

Status Report to the 2022 ISU Congress on the Four Year Plan 2018/19-2021/22

Committee/Commission:

ISU Council/ISU Secretariat

Project/Function/Area of Activity:

Media/Communications

The [Priorities of the Council 2018-2022](#) include three distinct pillars: 1. Development, 2. Marketing and Promotion and 3. Good Governance. The ISU Media Team has worked on and contributed to all three pillars by working with the relevant teams with the objective to help achieve the goals set out by the ISU Council.

The ISU Media Team has worked particularly closely with the Marketing department, but also with the eLearning team and the Good Governance Working Group. Specific updates and activities will be reported by each concerned group, however it is important to note the role the ISU Media Team has played to provide a standardized and overall view and approach, especially when it comes to outreach, promotion and communication plans.

The seasons 2018/19 can be classified as normal with business as usual. The season 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 were of course affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which had major consequences not only on ISU Events, but also on various projects and workflows.

It was important during this period to switch gears from an Event focused workflow to something else that would keep ISU Sports relevant and visible to the fans and partners.

Following the success of the #OneHandDown Short Track Speed Skating social media campaign, the media team launched a cross discipline campaign in November 2019 called #UpAgain. This campaign provided the flexibility but also the tools to pivot from an Event focused season to a content and storytelling-focused season.

The ISU Media Team also worked extensively with the eLearning team who played a key role in providing remote workouts and motivation to the Ice Skating Community during the first lockdown.

Another major undertaking was the launch of the ISU Skating Awards, which were originally planned to take place at the end of the ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2020 in Montreal (CAN), but due to the lockdown the team turned the project into a successful digital initiative.

The main focus of the 2020/21 season was to capitalize on the few scheduled events, "This is UpAgain, A Documentary Series" was produced during the ISU World Figure Skating Championships, ISU European and World Short Track Championships and the Speed Skating Bubble. The ISU Media Team focused on content creation with the purpose to keep the social media and communication channels relevant and active. The #UpAgain campaign was a key tool during this period and content that was no longer focused on events. Some of the biggest names in ISU sports joined the campaign via the #UpAgain show. A new podcast was launched and has become popular with the fans, additionally, a number of editorial pieces on topics such as mental health, education but also putting athletes in the spotlight were published.

When the season 2021/22 started, it was a great relief that most events could be maintained and the focus could shift back to the competitions and more specifically to the road to Beijing 2022. Although business was more or less back to usual, the added complication and time-consuming logistics created by Covid-19 made it a challenging year.

During the complicated and challenging seasons, the ISU Media teams found it particularly difficult to keep up the pace with its limited resources. Therefore, the priority during the summer of 2021 was to recruit in time for the start of the Olympic season. Chloé Burkhardt took over the role of Media Relations and Operation Coordinator as from December 1 2021 and the Naomi Cadosch started on January 1, 2022 in the newly created role of Content Coordinator.

This Status Report lists in no particular order a summary of the numerous projects undertaken by the Media Team.

Social Media

Launched in August 2011, the ISU’s social media strategy has greatly improved and continues to evolve over the years and the coverage and growth persists. May 2021 marked the fifth year that the ISU mandated an external company to conduct an in depth analysis of its overall performance and results of its social media properties, which includes 10 accounts across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Weibo.

One of the objectives of the ISU Media Team is to rank as high as possible in the yearly #SportOnSocial report. The impact of the pandemic on the ISU is clearly illustrated in the 2021 report, where the ISU dropped 2 places in the Overall Rankings to 14th. This is a direct consequence to the small number of events that took place during the season 2020/21.

International Federation	2021	2020	change	International Federation	2021	2020	change
Volleyball World	1	3	2 ▲	FIH	21	16	-5 ▼
BWF	2	4	2 ▲	IIHF	22	22	-
World Athletics	3	5	2 ▲	WT	23	24	1 ▲
FIFA	4	6	2 ▲	WS	24	27	3 ▲
FIBA	5	1	-4 ▼	World Rowing	25	26	1 ▲
ITTF	6	7	1 ▲	WCF	26	28	2 ▲
World Rugby	7	2	-5 ▼	ISSF	27	31	4 ▲
UCI	8	13	5 ▲	IWF	28	14	-14 ▼
UWW	9	11	2 ▲	FIE	29	29	-
FEI	10	8	-2 ▼	WBSC	30	-	-
FIG	11	20	9 ▲	IHF	31	19	-12 ▼
ITF	12	18	6 ▲	AIBA	32	23	-9 ▼
FIS	13	15	2 ▲	World Triathlon	33	25	-8 ▼
ISU	14	12	-2 ▼	IBSF	34	34	-
FINA	15	10	-5 ▼	ICF	35	30	-5 ▼
IJF	16	9	-7 ▼	FIL	36	32	-4 ▼
WKF	17	-	-	World Skate	37	-	-
IBU	18	21	3 ▲	ISA	38	-	-
World Archery	19	17	-2 ▼	UIPM	39	33	-6 ▼
IFSC	20	-	-				

It’s worth noting the following:

- The ISU is overall down 2 places to #14 compared to 2020
 - For context, 15 IFs fell overall as a result of less live events and slower growth rates
- ISU is in the unique position of being the only IF to fall overall, but not on any platforms. The ISU:
 - Remained 3rd on Twitter
 - Remained 10th on YouTube
 - Went up 1 place on Facebook to 20th
 - Went up 1 place on Instagram to 15th

Some of the ‘bigger’ Summer sports were also more active and started to move up the leader board as Tokyo 2020 and summer sports started to take more center stage. FIS also went up the leader board as they were able to maintain a large number of their events which were outdoors.

Considering the limited number of events, there was still growth and through the ISU Skating Awards and #UpAgain campaign, the fans were kept engaged, but the biggest impact always comes from the events.

Some top line figures include the following (NB: the figures below are a year on year comparison from 2019/20 and 2020/21):

Audience Growth - percentage of new followers

- **14% increase** in ISU fans across all platforms (902.9k to 1.03m).
- **43% audience growth decrease** compared to the previous year.
- 31.8k new fans generated by Weibo, a **58% year-on-year increase** – higher than any other platform.
- **37.8k new fans generated by YouTube**, more than any other platform (due to **Skating ISU channel**).
- **13% increase in total fans on Instagram**, representing largest proportion of ISU's social media audience (28%).

Audience demographics

- Figure Skating channels became even more weighted to the **female audience (83% of total)**, up from 82%.
- Speed Skating channels remained slightly skewed to the **male audience (58% of total)**, up from 57%.
- The **Netherlands** represented the largest proportion of fans for Speed Skating (14%), followed by the **USA** (9%) and **South Korea** (8%).
- The **USA and Japan** remained the most popular markets for Figure Skating (18% and 11% respectively).

Impressions - number of times a post viewed in a feed

- ISU content received **332.7m impressions (-42%)**.
- YouTube accounted for **66% of total impressions** (212.9m), despite experiencing a 40% fall.
- Twitter generated the 2nd highest number of impressions (**39.9m**), 12% of total.
- Impressions on **Instagram fell from 44.9m to 25.5m (-43%)**, on Instagram Stories from 29% to 17.1m.
- Impressions on Weibo fell from **11.1m to 9.8m (-11%)**.
- Impressions on Figure Skating pages decreased to **75.9m (-53%)**, Speed Skating pages saw a decrease to **6.2m (-36%)**.

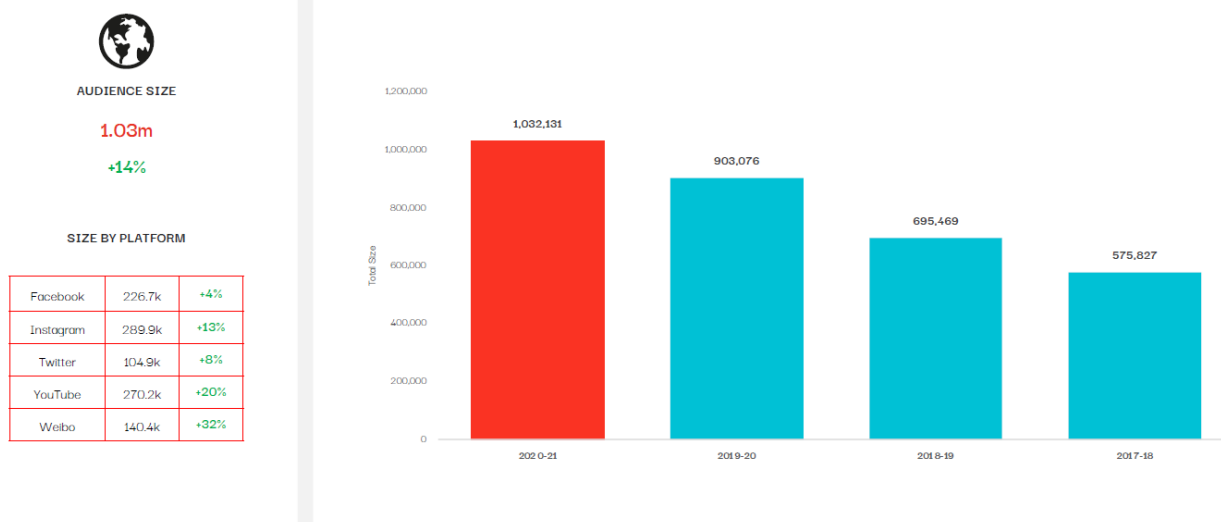
Engagements – number of reactions, comments, shares, likes, retweets, replies

- **47% decrease** in total social media engagements (3.4m from 6.3m)
- Instagram generated more engagements than any other platform (**1.9m**), representing 56% of total.
- Twitter experienced the **biggest year-on-year decrease in engagements (-56%)** as a result of 47% fewer posts.
- Facebook experienced a **53% fall** in engagements (to 346.9k).
- 2.3m engagements came from Figure Skating pages (**-50% year-on-year decrease**); 281.7k came from Speed Skating pages (**-27% year-on-year decrease**).

Video Views

- 26.3m video views were generated across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube (**-58%**).
- YouTube video **views fell by 48%** to lower than any other platform as archive content still generated substantial views.
- Twitter experienced the largest fall (**-72%**) from 13.4m to 3.7m.
- Facebook fell by **60%** to 3.3m, Instagram by **65%** to 3.8m.

TOTAL AUDIENCE SIZE



The ISU Media Team currently performs the following general tasks:

- **Social media advertising:** due to the algorithms on the various social media platforms, organic growth is now very limited and it is necessary to have a budget for advertising in order to have an impactful and relevant strategy. During the season 2020/21 the ISU used the advertising tools on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. As part of the overall strategy, these tools will be used more extensively.
- **Reporters:** over the course of the last couple of seasons, the ISU Media Team has created strong relationships and contacts with social media freelancers who can attend ISU Events and create content and posts remotely. This allows the ISU Media Team's to take on a project management role rather than an operational role.
- **Fan engagement:** in order to increase the followers and more importantly engagement during the pandemic, the ISU had to find new ways to offer something unique to fans. Considering the limited number of events that took place, the Media Team maximized the resources to take full advantage of the events to create content throughout the season and for the start of the new season. Activities such as obtaining tickets and souvenirs from OCs along with other giveaways will resume if the situation allows.
- **Maintenance, updating, moderation and interaction:** across all ISU social media platforms.
- **Content creation:** includes photography, videos, graphic design, mandating agencies, project managing, sending reporters to Events and managing other relevant resources.

Chinese market

China is a very complex market due to the structure and geopolitics within the Chinese media. However, with the Beijing 2022 Olympics, this emerging market is of the utmost importance. The promotion of ISU Events through Chinese social media should complement current TV/Internet deals with CCTV and Tencent which can translate in an increase of rights fee income in the market. It is particularly important to invest in China separately because platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. do not have a presence in China.

In 2018/19 the ISU negotiated a new contract with H&A Media which is based in Lausanne and Beijing to manage its Chinese social media accounts and strategy. The ISU now has the following accounts:

- **Weibo:** A Chinese social media platform similar to Facebook and Twitter. The account was opened at the end of the 2015/16 season.

- WeChat: [The account was successfully opened in April 2019.](#) The objective of this platform is to provide long-form content (400-800 words) along with video and/or still images to provide more in-depth coverage and stories.
- Youku: account soon to be closed due to a decline in its popularity with fans.
- Bilibili: new account to be opened shortly to replace Youku and to host long form (longer than 4 minute videos)

The Skating community is well aware of the various reactions in China following the Ladies Relay Short Track events in PyeongChang 2018 which has had a direct impact on the ISU's social media channels in China. However, as the political situation improved and ISU Events were held in China during the season 2019/20, the ISU Media Team took this opportunity to send a local crew to cover the ISU Events and create Chinese specific content. This had a positive impact on the engagement and social media results.

Additionally, the #KeepTraining content and campaign was specially adapted and translated for the Chinese market which created a positive sentiment and results.

Social Media Campaigns

#UpAgain

[#UpAgain](#), originally launched in November 2019, is an emotional and inspiring campaign based on one simple principle: we must overcome life's challenges to achieve our full potential. As we faced one of the biggest challenges humankind has encountered in decades, the Covid-19 pandemic, the campaign took a greater meaning and the campaign evolved into "This is #UpAgain". Athletes celebrated life back on the ice, shared how they stayed strong and had the opportunity to thank those who supported them through tough times.

The mandate was to deliver a season-long creative campaign across ISU digital and social media platforms and channels. The campaign built a non-competition narrative, leveraging milestones in all disciplines. When the situation dramatically changed and Events got canceled, the #UpAgain campaign became even more relevant. The #UpAgain campaign was relaunched with a new tag line This is #UpAgain, to show that following lockdowns, restricted or no access to ice rinks and limited competitions, the Skating world started to bloom again and the spirit of the campaign gained even more meaning.

The campaign is due to run until the end of the Olympic season and culminate during Beijing 2022. There are no plans to have another social media campaign for the post Olympic season (season 2022/23).

#ISUSkatingAwards

The ISU Skating Awards premiered in 2020, Awards in the following categories were given: Most Valuable Skater, Best Costume, Most Entertaining Program, Best Newcomer, Best Choreographer, Best Coach and Lifetime Achievement Award.

Considering the limited number of events that took place during the season 2020/21, it was not legitimate to have the same format at the 2020 Awards. Therefore there was more skating content and three Lifetime Achievement Awards that were given out. This created a very different product and show and unfortunately the fans had less opportunity to engage because no voting options were possible.

Nevertheless, ambitious campaign goals were set for the virtual ISU Skating Awards social media campaigns both in 2020 and 2021:

- Generate awareness and interest in the ISU Awards amongst the global Ice Skating community.
- Create a positive sentiment and a buzz around the ISU Skating Awards.
- Achieve **200k views in 2020** and **150k views in 2021** of the live stream on ISU Skating YouTube channel

- Reach **10m fans in 2020** and **12m fans in 2021** across all platforms throughout the duration of the campaign.

In 2020 the number of views achieved was **196k views** and **118.4K in 2021**. The reach in **2020 was 18.1m** and in **2021 14.6m**.

#KeepTraining

The ISU Media Team worked closely with the ISU Project Manager responsible for eLearning and the Centers of Excellence, to turn the idea of holding virtual training sessions, into a #KeepTraining social media campaign. The Media Team proposed the campaign name and created a strategy to promote, live stream and communicate around the initiative. This was a great example of an initiative that was turned into a successful digital project.

The Keep Training initiative was particularly well received on the ISU's Chinese social media platforms as no other International Federation offered such content to the Chinese market.

This is #Upagain – documentary series

The ISU Media Team deemed it important to capitalize on the limited number of events that took place during the 2020/21 season. Therefore it decided to send a video crew to all the events that took place in 2021, namely:

- ISU Speed Skating Bubble
- ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Championships
- ISU World Short Track Speed Skating Championships
- ISU World Figure Skating Championships

The Speed Skating Bubble created a unique opportunity as the athletes were in the Bubble for up to 5 weeks. Therefore House of Sports was mandated to film during this time and produce a documentary style video. Two crews were sent, one was inside the Bubble, the other outside the bubble. They followed 5 athletes' stories. The four-part documentary series was published during the summer leading up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and will be launched again at the beginning of the Speed Skating season.

During the Short Track Speed Skating and Figure Skating Championships, a different crew was sent to document the events. Because the time available was much shorter and the athletes did not have as much availability as Speed Skating, the series have a more general feel to them as the crew was not able to follow specific teams. The two documentary series were published at the start of the ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating and ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series in October 2021.

Other campaigns

An Elements Explained campaign was launched in 2021 in partnership with the Centers of Excellence, with the goal to explain various Figure Skating Elements ahead of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games. The ISU Media Team also worked with the eLearning group to promote various modules and seminars.

a. Live streaming on YouTube

In 2019 the ISU started working with Infront as a new TV Rights partner and for the distribution of the international signal to all ISU TV Right Holders.

This created an opportunity to live stream ISU Events to the ISU YouTube Channel and take advantage of the various carve-outs and agreements to maximize the visibility of ISU Events. The ISU Media Team worked closely with the Infront team to promote the live streams and other broadcast schedules through "Where to Watch" posts and publications, which proved to be very popular with the fans. This strategy is key to promoting Skating sports in developing markets in particular.

It very quickly became clear that there was a big demand for live streams and the results (see below) are impressive and were immediate.

i. ISU Junior Grand Prix YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/ISUJuniorGrandPrix>

103K subscribers – over 69 million views since the launch of the channel in 2011.

Launched in 2011, this social media initiative has been very successful over the years. There is a high rate of participation and there is great anticipation and enthusiasm around the ISU Junior Grand Prix Events. The Junior Grand Prix Series was upgraded from being delayed by a few minutes to a real live stream in 2014. This was a positive step forward and was extremely well received by the fans, media and Skating Family. This platform reaches out to a large female audience (75%) predominantly between the ages of 18-24 (26%). The numbers keep increasing year on year to an average of 7 million views per season.

In 2020, the ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series was canceled which had a big impact on the growth and engagement of the channel. However, despite not having any new, there was still growth as fans liked to watch previous seasons or specific programs. In 2021, the Junior Grand Prix started again and the fans were delighted to be able to enjoy Figure Skating again.

ii. Skating ISU YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/SkatingISU>

234K Subscribers – 69.3 million views since the launch of the Skating ISU YouTube Channels in May 2012.

This channel hosts different content from all the disciplines such as interviews, backstage videos and other original content, archive material etc. The ISU received a waiver from all ISU Right Holders and can edit and publish video clips of ISU Championships and Events on YouTube globally.

During the seasons 2020/21 and 2021/22 ISU Events were live streamed in dark markets without TV rights.

Press conferences from the ISU Grand Prix Final, European and World Figure Skating Championships were live streamed. For Short Track the qualifying events that take place on the Fridays were also live streamed with no geoblocking. This is #UpAgain Show was also available via the YouTube Channel, along with #KeepTraining videos among others.

Below are some key points from the season 2020/21, the data is not yet available for the season 2021/22:

- March experienced highest growth (16.3k), with the peak (+3.4k subscribers on 24 March) coinciding with start of 2021 World Figure Skating
- Championships. This was reflected in the highest views, hours watched, and average watch time.
- 67% of new subscribers (25.3k) came from the Watch Page, with Alexandra Trusova at Skate Canada 2019 (1.8k) and the Ladies Short Program at the 2021 World Figure Skating Championships (1.1k) generating most subscribers.
- The Alexandra Trusova video generated more views than any other (1.1m), 237.0k views coming from the Suggested Videos function on an external video that has generated over 23.8m views to date.
- YouTube search had the highest click-through rate of all traffic sources (7.0%) compared with the average (4.4%) as people actively looked to watch certain content.
- Yuzuru Hanyu, Alexandra Trusova, Nathan Chen and Alena Kostornaia were the most searched-for skaters, but events produced higher average durations, including the 2020 Rostelecom Cup, Skate America 2020 and the 2021 World Figure Skating Championships.
- Japan (1.6m) and Ukraine (1.0m) generated highest number of views; Canadian viewers spent longer watching content (15 min 22 sec) than any other country (over 200k views).
- A higher proportion of viewers (27%) were from younger audiences (under 24) than any other age group, yet over 65s spent longest viewing content (10 min 49 sec) and 25–34s accounted for 21% of total hours watched.

This project also included live clipping, highlight videos and other content to increase the visibility and promote ISU Events on its YouTube channel.

ISU Website

The last redesign of the main website ISU.ORG dates back to September 2017, and since then technical updates have been consistently put in place to ensure security and accessibility. It is clear that the ISU website is a key daily working tool for the ISU and the Skating family. During the season, there are approximately 15 weekly updates on the website with a lot of information made available. During the Off-Season the Media Team has also increased the number of editorial pieces to maintain regularity outside of the Events.

Statistics

The statistics below show the number of visits and users. The season 2019/20 shows a decrease in the number of visits to the website compared to last season. This can be explained by the cancellation of three ISU World Championships including the Event that attracts the most attention the ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2020. Due to the continuity of the Covid-19 crisis, the number of visits has drastically decreased during season 2020/21 due to less event related content published, and even if the number of visitors has also decreased, we have been able to maintain more than a million users thanks to a diversified editorial content plan.

	The number of sessions (visits) to ISU.ORG	Number of users	Total number of pages views	Average session (visit) duration
2017/18 Olympic Season	5,048,260	1,857,055	15,350,467	00:02:31
2018/19	5,221,376	1,740,734	16,016,092	00:02:44
2019/20	4,212,005	1,453,253	12,516,811	00:02:35
2020/21	2,234,701	1,082,542	5,836,052	00:02:04

ISU Central database

An audit of the different result providers and their technology took place over the summer of 2017. During the audit, several findings and observations were made, implying that a consolidated tool should be set in place to ease the internal work, and regain property of the Data.

Unfortunately, a number of delays due to the ISU Mobile App development, Timing providers delays, issues with the new Figure Skating database, staff at ST Sportservices and the integration of the Sport Computer Graphics data have had an impact on the delivery of the central database. ST Sportservices continues to work on fixing the various issues with the necessary support from the ISU and is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2022.

In addition to the ISU Archives which holds biographies and historical results, ST Sportservices has developed a live results system which gathers live data from all sports and delivers it in the proper format to be displayed on ISU.ORG or the ISU Mobile App.

ISU Mobile Application

During the Summer 2019, the ISU issued a Request for Proposals to find a provider to develop the ISU mobile App. InfrontX was the selected provider and the project started in November 2019.

Due the complexity of the project, required changes, limited resources at the ISU, the ISU result providers also involved in the project and because of the pandemic, a number of delays occurred. There were numerous exchanges on the topic of data feeds and the development of the mobile application was paused multiple times.

Live simulations and tests phases with bug fixes are taking place before the ISU Mobile App application is ready to be published on Google Play and Apple Store. The testing of the Mobile App is ongoing and all stakeholders will be informed when the launch will take place.

ISU Media Team tasks

Every year the ISU Media Team performs a growing number of tasks during the season, as listed below:

- **Inside ISU World Newsletter:** a weekly email newsletter that goes out to the ISU Members, Office Holders and anyone who subscribes to the newsletter, e.g., fans and media. This newsletter includes all the latest Communications, news, documents that were published on [ISU.ORG](https://www.isu.org). Communicating to stakeholders is key and contributes to staying in line with the ISU's goal to be more transparent and to increase its communication.
- **Hot Off the Ice Newsletter:** in 2018 a newsletter aimed at fans was created and is sent once a week during the season and every other week during the off season. This newsletter curates the latest information such as videos, featured stories, call to actions, marketing campaigns etc. The ISU Skating Awards voting process allowed to gather an extremely important number of subscribers to the Newsletter, who were integrated in 2020.
- **Media advisories:** the Media Team is conscious that Media outlets have limited budgets and resources therefore, it is increasingly important to provide readily accessible information in a timely and informative manner for them to cover ISU Events and topics. Consequently, the number of media advisories has increased year on year. The media advisories are sent to the media, ISU Members and Office Holders. These include information on media accreditation, competition previews, competition press releases, ISU Statements, ISU initiatives etc. There was a slight decrease last season due to the cancellation of many events.
- **ISU Website:** maintaining and updating the ISU website on a daily basis with ISU Communications, news, events, pictures, videos and other content. The ISU website is also being optimized on a regular basis in order to improve its usability.
- **IT:** during the season 2019/20 the ISU Media Team took over the ISU Secretariat IT project and when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world, it was imperative to provide ISU staff with the possibility to work remotely. Therefore, new system had to be implemented, including Zoom and Microsoft Teams protocols, A new IT strategy and infrastructure has been put in place in order to secure remote connections, online data and the ISU Secretariat servers. This process is ongoing as technology and needs evolve.
- **Mobile App:** during the summer of 2019, the ISU Media Team issued a Request for Proposals to a number of potential providers. Following the ISU Council Meeting in October 2019, it was agreed that the ISU would work with infrontX (formerly known as iX.co), an American company which is part of Infront. Since then, the ISU Media Team has worked with infrontX to develop the App, however this project quickly become more complicated than anticipated mainly due to the delicate interfaces with Result Service Providers (Swiss Timing, Sport Computer Graphics), It required implication of additional providers and took a lot more time than planned taking up a lot of the ISU Media Team's time to find solutions, negotiate contracts and conditions favorable for the ISU.
- **Infront:** in addition to the Mobile App, the ISU has worked with Infront Italy (a subsidiary to Infront) on the content production project, that involved live streaming (subject to geo-blocking when required) all ISU Events on the Skating ISU YouTube channel. During the season 2020/21, with the limited number of ISU Events taking place, Infront has been producing different kinds of content including the new sports videos, movies at the end of ISU Events among others. Content from the Events was created and published on social media, but also made available to Right Holders.

- **Social media operations:** creating, posting and moderating content on 14 different accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Weibo, WeChat etc.) on a daily basis.
- **Onsite media support:**
 - **Figure Skating:** the ISU works with a freelance journalist (Ms. Tatiana Flade) who attends all ISU Grand Prix events and Championships and provides essential support to the Event Manager team and media on site. The freelancer also provides a Quick Quotes service, updates Skater biographies, assists with the gathering of program elements information, and writes Press releases and press conference highlights. The ISU Communications and Media Director attends the ISU Grand Prix Final, European and World Championships to manage key areas such as the mixed zone and press center, assists ISU television Right Holders, organizes the President's press conference, sets up any production and live streaming activities as well as provides other support to the OCs. As social media plays a key role in communications, the Digital Communications Manager also attends key events in order to insure a good and comprehensive social media coverage of the event. As of December 2021, a new ISU Media Relations and Operation Coordinator was onboarded and will take over some of the tasks of the Director at ISU Events, in order to increase the services and offering to media.
 - **Short Track Speed Skating:** in 2018 the ISU mandated an agency of professional journalists, to attend all ISU World Cups and Championships (except the Junior events) in order to editorially cover them. They produce content for the ISU such as news and media advisories, features, and basic social media coverage.
 - **Speed Skating:** since the Olympic season 2017/18 a specialized Speed Skating journalist attends all World Cups and Championships (except the Junior events) in order to cover them. Leo Aquina produces content for the ISU such as news and media advisories, features, and basic social media coverage.
 - **Synchronized Skating:** a social media team attends the World Championships in order to provide extensive coverage of the event. A journalist covers the events remotely.
- **Memorandum:** The ISU Media updates the media guidelines in the Memorandum for Event Organizers whenever needed. During the season 2020/21, a number of updates had to be made in order to reflect the new needs and requirements that developed during the pandemic.
- **Event preparation:** the Media Team liaises with the OCs on media operations, social media, communications and marketing matters related to the Event. This includes the preparation of media accreditations, media information documents and forms, processing all media accreditation requests from all ISU Events, promoting the events through social media with the assistance of the OC or third parties (e.g., OC agency, Infront, IMG etc.), aligning communication strategies with the OCs, reviewing marketing material etc.
- **Media Guides:** at the beginning of each season the Media Team prepares media guides that include a summary of each sport and results throughout the season. They can be found on the ISU website: <https://isu.org/media-centre/guides/media>

- **Freelancers:** in order to increase the coverage at ISU Events, the Media Team has increased the pool of freelancers it works with. This has had an impact on the quality and quantity of the content. Additional content such as long form articles which include interviews with athletes, profiles, information about the ISU disciplines, equipment, training etc. were produced for the first time during the season 2016/17 and the number of long form articles continue to increase. The Media Team assesses the level of engagement of the content in order to set priorities during the season. As of the season 2018/19, the ISU has also been working closely with social media freelancers who post content throughout the season and in particular remotely during events.
- **Agencies:** the ISU works with a number of agencies who are specialized in design, video editing, content creation, communications etc. In 2019/20, the ISU worked with; The Works for the ISU Corporate Identity, Penceo for the creation of social media assets and video editing, Redtorch who were mandated for the #UpAgain campaign, H&A Media for the ISU's Chinese social media strategy, Infront for live streaming, clipping and editing, Getty Images for photography etc.
- **ISU photographers:** back in 2014, the ISU did not own any photographs and had to rely on the presence of other photographers in order to obtain pictures. However, in December 2014 the ISU signed a contract with Getty Images in order to start building an ISU Photo Collection. An ISU photographer is sent to every ISU Event (Championships, Junior Grand Prix, Grand Prix, World Cups and Junior World Cups), which enables the Media Team to use the content on the ISU website and social media platforms. The ISU Media Team has been providing photographs to ISU Members and OCs to be included in their programs, social media platforms and website. Pictures can also be provided to sponsors, partners and used for internal purposes.
- **Media accreditations:** the Media Team prepares, assesses and processes media accreditation requests from written press and television Right Holders applying to attend ISU Events and Championships (this includes all Grand Prix, World Cups and Championships: approximately 20 Events in total) and deals with over 2,000 media requests during a normal season. During the pandemic, the situation was of course very different. Media had an option to apply for on site media accreditation (if the host nation permitted this) or for remote media accreditation. The Media Team worked with the OCs to enable media to interview athletes remotely via Zoom or other similar technology. Therefore, although the number of events during the 2020/21 season were minimal, the workload was intense because of the instauration of new protocols, and having to manage uncertainty and remain flexible at all times.
- **Expand and update the ISU media and communication strategy:** the Media Team liaises with a number of ISU bodies and stakeholders: renewing contracts with current providers (e.g. Getty Images, freelancers, photographers and production agencies, Chinese agency, website provider, biography and statistics provider etc.); negotiating contracts for new or additional projects with existing or new providers (e.g. ST Sportservices, production agencies, Infront etc.); liaising with ISU staff and Office Holders to implement and adapt strategies (e.g. social media, communication and promotion, short clips, commentator seminars etc.).
- **Moderate the news:** the Media Team alerts the ISU Director General and the ISU President of any potential "hot" topics.
- **Provide assistance to ISU Council, Office Holders and ISU Members**
- **General enquiries:** the Media Team responds to general enquiries from the media, Organizing Committees, Right Holders, providers and the general public either through email, website or social media.

- **Logistical and administrative tasks:** the Media Team liaises with photographers and other partners that attend ISU Events and arranges accreditation, transport and accommodation and also carries out general administrative tasks such as processing invoices, negotiating or renewing contracts, attending meetings (internal, IOC, partners, providers) etc.
- **Project management:** the ISU has to manage a number of ongoing projects including the collection of biographies, the editing of videos after each ISU Event (except the Junior events), the work done by agencies and freelancers, write Requests for Proposals for new projects such as an ISU App or updating the ISU IT infrastructure.
- **Fan's database and E-Mail marketing:** Assist and support the Marketing department with the development of a fan's database, see the Marketing report for more details.

April 2022