URBAN AIRSHIP

US Open Grows Engagement with Beacons, Mobile App Engagement

US Open's Objectives

- Use macro- and micro-targeted location notifications and beacons for greater relevance

- Integrate sponsoring partners' messages into app with message center and push notifications

- Serve on-site US Open fans with a "day guide"

The US Open app seeks to give all fans an exceptional experience, whether they're at the game or halfway across the world.

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) hosts the US Open and used push and geofences in its 2013 app. For 2014, the USTA wanted to test new capabilities in its app, including micro-targeting with beacons.

Brian Ryerson, Digital Strategy Manager at USTA, explained the content segmentation strategy. "Push notifications allow us to contact people on the fly, while the message center allows users to return to the content," he said.

The US Open app paired push with Gimbal proximity beacons and a message center to further integrate its partners into the app and monetize push and in-app messaging. For example, a push notification deep-linked to a rich in-app message about a sponsored ticket giveaway was sent to everyone on the grounds. The first fan to open the push and get to the booth won tickets to the suite.
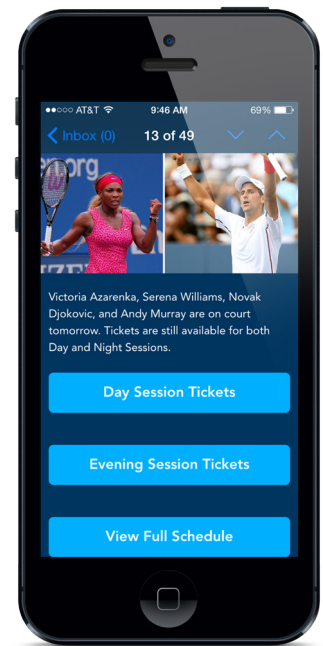
The USTA uses push notifications and a message center to communicate with fans at the 2014 US Open. Content triggered by beacons heightens relevance.

RESULTS

⬆ **53%**

Open rate for US Open live streaming notifications.

⬆ **32%**

Average click-through rate for highly targeted last-minute ticket offers.

Beacons were a new feature in the US Open app. Gimbal beacons were placed throughout the US Open grounds near each gate for the event as well as other key locations. When attendees were near a gate, a beacon-triggered welcome message was sent to users. Upon opening, users were directed to an in-app message sharing the day's events, matches and signings, which allowed users to plan their day in real-time. With frequency limits, users only received one welcome message per day.

To promote last-minute ticket offers, USTA zeroed in on app users that had previously looked at tickets within the app, had been near a US Open ticket booth and were currently in the tri-state area.

This high-level of targeting involving proximity history, current location (within geofence) and in-app behaviors achieved massive response, with 32 percent of recipients clicking the Buy Tickets Now button within the message center.

"Using Urban Airship and Gimbal not only worked seamlessly, but offered us sophistication to provide the ideal mobile experience for tennis fans and learn more about foot traffic at Flushing Meadows," Ryerson said.

"As one example, rich messages sent via beacon-triggered push alerts and message center allowed us to position part of our global mobile app specifically to the on-site fan while not interrupting the at-home experience. The messages allowed our mobile app to become a true 'day guide' for everything happening around the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center."

By using more contextual push notifications, users checked their message centers more frequently and went further into the app. And because content was available in the message center for viewing later at users' convenience, the number of views for message center content was even higher than the total number sent.

The USTA had more than 387,000 sightings around various beacons on the site, to gather useful data about traffic on the grounds, and gain valuable insight for future planning.