

Horse Racing at a Crossroads: Blending Tradition with Immersive Digital Innovation

Horse racing, with its rich legacy and iconic appeal, stands at a defining moment. Though the drama and elegance of the sport continue to draw widespread admiration, the industry must now evolve to remain vibrant and relevant in a digitally driven age.

To unlock its full potential with new generations of fans, horse racing must overcome two major barriers:

1. Understanding the Sport

The traditions, rules, and strategies that define horse racing can be complex and inaccessible to newcomers.

2. Grasping the concept of betting

Betting, an essential part of the racing experience, often feels intimidating or confusing to those unfamiliar with it.

The Urgency for Reinvention

Today, horse racing is facing significant growth challenges for several reasons:

- ★ The number of dedicated fans and bettors is dwindling.
- ★ Attracting new generations, particularly Gen Z and sports enthusiasts, is becoming increasingly difficult in a highly competitive, crowded global sports marketplace.
- ★ The stakes are high: the sport must draw new audiences—starting with Gen Z, sports fans, and the general public—to remain relevant and thrive.

To achieve this, horse racing must offer innovative experiences that resonate with these new audiences, blending education, immersion, gamification, and entertainment within the racetrack environment.

The Digital Immersive Revolution

To break down the two barriers and attract a new generation of fans, the sport must embrace immersive, tech-enabled experiences—both on-site and online—that educate, entertain, and engage. By blending its storied past with digital innovation, horse racing can open its gates to a broader, more diverse audience and secure its place in the future of global entertainment.

The industry has, until now, largely failed to harness the power of the digital realm, leaving a vast reservoir of fan engagement untapped. However, this is set to change dramatically with the advent of sophisticated digital immersive experiences poised to revolutionize the way fans interact with the sport.

Immersive Use Cases Transforming the Fan Experience

Digital technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are being deployed to create personalized, interactive, and shareable moments that extend the thrill of the race beyond the physical venue.

The Dawn of Immersive Horse Racing Experiences

The luxury location experience offered by these prestigious events, spanning days before and after the races, presents a fertile ground for digital augmentation. Imagine extending the thrill of the race beyond the confines of the physical venue, creating personalized, interactive, and shareable moments that resonate with fans on a deeper level. This is the promise of immersive technology.

20 Immersive Use Cases to Transform the Fan Experience

Here are 20 detailed use cases that leverage digital immersive technologies to enhance the fan experience at premium horse racing events:

1. Augmented Reality (AR) Race Day Guides:

- ★ **Description:** An AR-enabled mobile app that overlays real-time race information, horse statistics, jockey profiles, onto live racetrack views, making the sport more accessible and engaging for newcomers. Service-oriented app for navigation at a racecourse.
- ★ **Benefit:** Provides instant, context-aware information, enhancing understanding and engagement.

2. Real-Time Data Visualization & Analytics:

- ★ **Description:** Interactive displays and mobile apps that visualize real-time race data, including speed, stride length, heart rate, and track conditions.
- ★ **Benefit:** Provides deeper insights into race performance, appealing to data-driven fans.

3. AI-Powered Race Predictions & Insights:

- ★ **Description:** Provide personalized insights and predictions, adding a strategic dimension that appeals to both new and seasoned bettors.
- ★ **Benefit:** Enhances the excitement and strategic element of the race, appealing to analytical fans.

4. Personalized Race Day Itineraries:

- ★ **Description:** AI-powered apps that create personalized race day itineraries, recommending events, experiences, and amenities based on fan preferences.
- ★ **Benefit:** Enhances convenience and personalization, ensuring a seamless and enjoyable experience.

5. Holographic Horse & Jockey Presentations:

- ★ **Description:** Holographic projections of horses and jockeys, providing detailed pre-race presentations and post-race analysis.
- ★ **Benefit:** Creates a visually stunning and engaging experience, highlighting the athleticism and skill involved.

6. Interactive Paddock & Stable Tours:

- ★ **Description:** AR/VR tours offer behind-the-scenes access and educational content, enhancing fan knowledge and appreciation.
- ★ **Benefit:** Offers exclusive access and educational content, enhancing fan knowledge and appreciation.

7. Virtual Reality (VR) Jockey Experience:

- ★ **Description:** VR simulations that let fans experience the race from a jockey's perspective, fostering a visceral connection with the sport.
- ★ **Benefit:** Offers a unique, visceral experience, fostering a deeper connection with the sport.

8. Immersive Pre-Race Entertainment:

- ★ **Description:** AR/VR experiences that enhance pre-race entertainment, such as virtual fashion shows, interactive art installations, and musical performances.
- ★ **Benefit:** Elevates the overall entertainment value of the event, catering to a wider audience.

9. Immersive Post-Race Celebrations:

- ★ **Description:** AR/VR experiences that extend the celebration beyond the finish line, including virtual victory parades, interactive photo booths, and digital fireworks displays.
- ★ **Benefit:** Creates a memorable and shareable post-race experience, extending the excitement.

10. Immersive Historical Recreations:

- ★ **Description:** VR recreations of iconic races from the past, allowing fans to relive historic moments and experience the evolution of the sport.
- ★ **Benefit:** Appeals to nostalgia and provides educational content, connecting fans with the rich history of horse racing.

11. Digital Immersive Training and Educational Content:

- ★ **Description:** VR training and interactive modules teach fans about horse care, breeding, and racing strategy, helping them overcome the initial learning curve.
- ★ **Benefit:** Enhances education and safety within the sport, while also offering content that can be sold to fans.

12. AI-Powered Fan Engagement Platforms:

- ★ **Description:** AI-powered platforms that analyze fan data and provide personalized recommendations and engagement opportunities.
- ★ **Benefit:** Enhances fan engagement and loyalty, creating a more personalized experience.

13. Immersive Food and Beverage Experiences:

- ★ **Description:** AR/VR menus that provide detailed information about food and beverage options, including virtual tastings and pairing recommendations.
- ★ **Benefit:** Enhances the dining experience and provides personalized recommendations.

14. Interactive Digital Art Installations:

- ★ **Description:** Digital art installations that respond to fan interactions and create dynamic visual experiences.
- ★ **Benefit:** Adds a unique and artistic dimension to the event, appealing to a wider audience.

15. Multi-Sensory Immersive Rooms:

- ★ **Description:** Dedicated immersive rooms that combine VR, haptics, and environmental effects to create multi-sensory experiences related to horse racing.
- ★ **Benefit:** Offers a truly immersive and unforgettable experience.

16. Personalized Digital Silks & Avatars:

- ★ **Description:** Fans can create and customize digital silks and avatars, which are displayed on digital screens and integrated into AR/VR experiences.
- ★ **Benefit:** Allows for self-expression and personalized engagement, creating a sense of belonging.

17. Social AR Filters & Games:

- ★ **Description:** AR filters and games that integrate with social media platforms, allowing fans to share their experiences and engage in interactive challenges.
- ★ **Benefit:** Drives social media engagement and creates a fun, shareable experience.

18. Digital Collectibles & NFTs:

- ★ **Description:** Digital collectibles and NFTs representing iconic horses, jockeys, and race moments, offering fans unique ownership and trading opportunities.
- ★ **Benefit:** Creates a new revenue stream and fosters a sense of digital ownership and community.

19. Geo-Location Based Immersive Scavenger Hunts:

- ★ **Description:** Geo-Location based immersive scavenger hunts that allow fans to interact with physical locations around the event, and unlock digital content.
- ★ **Benefit:** drives engagement and exploration of the venue.

20. Live Interactive Social Walls:

- ★ **Description:** Large digital screens that display real-time social media feeds, fan photos, and interactive polls and quizzes.
- ★ **Benefit:** Fosters a sense of community and encourages social media engagement.

Monetizing the Digital Surge: Data, AI and Cybersecurity

The successful implementation of immersive experiences relies on robust data, AI, and cybersecurity strategies. By capturing and analyzing fan data, race organizers can personalize marketing, optimize event experiences, and create new revenue streams through targeted advertising and sponsorships. AI-driven personalization and cybersecurity are essential to protect fan data and ensure the integrity of digital platforms.

Data Monetization:

- ★ By capturing and analyzing fan data, race sports properties can gain valuable insights into audience preferences, behaviors, and engagement patterns.
- ★ This data can be used to personalize marketing campaigns, optimize event experiences, and create new revenue streams through targeted advertising and sponsorships.
- ★ Data can be sold to third party companies, for market research, and targeted advertisement.

AI-Driven Personalization:

- ★ AI algorithms can be used to personalize content, recommendations, and experiences based on individual fan profiles.
- ★ AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can provide instant support and information to fans, enhancing customer service.
- ★ AI can be used for fraud detection, and security purposes.

Cybersecurity and Connectivity:

- ★ Robust cybersecurity measures are essential to protect fan data and ensure the security of digital platforms.
- ★ Wi-Fi 7 or Private 5G SA can provide the high-bandwidth and low-latency connectivity required to support immersive experiences and real-time data streaming.

- ★ Edge computing can be deployed, to reduce latency, and increase security.
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In our separate Blog Report, **Protecting the Digital Fan Goldmine: Safeguarding Immersive Revenue in the Age of AI Cybercrime** [Protecting the Digital Fan Goldmine: Safeguarding Immersive Revenue in the Age of AI Cybercrime - TIAKI](#),

We highlight 5 potential AI attack vectors and the potential impact on the top 10 European football clubs, and their fan base of 2.3 billion social media followers.

A New Era for Horse Racing: Blending Tradition with Digital Innovation

The global horse racing industry is on the cusp of a significant transformation, poised to become more engaging, personalized, and lucrative through the integration of **digital immersive experiences**. This isn't just about keeping the sport alive; it's about reinventing it for the modern era.

Premium events like the Kentucky Derby, Royal Ascot, Melbourne Cup, Dubai World Cup, Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, and Japan Cup stand to solidify their positions as global leaders by harnessing the power of the digital realm. By embracing these technologies, horse racing can overcome traditional barriers like complexity and betting intimidation. Imagine educational, interactive, and entertaining experiences that appeal to Gen Z, diverse sports fans, and the general public, making the sport more accessible and relevant than ever before.

In essence, the future of horse racing hinges on its ability to seamlessly blend its rich tradition with cutting-edge digital innovation, ensuring the sport is both understandable and thrilling for all audiences through the power of digital immersion.

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Lilian Baudard is a Paris-based Chief Marketing & Communications Officer with deep expertise in the sports, media, and technology sectors.

With a career spanning over 20 years, he has held key roles at leading organizations such as Eurosport and Warner Bros. Discovery, and has worked closely with major global sports properties including the NHL, Premier League, UEFA Champions League, and Bundesliga.

Renowned for his ability to craft and execute high-impact marketing and communications strategies, Lilian specializes in unlocking digital revenue growth for rights holders and enhancing brand value through innovation. His work bridges strategic vision, storytelling, and cutting-edge technology—particularly in fan engagement and immersive digital experiences—positioning him as a forward-thinking voice in the future of sports marketing.



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David is the Founder & Managing Partner at TIAKI, a niche consulting practice helping executive leadership in sport make confident, informed decisions on their risks, investments and business outcomes powered by secure 'data-at-scale'. He collaborates with bold and determined leaders in the sports ecosystem to define their data, AI and cybersecurity strategies to deliver sustainable value.

David's vision for TIAKI is to empower sports franchise CEOs, leadership teams, sports media broadcasters and investors in the global sports industry with strategic advisory frameworks to deliver secure, pioneering digital fan experiences and new ecosystem business models to achieve breakthrough returns.

David has over 20 years of strategy and technology enabled business transformation experience, providing consulting expertise in cloud native technologies, data strategy, digital business enablement and cybersecurity strategy. He is passionate about helping talented leadership teams succeed in securely growing their differentiated business models in the data-driven, digital sports economy.

Based in Stockholm, David previously worked for IBM Consulting, EY, Accenture Strategy and Orange Business. He studied Chemistry at Durham University and holds an MBA from Trinity College, Dublin Business School.



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