

Acing the US Open d experience

AI models built with watsonx transform
data into insight

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For two weeks at the end of summer, nearly one million fans flock to Flushing, New York, to watch the best tennis players in the world compete in the US Open Tennis Championships.

Business Challenge Transformation Outcome

But more than 15 million global tennis fans follow the US Open app and website. And to keep them coming back, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) has worked side-by-side with IBM for more than three decades, developing and delivering a digital experience that constantly advances its features and functional

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“The digital experience of the US Open is of end and therefore to us,” says Kirsten Corio, Chief C means we need to constantly innovate to meet anticipating their needs, but also surprising the experiences.”

To help the US Open stay on the cutting edge of Consulting worked closely with the USTA to dev transform tennis data into insights and original website. To do this, the USTA used [IBM® watson](#) powerful AI models, including [IBM Granite™](#) for app features such as Match Reports and AI Co



15M

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World-class digital experiences for more than **15 million** fans around the globe

“The AI models built do more than enhance the experience of the USTA. They also scale the production of the editorial team by automating workflows.”

Kirsten Corio

Chief Commercial Officer
United States Tennis Association

Generative AI experience with watsonx

The US Open is a sprawling, two-week tournament on 22 different courts. Keeping up with all the action for fans and the USTA editorial team covering the event is a challenge. We design, develop, and deliver solutions that enhance the fan experience and help our team serve up more content, covering more

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To do it, the IBM Consulting team built generative AI models using watsonx, a part of IBM's portfolio of AI products. These models generated post-match summaries that are designed to provide context on the action from around the tournament. AI Commentators provided spoken commentary to match highlights. And Sports Illustrated's new application for the US Open—features AI-generated content.

“The AI models built with watsonx do more than just generate content for the US Open,” says Kirsten Corio, Chief Communications Officer. “They increase the productivity of our editorial team by automating repetitive tasks.”

The IBM team worked with multiple AI models, including the family of Granit AI models. These models understand language, but they needed to be trained on specific data in order to translate US Open action into sentence-by-sentence summaries.

“Foundation models are incredibly powerful and versatile, but to achieve meaningful business outcomes, they need to be trained on specific data to develop domain expertise. And that’s why an organization’s data is a key differentiator when it comes to AI.”

The team used watsonx.data to connect and curate data from various sources. The curation process includes de-duping and filtering data to inform the large language model, as well as the model’s training. The process filters for things like profanity or abusive content.

The models were then trained to translate tennis action into summaries, summarizing entire matches in the case of Match Reports and AI Commentators that describe the action in highlight reels for AI Commentators. For the 2024 US Open, Match Reports and AI Commentators for men’s singles matches and women’s singles matches; something the US Open has never done before. And the ongoing operation of the model is supported by the governance elements of watsonx.governance, which ensure the models are operating as expected.

During the software development phase of the project, the team built a powerful generative AI assistant to increase the productivity of the IBM watsonx Code Assistant™ uses generative AI to help developers write code faster and more accurately.

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model to accelerate software development, help on natural language prompts. The team used the snippets of code, annotated code to facilitate better developers, and auto-complete snippets of ana



Platform of innovation

To develop new capabilities every year, the UST purpose. The process starts the week after the Consulting kicks off work using the [IBM Garage](#) approach to co-creation.

“When we engage with a client, it’s critical that of the way, ideating, iterating and adapting as we end state,” says Miller.

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In order to transform new ideas into digital real and manages a powerful digital infrastructure c unstructured data, and integrating technology f foundational infrastructure is advanced and imp

“It used to be that innovation cycles were meas
“But now, innovation is measured in weeks and anywhere. So, we needed a flexible platform th automate the process of turning data into insigh entire digital environment.”

From data to insight

The raw material of any digital experience is data, and the US Open tournament produces a lot of it. For starters, each US Open consists of 128 men and 128 women singles players, and a total of seven rounds for each tournament. Each tennis player comes with his or her own data set, including world ranking and recent performance. But that’s just the beginning.

Over the course of the tournament, more than 125,000 points will be played. And each one of those points generates its own data set: serve direction, speed, return shot type, winner shot type, rally count and even ball position. All told, more than seven million data points are generated during the tournament.

To add more texture and context to the US Open digital experience, the team wanted to go beyond the numbers. So, they used AI to analyze the language and sentiment of millions of articles from hundreds of thousands of different sources to develop insights that are unique and informative, for instance, the likelihood to Win predictions for all singles matches. To help manage the collection, integration, and analysis of the data sets, IBM used [IBM watsonx.data](#) specifically designed to handle AI workloads.

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“It’s a massive data management operation, incorporating multiple sources of data and a variety of partners,” says Miller. “But the magic happens when you combine

hard data like stats and scores with unstructured data like media commentary. That is what gives tennis fans a more complete picture of each match.”

Automation, containerization and other efficiencies

To streamline this process, during the years working with the UTSA, IBM Consulting built automated workflows that integrate and orchestrate the flow of data through the various applications and AI models needed to produce the digital experience. These workflows are made possible by a hybrid cloud architecture and the containerized apps running on [Red Hat® OpenShift® on IBM Cloud](#). The US Open hybrid multicloud architecture is made up of four public clouds, drawing on data from a variety of sources and integrating features and capability from a variety of partners. By containerizing the applications, the team can write them once and run them anywhere, ensuring that the right data gets to the right application on the right cloud.

“With this platform, we’re capable of doing things that were not possible just a few years ago,” says Corio. “Managing all that data, producing AI-generated insights, securing the environment ... IBM just makes it all come together for us. And I can’t wait to see what the future of the partnership holds.”

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Kirsten Corio
Chief Commercial Officer

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About United States Tennis Association (USTA)

Founded in 1881, the [USTA](#) is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the US. The [US Open](#) is the association’s Grand Slam tournament, first held in 1968—the year that Arthur Ashe won the men’s singles title. The US Open is played each September at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing, Queens, New York.

Solution components

IBM Consulting™ →	IBM Garage™ Methodology →	IBM® Granite™ →
IBM watsonx™ →	IBM watsonx.data™ →	IBM watsonx Code Assistant™ →
Red Hat® OpenShift® on IBM Cloud →		

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